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Bridge column by Tanna Hirsch

9th September 2011

Dealer : South Vul : E-W	NORTH ♠ 10 9 8 3 ♥ Q 10 ♦ A Q J 9 ♣ A Q 2	
WEST ♠ Q 7 6 5 4 2 ♥ J 4 ♦ 5 ♣ 10 9 6 4		EAST ♠ A J ♥ K 9 7 3 ♦ 8 7 3 ♣ J 8 7 5
	SOUTH ♠ K ♥ A 8 6 5 2 ♦ K 10 6 4 2 ♣ K 3	

South	West	North	East
1 Heart	Pass	1 Spade	Pass
2 Diamond	Pass	3 Club	Pass
3 Diamond	Pass	4 Diamond	Pass
4 Heart	Pass	5 Club	Pass
6 Diamond	All Pass		

Opening lead: Five of ♠

The interesting move in the auction is North's bid of four diamonds. That is a slam try – with nothing bigger in mind, North would either have bid three no trump or leaped to the diamond game. Although dead minimum in terms of high cards, South decided that the distribution merited cooperating with partner, hence the four-heart cue-bid and the jump to slam after North's return cue-bid.

The slam mostly depends on the opening lead. With any lead except a spade, the contract would have had excellent play. After a spade lead it was terrible.

The only legitimate play for the slam was to hope that the king of hearts was singleton, but there was nothing in the auction or the North-South distribution to suggest that was a likely possibility. Instead, South decided to rely on a bit of chicanery.

When West found the spade lead, declarer played low from dummy. East rose with the ace and returned the jack. Declarer ruffed, crossed dummy with a trump and immediately led the queen of hearts. We all know that East should cover but, since that was declarer's first-bid suit, East decided doing that could not gain.

When East failed to put up the king, declarer let the queen ride. After the lady held the trick, the rest was simply a mopping-up operation. Dummy's two spades were ruffed in hand with a trump serving as the entry and, after returning to the table with a club to extract the outstanding trump, declarer could claim the remaining tricks.

Read more: http://www.stltoday.com/entertainment/article_3b99c241-8047-5cb0-a4aa-d9e01fe082af.html#ixzz1XR4OSGSU

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