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Bridge column by Tanna Hirsch

26th May 2011

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

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

Opening lead: King of ♠

Beware of hands that look too easy for words. The shoals of distribution are lying in wait for the careless mariner.

North-South bid intelligently to reach an excellent small slam. A 3-2 trump split would permit declarer to claim 12 tricks. Note that the slam was reached even though South's rebid was a simple two clubs on a hand with excellent trick-taking possibilities — the chance of a misfit dictated a cautious approach.

Declarer won the opening lead of the king of spades in dummy and immediately started on trumps. When East discarded a spade on the second round of trumps, it dawned on South that the chance of losing a trick in each red suit was real. And, indeed, that proved to be the case — down one. Try it.

Actually, the slam is makeable even with the cards lying as in the diagram. At trick two declarer should ruff a spade, then test the trumps. When East shows out on the second round, there is just one realistic chance of landing 12 tricks — West had to have started with exactly three spades and the king of diamonds!

South must cash the queen of hearts, cross to dummy with the queen of clubs and ruff another spade. The time has come to start running clubs. To prevent declarer winning 12 tricks by force, West must ruff a club somewhere along the line. However, the West hand has been reduced to nothing but diamonds and, on the forced diamond return, the queen of diamonds becomes the fulfilling trick!

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