

Dealer: S Vul: N/S		North ♠ 6 4 3 2 ♥ A ♦ A 8 6 5 ♣ 8 5 3 2	
		South ♠ A Q J 7 5 ♥ void ♦ Q J 10 9 2 ♣ A K Q	
Lead: ♥ Q Bidding:			
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♠
4♥	4♠	5♥	6♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

One mark of an expert is that he sees problems before they become problems.

The auction was rather hectic which is usually the case when someone has a long suit and the vulnerability is favorable. South opened one spade and West jumped in with four hearts. North was under pressure and was obliged to bid four spades.

South could envision seven spades opposite the right ten count, but decided not to get involved in a difficult cue bidding sequence. His actual bid of six spades was a very fair compromise which rated to make much of the time.

South won the heart lead with dummy's ace and discarded his two of diamonds. The spade finesse won but when West showed out, South was faced with a sure trump loser. He led the queen of diamonds, hoping for West to cover, but West refused. South continued with the jack of diamonds but was now doomed to fail regardless of what happened. In fact, East ruffed the jack of diamonds and returned a club. Eventually, East took the setting trick with the king of spades.

Where did South go wrong, or was he just unlucky? Stop reading here and consider how South might have made six spades?

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West ♠ void ♥ Q J 10 7 6 5 4 3 ♦ K 7 3 ♣ 6 4		East ♠ K 10 9 8 ♥ K 9 8 2 ♦ 4 ♣ J 10 9 7
	South ♠ A Q J 7 5 ♥ void ♦ Q J 10 9 2 ♣ A K Q	

Lead: ♥ Q			
Bidding:			
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1 ♠
4 ♥	4 ♠	5 ♥	6 ♠
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East made an excellent bid of five hearts. It was true he had some defense against spades, but he also had a good hand in support of hearts. Whatever West had, five hearts should be inexpensive, and on a good day, the opponents would continue

bidding. East had his wish come true. Not only did South bid again, he bid a slam. If North has the queen or jack of spades, East is sure to have two spade tricks.

It turns out that dummy did not have a spade honour so East's spade holding is less useful than he hoped for. Still, South has to make his slam if he can. As you saw, he did not. Was it an unmakeable slam?

South erred at trick one. It is amazing to me how many contracts are lost at the first trick.

If South had discarded any club or any high diamond, he would have been able to lead the TWO of diamonds at trick three and if West played low, (as surely he would), South would have finessed dummy's eight. Now declarer could take another trump finesse and later another diamond finesse losing just the one trump trick.

As it was, South had eight cards to discard at trick one, seven of them right and one of them wrong. With unerring accuracy, South found the one wrong card.

Not to laugh. The majority of the players who have seen this hand have done the wrong thing.