

Kyle Larsen, the Player

Extract from the NABC 2002 bulletin in Phoenix

This deal, which appears in the *2003 Daily Bridge Calendar*, was played in the 1998 Life Master Pairs and reported by Eric Kokish and Beverly Kraft.

		♠ 8 5 3		
		♥ 9 8 3 2		
		♦ A 10 9 3		
		♣ A K		
		♠ K 9		
		♥ A Q 10 7 5 4		
		♦ --		
		♣ Q 5 4 3 2		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>		<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			Pass	1♥
Pass	3♥		Pass	4♣ (1)
Pass	6♥		All Pass	

(1) Natural, slam interest.

West led the Jack of spade and East won his Ace to return a spade. Winning with the King, declarer's only problem lay in trumps. The percentage play for no losers was to cross to dummy and play a heart to his queen, but our declarer crossed to dummy in clubs and led the 10 of diamond, a seemingly irrelevant play. East rose with the King. Declarer ruffed, then laid down the Ace of spade, hoping for the singleton King to appear. What had happened to cause him to play against the odds? Do you think this was a good play?

The key to declarer's play on this thin 6 heart slam was a negative inference he had picked up from the bidding. East, who had passed as dealer, had turned up with the Ace and Queen of spade assuming East's lead of the jack denied the queen. Declarer's clever discovery play in diamonds revealed that East also held the King. If East had started with the King of heart in addition to the A Q of spade and the King of diamond, he would have had 12 good-looking points and would surely have opened the bidding. That meant West had to have the King, so declarer's only chance was that West's King was singleton. His detective work was rewarded when the ace duly felled the King. He drew trumps and claimed. What an easy game!