

**Save the King
By Roger Lord**

**Dealer: South
Vul: East-West**

	North	
	♠ 6	
	♥ QJ853	
	♦ KQ954	
	♣ A7	
		East
		♠ A1054
		♥ 10742
		♦ ---
		♣ QJ843
West		
♠ K8732		
♥ 9		
♦ J1073		
♣ 962		
	South	
	♠ QJ9	
	♥ AK6	
	♦ A862	
	♣ K105	

South	West	North	East
1 Notrump	Pass	2 Diamonds	Pass
2 Hearts	Pass	3 Diamonds	Pass
3 Hearts	Pass	4 Clubs	Pass
4 Diamonds	Pass	4 Notrump	Pass
5 Diamonds	Pass	6 Hearts	All Pass

Contract: Six Hearts

Opening Lead: Club Six

Don't look at the East-West cards. The North-South auction proceeded as above. After South's one notrump, North transferred to hearts, which South accepted. Although some would bypass two hearts and make a "super-acceptance" bid (such as two notrump or a cuebid) to show a maximum and a good trump holding, we prefer to await a fourth trump and an outside doubleton before employing a super-acceptance.

North's three diamonds was natural and forcing to game, probably with slam interest. South bid a calm three hearts, establishing at least an eight-card trump fit. North's four clubs was a slam-try control-showing bid (not Gerber), and South cooperated with a four-diamond control bid. North, who held second-round control of spades, asked for key cards via Roman Key Card Blackwood. South's five diamonds designated either zero or three key cards, obviously three, counting the two aces and the trump (heart) king. North placed the contract at six hearts, which would achieve a maximum matchpoint score if made. A lower-scoring six diamond contract would have been slightly safer.

Play six hearts with the club six opening lead.

Did we hear you ask, "What's the problem?" This deal was presented to some experienced players "on paper," and quite a few failed to make the contract.

After you draw trumps (they are 1-4), you will go after diamonds. There is no problem bringing in the suit if it breaks 2-2, 3-1 or 1-3. If all four diamonds are with RHO, you'll have to lose a diamond trick (and, of course, a spade trick, for down one). Only if diamonds are all with West does the diamond play matter. In that case, to bring in the suit, you must start with the ace and, when RHO shows out, lead a diamond towards dummy and cover West's honor. Then, you'll need to find an entry to your hand to repeat the diamond finesse.

The catch is that you'll have to figure this out before you call a card from dummy at trick one! If you carelessly let the club ride to your hand, later you will regret the loss of the club king as a reentry to your hand to take the second diamond finesse. Planning ahead, you must win trick one with dummy's club ace and save the king.

Has anyone noticed that six hearts would be set with a diamond ruff and a spade trick? East could have doubled six hearts, a "Lightner" double, alerting partner to an unusual lead, in this case North's side suit. Then, imagine what might happen if South realizes that his position is hopeless and desperately escapes to six notrump. Whether six notrump is doubled or undoubled, would West find a spade lead away from the king? If not, 12 tricks are there.