

Avoiding the need for a Finesse

by Brian Senior

Gad Chadha gave me this hand from Saturday's Stratified Swiss Pairs.

Board 40. Dealer West. None Vul.

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

Gad was declarer in 6♥ on the lead of a diamond. The hearts can be picked up for one loser whenever they are three-two, while a four-one split requires that declarer play the right hand for the length. Gad duly got over the first hurdle when he led a low heart away from the ace. East played low so the queen won, and Gad, not wishing to commit himself in spades just yet, ruffed a diamond to get back to the North hand for a second low heart play.

East thought for a bit then ducked again, and Gad won the jack. He continued by cashing the ace and king of clubs then the ace and king of diamonds, throwing a club and a spade from the North hand. Now he found an elegant ending to avoid the need for the spade finesse. He led a spade to the king then a spade back towards the ace. East was powerless. If he ruffed, South would play low, while if he discarded South would score the ace. Either way, declarer would have 12 tricks without having taken either black-suit finesse. Nicely played.