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Bridge Tips Tannah Hirsch

12/17/2009 East-West vulnerable. East deals.

	NORTH J 6 A J 10 8 3 Q 6 2 K J 8	
WEST 5 4 3 2 Q 5 J 10 9 7 5 3 2		EAST K Q 10 8 7 K 9 6 2 K 9 7 A
	SOUTH A 9 7 4 A 10 8 5 4 3 Q 6 4	

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
2 Diamond 3 Diamond	Pass 3 Spade	2 Heart 4 Diamond	1 Spade Pass All Pass

Opening lead: Two of

The most difficult facet of bridge to master is defense. On this deal from an international tournament in Europe, one of the world's great players, Norway's Geir Helgemo, held the East cards.

It is seldom wise to pass when you have four-card support for partner's major suit. Here, however, at adverse vulnerability West decided to stay out of the auction initially, but atoned for it by bidding later and pushing North-South to an uncomfortable level.

West led a spade to the six, ten and ace. With at least one loser in each suit, declarer elected to exit with a spade to the knave and the queen. With hardly a moment's thought, Helgemo found the excellent defense of cashing the ace of clubs and shifting to the king of hearts!

Declarer won in dummy with the ace and countered by leading the queen of diamonds, capturing East's king with the ace and pinning West's jack. Now declarer needed another entry to take the marked finesse for the nine of diamonds. In desperation he tried a club, but East ruffed for down one.

Notice that it does not help declarer to refuse to capture the king of hearts. East will simply continue with another heart and declarer will be faced with the same problem since he will need two entries for diamond finesses.

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