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Bridge Tips Tannah Hirsch

17th April 2010 Neither vulnerable. South deals.

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

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
		1 NT	Pass
3 NT	All Pass		

Opening lead: Queen of ♠

Playing bridge by rote is hardly the way to success. Those wise saws are only generalities. They fit most circumstances, but not all. Here's a case in point.

The auction was simple enough. South had a maximum no trump and North had an easy raise to game. West led the queen of spades. Declarer could count eight fast tricks and, as long as one top heart was with East, a ninth trick would be easy to establish.

Declarer ducked the opening spade lead in both hands and won the continuation perforce in dummy. Following a "second hand low" play by East on the heart lead from dummy, South's queen was taken by West with the king. Declarer's remaining spade stopper was removed.

Declarer crossed to the table with the king of clubs to lead another heart. East took his ace but had no fast entry to the West hand, and declarer coasted home.

See the difference if East had not been lulled into playing second hand low on the first heart lead from dummy. He wins the ace and returns a spade to remove declarer's last stopper and sooner or later West must gain the lead in hearts to cash the setting tricks in spades.

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