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Bridge Tips Tannah Hirsch

12/18/2009 Both vulnerable. South deals

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

SOUTH 1 Club 1 NT	WEST Pass Pass	NORTH 1 Diamond 3 NT	EAST Pass All Pass
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OPENING LEAD:

Opening lead: Jack of

How well do computers play bridge? Consider this deal from the finals of the World Computer Championships a few years ago. "Sitting" South was Qplus, a German entry, and GIB from the United States was defending. At the other "table," the seating was reversed.

Since Qplus played a strong club system, the opening bid and one-no-trump rebid showed 17-20 points, theoretically balanced. Both computers reached three no trump although five diamonds is clearly superior.

At both tables, the computer led the jack of clubs. Both declarers won and cashed out the diamond suit. The German program discarded one card in each major and two clubs. Both computers then took the heart finesse. After winning the king of hearts, the German computer cashed three club tricks, but GIB had the rest.

At the other table, GIB cleverly discarded one heart and two spades and just one club. When Qplus then lost the heart finesse, GIB was able to score four club tricks for a one-trick set.

We considered trading in our partner for a computer, but the minuses clearly outweighed the pluses. How can you possibly congratulate a machine for a hand well played?

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