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Bridge Tips Tannah Hirsch

12/22/2009 North-South vulnerable. West deals.

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

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|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| WEST 1 Diamond Pass | NORTH Pass 3 NT | EAST1 Heart All Pass | SOUTH 1 NT |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|---------------|

Opening lead: Five of

Every bridge player is eager to pick up as strong a hand as possible. However, there are times when having too many high cards can be an embarrassment! Consider this deal from a rubber bridge game.

Purists might raise their eyebrows at East's response with only three high-card points. However, experience has shown that it pays to respond to partner's minor-suit opening bid with a five-card major, even on sub-minimum holdings. North's optimistic raise to three no trump was based on the knowledge that partner, vulnerable, would not enter a live auction against two opponents who have not yet limited their holdings without a very good, balanced hand.

West was in the unusual position of being end played at trick one, and declarer made the most of that. West's diamond lead was taken in the closed hand with the nine and the king was led. West did well to refuse to win that trick, but the respite was brief. Declarer found a brilliant riposte by exiting with the queen of spades!

In with the king, West had no good return. A spade would give declarer a third trick in that suit — and all sorts of ways to come to the fulfilling trick. The ace of diamonds and another establishes an entry to dummy to work on three heart tricks. And a club simply postpones another endplay for a trick.

To appreciate the beauty of declarer's play to the third trick, lay out the cards and see whether you can defeat three no trump. We could not!

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