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Bridge Tips Tannah Hirsch

12/29/2009 Both vulnerable. East deals.

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

EAST 3 Club Pass	SOUTH 3 Diamond 4 Heart	WEST 3 Spade All Pass	NORTH 4 Club
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Opening lead: Queen of

The importance of an overtrick at duplicate pairs cannot be stressed too highly. Sometimes, it can be achieved by skill; often, it is fortuitous. On this deal, first-round actions by East and South determined the outcome.

We do not favor a first-round pre-empt by East at this vulnerability, and we would prefer a takeout double by South to the three-diamond overcall – the hand is suitable for playing in any one of the unbid suits – even on a 4-3 spade fit. Rather than overcall in hearts, North cue-bid clubs and South became declarer at four hearts.

West led a club, taken by the ace. Trumps were drawn in two rounds, ending in dummy, and declarer took a winning diamond finesse. A trump to the table enabled declarer to repeat the finesse, and declarer cashed out the diamonds, discarding a spade from the table. Declarer then conceded two spade tricks to end up with an overtrick.

Where East passed, North became declarer at four hearts. East led his singleton spade and the defenders took two spades and a ruff to hold declarer to his contract. Since North-South had little to do with this result, we cannot help feeling that East was justifiably punished for his pre-empt.

e-mail: gorenbridge@aol.com