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Bridge Tips Tannah Hirsch

4<sup>th</sup> March 2010 Neither vulnerable. North deals.

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

<b>SOUTH</b>	<b>WEST</b>	<b>NORTH</b>	<b>EAST</b>
1 Diamond 2 NT	Pass Pass	Pass 1 Heart 3 NT	Pass Pass All Pass

Opening lead: Five of

Cover the East and West cards and decide: How would you, South, play three no trump after the lead of the five of clubs?

The auction is routine these days. South's second-round jump showed a balanced 18-19 points, three clubs was a check-back to see whether South had three-card support for hearts and three no trump ended the auction.

When dummy appears after the opening lead, you can count eight winners – two each in spades and hearts, three diamonds and one club. There are several chances for a ninth trick – a 4-4 split in clubs, a 3-3 distribution in diamonds or the spade finesse. How can you combine as many chances as possible?

First, return a club immediately. The opponents are likely to take their tricks in the suit. Now, if the clubs are 5-3, you still have two shots at the contract. When next you get in, play off the top diamonds. If they are 3-3, you have nine tricks; if not, you can still fall back on the spade finesse.

What if clubs are 4-4? The defenders can take only three tricks. Take the spade finesse first. If it loses you will still have time to play for a 3-3 split in either diamonds or spades to allow you to get home. Well done!

e-mail: [gorenbridge@aol.c](mailto:gorenbridge@aol.c)

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