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Bridge Tips Tannah Hirsch

10th August 2010 Both vulnerable. South deals.

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

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---------|----------|---------|------|
| 1 Spade | 2 Heart | 2 Spade | Pass |
| 4 Spade | All Pass | | |

Opening lead: King of ♥

For the upcoming week we will be looking at the art of counting hands and how to amass the clues that guide you. Some are absolute — a player fails to follow on a suit being played. Others are inferential — gathered from the bidding or by a card led which you have no reason to believe is false.

West's hand is borderline for a simple overcall or a weak jump. That should not affect the bidding. North will support spades over either and South has ample to proceed to game.

West started with three rounds of hearts, East first discarding a club on the second, ruffing the third and returning the jack of clubs, won by declarer in hand.

Declarer's problem is simple — he must avoid losing a diamond trick and the finesse can be taken either way. Some will gaze skyward, but assistance is unlikely from that source; others will presume that, since the auction probably marks East with diamond length, the finesse should be taken through that defender.

A far more reliable source is to count the hand. Start by drawing three rounds of trumps and two rounds of clubs, ending in dummy and then ruff a club. Now you will have learned that West started with six hearts for his two-level overcall, three spades and at least three clubs, so therefore can hold at most one diamonds. So claim your contract, announcing that you are going to lead a diamond to the ace and the finesse the jack on the return.

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