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Bridge Tips Tannah Hirsch

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Both vulnerable. South deals.

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

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1D	1H	X	P
2NY	P	3NT	All Pass

Opening lead: King of

A simple count of the tricks will often tell you whether or not you can afford to lose a trick. Reading the opening lead might tell you which hand you must keep off play, and you might be able to plan your play accordingly.

South's jump to two no trump over his partner's negative double showed 18-19 points. North had just enough to raise to game.

West led the king of hearts and declarer could count five fast tricks outside diamonds — two spades one heart and two clubs — and so had to develop four tricks in diamonds while keeping West off lead. There were two lines of play available. All it needs is for a 3-2 diamond break (or a 4-1 split with the length in the East hand).

Once the problem has been isolated, the solution is a matter of technique. Hold up the ace of hearts to the third round and then lead the jack of diamonds. If West does not cover run it. If it loses, win any return and revert to diamonds, leading low to the ace and back to the king.

If West covers the jack of diamonds with the queen, win with the ace and continue with a diamond to the king. That guarantees the contract if East holds the ten of diamonds or if West has the doubleton ten.

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