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 Bridge Tips Tannah Hirsch

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Both vulnerable. South deals

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

North	East	South	West
--	--	2 NT	Pass
3 NT	All Pass		

Opening lead: Six of ♥

The defenders have ways to convey their length in a suit to partner. However, that information is available to declarer as well! Consider this deal.

North-South reached three no trump on a standard auction. West, by agreement lead a fourth-best heart, East won with the ace and returned the jack, and declarer was faced with a dilemma. With East-West were playing fourth-best leads, declarer's only hope of not being defeated before he could get started winning tricks was to play low if West started with six hearts, or to cover if West had started with a five-card suit and hope East's remaining heart was the ten. Was there any way to tell?

If the defenders were playing fourth-best opening leads, deduct the spot-card led from 11 to discover how many cards higher than the card led are in the remaining hands. Here the number is five, and they are all accounted for, so West must have the ten of hearts. The only hope is for declarer to play low, and West started with six cards and cannot afford to overtake.

After winning the second heart, East shifted to the queen of spades. Declarer won and cashed the ace and king of diamonds, and when East sluffed a spade West was marked with six hearts and four diamonds. Declarer completed the count by cashing his remaining spade winner. When West followed suit, 12 of his cards were known so he held just one club. Declarer crossed to dummy with the queen of clubs and, when neither the jack nor nine appeared, led the ten of clubs, covered by the jack and taken with the ace. Declarer crossed back to the table with the queen of diamonds and led a club for the marked finesse with the eight – nine tricks bid and made!

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