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Bridge Tips Tannah Hirsch

24th August 2010 Both vulnerable. South deals.

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

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
2 NT	Pass	3 Heart	Pass
3 Spade	Pass	3 NT	All Pass

Opening lead: ?

Look at the West hand only. Against three no trump, what would you lead? North's transfer showed five spades and a balanced hand, with enough values for game or more.

Change one of West's diamonds to a major-suit card, and the queen of clubs would be everyone's pick. Not only is it safer, but also you have a better chance of developing two tricks in clubs than diamonds. With the fifth diamond, however, the picture is different. Odds are that the diamond suit will produce anywhere from three to five tricks, so a low diamond is the automatic choice.

This hand illustrates the difference. Suppose West were to lead a club. Declarer would win and take the spade finesse, losing to East. Regardless of how the defenders continue, declarer is assured of four spade tricks, three hearts and two clubs.

A diamond lead is another story. Declarer wins the first trick cheaply and takes the losing spade finesse. A diamond back assures the defenders of four diamond tricks to go with the king of spades — down one.

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