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Bridge Tips Tannah Hirsch

8th Jan 2010 North-South vulnerable. South deals.

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

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

Opening lead: Ten of ♠

Tempo is associated more with chess than bridge. But there is no denying its importance over the green baize.

Note that North and South bid the same three strains at the two- and three-levels, with the bidders switched. The first three bids showed a strong, balanced hand around a waiting bid. The next three inquired about major suits, denied holding one and settled in the notrump game.

Had the four top honors in spades produced more than two tricks, it would simply have been a matter of how many overtricks the deal would produce. But the mirror holding in that suit and the fact that the opening lead reduced South to one stopper in spades meant that the diamond suit could no longer be set up as the source of the two tricks declarer had to develop to land the game.

Since hearts had the possibility of providing an extra trick, South immediately cashed the top honors in the suit, to no avail. Now those tricks had to come from clubs, and that was no easy task. For example, suppose declarer were to lead a low club to the jack. If the defenders refuse to win the king, one additional trick in clubs is all that can be developed as the cards lie.

The best chance to set up two extra tricks in the suit is to find West with the ten of clubs and East with the king. At trick five, declarer should lead a low club and finesse dummy's eight! With the cards as in the diagram, the defenders cannot prevent declarer from collecting three tricks in the suit since, if East now holds up the king, declarer can continue by running the queen for a simple finesse.

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