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Bridge column by Tanna Hirsch

21st September 2011

Dealer : South Vul : E-W	NORTH ♠ K Q 4 ♥ J 9 ♦ K Q 6 4 ♣ 7 5 4 2	
WEST ♠ J 10 9 8 3 ♥ A K 6 ♦ 9 ♣ K 10 9 3		EAST ♠ 7 5 2 ♥ 8 7 5 2 ♦ J 10 8 5 3 ♣ 6
	SOUTH ♠ A 6 ♥ Q 10 4 3 ♦ A 7 2 ♣ A Q J 8	

South	West	North	East
1 NT	Pass	3 NT	All Pass

Opening lead: Jack of ♠

After a snowstorm, when the whole landscape is white, there are times when you lack depth perception.

A similar phenomenon occurs at the bridge table, when it appears that tricks are plentiful.

With a balanced 11 points and no four-card or longer major facing a partner who opened one no trump, the raise to game is obvious. Making nine tricks seemed like child's play.

Declarer won the spade opening lead in hand, crossed to the queen of diamonds and led a club to the jack.

West grabbed the king and persevered with spades, taken in dummy.

When East failed to follow to the second club, declarer belatedly discovered there were only eight tricks available unless diamonds broke evenly. When that proved not to be the case, declarer had to settle for down one.

The lie of the cards was most unfortunate, but there were nine tricks there for the taking.

After winning the opening lead, declarer should immediately go after hearts, and declarer is a tempo ahead of the defense.

The defenders have only two heart stoppers, and declarer still has spades doubly stopped.

South has the time and the entries to set up and cash two heart tricks before the defenders can run spades.

That gives declarer nine tricks — three spades, two hearts, three diamonds and one club.