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**Bridge Tips** Tannah Hirsch

**30<sup>th</sup> September 2010 Both vulnerable. South deals.**

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

North	East	South	West
		1 Diamond	Pass
1 Heart	Pass	2 NT	Pass
3 NT	All Pass		

**Opening lead:** Four of ♠

Study the four hands shown. Would you rather play or defend three no trump after the lead of a low spade?

The auction was routine. South showed a balanced hand of 18-19 points and North had just enough to proceed to game.

Suppose you elect to declare. West leads the four of spades, declarer calls for the table's jack, East covers and declarer ducks, and holds up the ace again when East continues with the nine. Declarer wins the third round and tries the ace, king and another diamond. Unfortunately, West wins the trick and cashes two more spades — down one.

However, that does not mean that you should elect to defend. Suppose that South, after cashing the ace of diamonds, continues with a low diamond. Now East must win and, since the defender has no more spades, you can capture any return and cash out for nine tricks.

Before changing your mind, however, East can counter this effort by jettisoning the queen of diamonds under the ace. Now there was no way to avoid giving the lead to West if you try to establish the suit — down one.

Despite this, you should elect to declare. After winning the ace of spades, cross to the king of hearts and lead a diamond. When East follows low, win the ace, return to dummy with the king of clubs and lead another diamond. You win with the king if East follows low, or duck if East produces the queen. Now you have nine tricks no matter how the play proceeds.

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