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Bridge Tips Tannah Hirsch

12/15/2009 Both vulnerable. South deals.

	NORTH K 6 5 3 A 4 2 8 7 6 5 4 2 Void	
WEST 10 9 8 4 2 9 6 K 8 6 5 4 2		EAST Q J 7 J 10 8 3 J 10 9 3 7 3
	SOUTH A K Q 7 5 A Q A K Q J 10 9	

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
2 Club	Pass	2 Diamond	Pass
3 Club	Pass	3 Diamond	Pass
4 NT	Pass	5 Diamond	Pass
5 NT	Pass	6 Diamond	Pass
7 NT	All Pass		

Opening lead: Ten of

Does the fact that you chose a 35.6 percent chance of making your contract when there was a 39.5 percent line available bother you, or does the question make your hair stand up straight? If so, you might enjoy a new book, *Expert Bridge Simplified: Arithmetic Shortcuts for Declarer* (416 pp., paperback, available from Bridge World Books, 800-366-1939, \$23.95 plus shipping). Written by "The Bridge World" editor Jeff Rubens, it downplays complicated or exact computations in favor of simpler methods. This deal is an example.

After a simple auction, West leads the ten of spades against the no-trump grand slam. It seems that declarer must choose between a successful diamond finesse or a 3-3 heart split. But, as the author points out, technique trumps arithmetic.

South can take advantage of both possibilities. He should take the ace of spades, six clubs and three rounds of hearts, ending in dummy. If hearts break 3-3, declarer throws the queen of diamonds on the king of spades. Otherwise, he discards his last heart on the king of spades and tries his luck in diamonds. If East guards hearts, that defender must keep a heart as one of his last two cards, so in the ending declarer has nothing to gain by finessing in diamonds – he must hope that the king will drop.

The book is a great Christmas gift, but get a copy for yourself as well – you will need it to keep up with the friends to whom you send gift copies!

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