

THINKING BRIDGE by EDDIE KANTAR 5

Dir: East	♠ 5 4		
Vul: N-S	♥ 9 5		
	♦ Q J 10 8 6 4		
	♣ A K J		
♠ Q 10 8 6 3		♠ J 9 2	
♥ K 10 8 3		♥ A J 7 2	
♦ A 3		♦ 7 2	
♣ 7 6		♣ 5 4 3 2	
	♠ A K 7		
	♥ Q 6 2		
	♦ K 9 5		
	♣ Q 10 9 8		

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♣
1♣	2♦	2♣	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Opening lead: ♣6.

Bidding commentary: As East, you have a borderline raise to 2♠. As North, your 2♦ bid in competition shows 10+ HCP and is not a game-force, but your trick-taking potential is enough to raise to 3NT after partner's non-forcing 2NT bid (13-14 HCP).

Play commentary: As South, take the first trick with the ♠K, not the ace. West knows you have the ♠A K from East's play of the ♠J, but East can't be sure what's going if you win the king. East may think you have K-Q-x or K-x-x. It doesn't matter on this deal, but if you win the ♠A, East may smell a rat. If your only stopper is the ace, why no holdup play?

Bottom line: With an A-K stopper at notrump, take the first trick with the king. In a suit contract, try the ace.

Defensive commentary: As West, after winning the ♦A, you can count declarer for at least nine tricks outside of hearts: five diamonds, two spades and two clubs, minimum. To entertain any hope of defeating the contract, shift to a low heart (the 3) looking for four heart tricks.

Defensive commentary #2: As East, when partner shifts to a low heart, showing strength, win the ♥A, return the ♥2 and rattle off four heart tricks. Down one. If West had wanted a spade return, he would have shifted to a high heart, showing weakness.