

# THINKING BRIDGE

By Eddie Kantar

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Here are more **card combination tips**.

The **bidding** can assist you in your card combination play.

♠K J 3 2  
♠A 6 5 4

The normal play for four tricks is to lead the ace and low to the jack, needing to find West with Q-x(x). However, if the bidding has told you that East must have the queen, play the ace and low to the king, hoping East has Q-x.

**The count.** Having the count on a suit frequently alters the percentage play.

♠Q 10 3 2  
♠A K 6

The percentage play for four spade tricks is to play the ace and the king and low to the queen. However, if the count tells you that West started with four spades, play the ace-king and low to the 10. If the count tells you that East has four spades, pray that West has J-x!

**Avoidance.**

♠A 10 5 4  
♠K J 7 6 2

In isolation, the best play for five spade tricks is the ace then the king, but there are variables, one of which is an avoidance play. It might be worth a possible trick to make sure a particular opponent, called the "danger hand," does not get the lead. There are many good reasons to keep the danger hand off lead, like leading through an unprotected king. The trick to keeping the danger from getting in is to make sure the danger hand plays second to the finesse trick, not last. If West is the danger hand, play the king and low to the 10 finessing into East. If East is the danger hand, play the ace and low to the jack finessing into West. In both cases the danger hand plays second to the trick, the non-danger hand, last.

Now here's your first lesson.

Dir: North Vul: E-W	NORTH ♠ K Q 10 7 3 ♥ K Q 5 4 ♦ 9 6 ♣ K 3		West	North	East	South
			----	1 Spade	1 NT	Pass
			3 NT	All Pass		
WEST ♠ 9 8 2 ♥ 6 3 2 ♦ K 10 ♣ A Q 9 8 7		EAST ♠ A 6 5 4 ♥ A J 10 ♦ A Q J ♣ J 10 4	Opening Lead = ♠ J			
	SOUTH ♠ J ♥ 9 8 7 ♦ 8 7 5 4 3 2 ♣ 6 5 2					

**Bidding commentary:** East's 1NT overcall shows the same strength as an opening 1NT.

**Lead commentary:** Keep peace in the family and lead partner's suit particularly with a hopeless hand.

**Defensive commentary:** This contract is decided at trick one! If you signal with the seven telling your partner to continue with a spade, he may want to, but not on this hand. Once a second spade is not played, declarer has time to set up the clubs and easily come to nine tricks.

However, your spade spots are strong enough (see the 9 8 in dummy?) to overtake the jack with the queen and continue with a high spades until you drive out the ace. Now when you get in with the ♣ K you will have established four spade tricks. That ♠7 is the best card in your hand! It tops declarer's 6 and allows you to score four spade tricks plus the ♠K. Don't signal when you can overtake!