

THINKING BRIDGE -- By Eddie Kantar
(From - NABC Fall 2004 - Orlando - Florida 3)

Dir: North Vul: None	NORTH ♠ 9 8 2 ♥ A 9 ♦ K Q 10 5 2 ♣ A 9 8		West	North	East	South
				1 Diamond	1 Spade	X
			Pass	2 Diamond	Pass	3 NY
			All Pass			
WEST ♠ 10 ♥ 10 6 5 4 3 ♦ 8 7 3 ♣ 7 5 4 2		EAST ♠ K Q J 7 3 ♥ J 2 ♦ A 6 4 ♣ Q 10 6	Opening Lead = West leads the ♠10. Plan your defense as East.			
	SOUTH ♠ A 6 5 4 ♥ K Q 8 7 ♦ J 9 K J 3♣					

Bidding commentary: .

The bidding follows routine lines. South's double of the 1♠ overcall shows at least four hearts and seven or more high-card points. North rebids as if South had responded 1♥. North would normally rebid 1NT but when East has overcalled spades, North should have a spade stopper to make that bid. After the 2♦ rebid, South makes a normal 3NT rebid. A rebid of 2NT would not be forcing. The one who knows, goes.

Play commentary:

When partner leads an honor card (the ♠10, in this case), third hand has three options: (a) encourage, (b) discourage, (c) overtake. Playing standard attitude signals, the ♠2 would be low and discouraging; the ♠7, an relatively high spot card, would be encouraging. You should overtake with the lower equal, the ♠J, when you want the suit continued and have the necessary spot cards – just in case partner has led a singleton honor. (When partner leads the 10 and the 9 is in dummy, partner must have led a singleton or from a doubleton. With 10-x-x, the standard lead is low.)

In this case, the ♠7 is an enormous card with the 9-8-2 in dummy. You can see (hopefully) that if the ♠J is played at trick one, the queen and king will later squash the 8 and 9 – and the 7 will be high.

In other words, you can afford to overtake and should overtake to ensure that spades are played until the ace is driven out. Once it is driven out, you have the ♦A as an entry and are sure to take four spades and the ♦A.

If you do not overtake, declarer can play low. Your partner can search high and low for another spade to lead but he won't find one. Once partner has to lead another suit, declarer has enough time to drive out the ♦A while still clutching the ♠A. He makes 11 tricks instead of eight.

Point to remember: When you are third hand and can afford to overtake partner's honor card lead (without costing your side a trick) and you want the suit continued, overtake. Partner may have a singleton honor. Good players never signal encouragement when they can afford to overtake.