

THINKING BRIDGE

By Eddie Kantar

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Not much time left at this tournament. I hope you have been paying close attention to these lessons about card combinations. This is information that will help you take more tricks - as declarer and on defense.

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

Bidding commentary: Your jump to 3NT shows an opening bid, usually 12-16 high-card points, with at least one stop in the opponent's suit.

Play commentary: When they are in the bidding, it really helps to start by adding your HCP to partner's (26) telling you how many they have (14). As the opening bidder figures to have at least 12, East must be looking at a queen at most. East cannot have two jacks. Why? Because dummy has two jacks and West must have the ♠J.

The critical heart holdings in the West hand are the singleton and doubleton king. If West has three hearts to the king, you cannot go wrong no matter which heart you lead, and if West has four to the king, you cannot go right as long as West covers the queen. The way to cater to the stiff king or the doubleton king is to start by leading a low heart, not the queen!

If the king appears you have four heart tricks and if it does not stick in the 10 and duck a club, which can't hurt but might work out great if West has K-Q doubleton. Say nothing exciting happens in clubs, such as West winning the low club with a high honor, and they knock out your ♠A. Play a club to the ace and continue with a low heart the second time. If the king appears, win the ace, cross back to the queen and then cross to the dummy's ♦K, to cash the ♥J, your ninth trick. Play hearts the same if the suit looked like J-x-x facing A-Q-10-x.