

THINKING BRIDGE -- By **Eddie Kantar**
(From - NABC -SUMMER - 2014 - LAS VAGAS 3)

Dir: East Vul: Both	NORTH ♠ AKQ98 ♥ QJ10 ♦ Q105 ♣ AJ		West	North	East	South
			--	--	1 Club	Pass
			Pass	X	Pass	1 Spade
			Pass	3 Spade	Pass	4 Spade
			All Pass			
WEST ♠ 1072 ♥ 9854 ♦ 876 ♣ 984		EAST ♠ 3 ♥ AK6 ♦ AJ9 ♣ 1076532	Opening Lead = ♣4			
	SOUTH ♠ J654 ♥ 732 ♦ K432 ♣ KQ					

Bidding commentary: With 9-11 high-card points, the usual bid in response to a takeout double is a jump in your suit (2♠ in this case). However, North has made a balancing takeout double, which can be made with two or three fewer HCP than normal. Responder therefore needs two or three more HCP than normal to jump. After the 1♠ response, North has enough (barely) to jump to 3♠. The North hand is not as good as it looks. It is too balanced and with a likely wasted ♣J.

Lead commentary: When leading partner's unsupported suit, start with a low card from any three cards that don't include the ace or a two- or three-card honor sequence. Leading high shows shortness or the top of an honor sequence. Lead the jack from the J-10-x even if you have not supported. If you have supported the suit you are leading, start with a high card from three low cards.

Play commentary: You have two sure heart losers plus the ♦A and it looks like the contract depends upon finding the ♦J with West. Or does it? As ever, use the bidding to guide you in the play.

You and partner have 28 HCP between the two hands, leaving the opponents with 12. East has opened the bidding, which normally shows 12 or more HCP. East is a heavy favorite to have the ♦J. Can you do anything about it? Yes. After winning the first trick in either hand, draw trumps, cash a second club, stripping that suit, and exit with a heart.

Defensive commentary: Assuming South has drawn trumps and stripped the clubs and has exited a heart, as East win the ♥K, cash the ♥A and exit a heart, hoping to get two diamond tricks.

Play commentary: Now that hearts have been stripped, your only problem is how to wrest that ♦J from East. Here's how: Lead the ♦Q from dummy. East must win. Now East must lead away from his assumed ♦J or give you a ruffsluff with a club return.

By paying attention to the bidding, you have come up with a nice throw-in play after eliminating the other suits. And remember, count the number of points you and partner have to begin with. It helps you place the remaining HCP in the opponent's hand(s) if they have done any bidding.

