

THINKING BRIDGE

By Eddie Kantar

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Dir: South Vul: E-W	NORTH		West	North	East	South
	♠ 1072		--	--	--	2 Club
	♥ 753		Pass	2 Diamond	Pass	2 Spade
	♦ 1032		Pass	3 Club	Pass	3 Diamond
	♣ 10643		Pass	4 Spade	All Pass	
WEST		EAST	Opening Lead = ♥K.			
♠ 53		♠ 9864				
♥ KQ106		♥ AJ92				
♦ 98654		♦ 7				
♣ J985		♣ 72				
	SOUTH					
	♠ AKQJ					
	♥ 84					
	♦ AKQJ					
	♣ AKQ					

Bidding commentary: As South, how do you like your hand? As North, how do you like yours? In any case, 2♣ is strong and artificial and 2♦ is “waiting,” meaning North has a very weak hand or a middling hand without a good suit. In this case, it’s waiting for the roof to cave in.

The 2♠ rebid is supposed to show five spades, but South’s choices are limited because of the heart weakness. 3♣ was a “second negative,” denying any ace or king or even as much as two queens. Many use 2♥ directly as a second or “double” negative.

Defensive commentary: With East signaling encouragement, the defenders start by playing three rounds of hearts.

Play commentary: As South, rather than shortening your trump holding, which could lead to trouble if one defender has four spades, your best play is to discard a winning club or diamond, though you may hate to do it. Once you do that, you have the rest of the tricks. If a fourth heart is played, ruff with dummy’s ♠10, draw trumps and take the rest of the tricks. If a fourth heart is not played, win the return, draw trumps and claim.

Notice that had you ruffed the third heart and played three rounds of trumps, you would have gone down. The player who started with four trumps would sooner or later ruff a minor-suit winner and cash a heart to defeat the contract.

One trick to playing a 4-3 trump fit is to avoid ruffing on the four-card side if you can help it. In many cases, you can discard a loser rather than ruffing. In this case, you have to discard a winner!

Notice that after making your discard, you and dummy are now void in hearts, the “force suit.” Translation: if they continue with a fourth heart, you can ruff it on the short side, retaining the four high trumps in your hand so you can draw trumps in safety.

