

THINKING BRIDGE - - By Eddie Kantar

(From - NABC -SPRING - 2014 - DALLAS-TEXAS - 4)

Dir: West Vul: Both	NORTH ♠ 7 ♥ Q105 ♦ K75 ♣ KQJ1097		West	North	East	South
			2 Spade	3 Club	Pass	3 NT
			All Pass			
WEST ♠ QJ10643 ♥ 863 ♦ AJ8 ♣ 8		EAST ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣	Opening Lead = ♠Q			
	SOUTH ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣					

As West, you lead the ♠Q. Partner plays the ♠2 (discouraging) and declarer wins the king. At trick two, declarer tries a low diamond from hand.

Plan your defense.

From the ♠2, discouraging, you can infer that declarer has the ♠A. From the lead of a low diamond at trick two you can infer that declarer has the ♣A. If declarer didn't have the ♣A, his first play would have been a club to drive out the ace.

If declarer has the ♣A and the ♠A, he has eight black-suit tricks and if he has the ♦Q (likely), you are letting declarer steal a ninth trick from right under your nose if you play low. You should rise with the ♦A and shift to a heart. You are hoping, praying that partner has the ♥A K J x. A good partner will have those cards.

The full deal:

Dir: West Vul: Both	NORTH ♠ 7 ♥ Q105 ♦ K75 ♣ KQJ1097		WEST	EAST
			♠ QJ10643 ♥ 863 ♦ AJ8 ♣ 8	♠ 82 ♥ AKJ7 ♦ 1063 ♣ 6432
	SOUTH ♠ AK95 ♥ 942 ♦ Q942 ♣ A5			

Points of interest (other than the fact that you have a good partner):

Aside from the ♣A inference, notice that declarer tries to steal a ninth trick early. If you run the clubs first, they can signal each other, etc. East discourages in spades with a low doubleton.

This is notrump, not a suit contract. When partner leads an honor against notrump and dummy has low cards, signal encouragement only if you have an honor as well.

Notice that declarer takes the first trick with the ♠K holding the A-K. There are two reasons why this is the right play:

- (1) If declarer wins the first trick with the ace, it is highly suspicious. If that was declarer's only stopper, why didn't he hold up?
- (2) If South wins the ace, East knows that South has the king. If South wins the king, East cannot be sure whether partner has led from a sequence headed by the Q-J or from an A-Q-J combination. This could be crucial.