

## THINKING BRIDGE by EDDIE KANTAR 8

Dir: North Vul: E-W	♠ A J 10 6 ♥ K 2 ♦ 9 5 4 ♣ A K Q J		
♠ K 8 7 5 4 ♥ 8 7 6 ♦ 8 7 3 ♣ 7 5	♠ Q 9 2 ♥ Q J 5 4 3 ♦ K 2 ♣ 8 6 4	♠ 3 ♥ A 10 9 ♦ A Q J 10 6 ♣ 10 9 3 2	
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1♣	1♦	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	INT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	
<b>Opening lead: ♠3.</b>			

**Bidding Commentary:** As North, you are a point shy to jump shift to 2♠ with a balanced hand, and 2NT is out with no diamond stopper. South's 1NT shows 7+ to 10 HCP and at least one diamond stopper – enough for North to bid 3NT.

**Lead commentary:** With three low cards in partner's unsupported suit, lead low to show length. The lead of a high spot card in partner's unsupported suit shows shortness.

**Defensive commentary:** As East, with ♦A Q J 10 6, normal third-

hand play at notrump is the 10 to drive out the king, leaving partner with at least one diamond.

As West, do not cover the ♠Q if it is led. Your length plus the lack of intermediate spot cards dictate playing low.

**Play commentary:** As South, you have no "time" to drive out the ♥A. The opponents will take four diamonds and a heart. Take the spade finesse instead – and beware: This spade layout is tricky. Start with the 9, playing the 6 from dummy. After the 9 holds, continue with the queen, and finally low to the jack. If you start with the queen and West plays low, you will wind up in dummy the next time you lead the suit with no entry back to your hand to repeat the finesse. Play the same with J-9-x facing A-Q-10-x. Start with the 9, not the jack.

Note that on this deal it does not work to play the ♠Q and, when West plays low, unblock the jack or 10. When you lead the 9 next, West will cover with the king and eventually score the ♠8 or ♠7. You will be limited to three spade tricks and will be down one.