

THINKING BRIDGE

By Eddie Kantar

(From - NABC - FALL 2009-SAN DIEGO 4)

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

Defensive commentary: West starts with three rounds of hearts.

Play commentary: As South, before playing to the first trick, count your sure tricks (or losers) and look over your own hand and dummy suit by suit to see if there are any problems. And if you find one (like clubs being blocked), ask yourself if anything can be done. You need a dummy entry to use the clubs after you unblock the A. You have one. See it? If you ruff the third heart high (first key play), cash the A and lead a low spade to the 7 (second key play) you force a dummy entry with the ♠8. Are you a player or what? East wins the ♠9 and fires the J through you're A-Q. Too late. You win the A, cross to the ♠8 and discard two losing diamonds on two winning clubs. Don't look now, but you have the rest of the tricks. And, yes, there is a defense that defeats this contract! After cashing two hearts, West has to shift to a spade and East has to play low, killing dummy's late spade entry.

Do not hold your breath.

Bidding commentary: 2 is the standard tool for very strong opening hands. 2 is often played as a waiting response to see what opener has in mind. Opener usually rebids 2NT to show 22-24 high-card points, balanced. If so, responses are similar to a 2NT opening bid. South's 2♠ rebid suggests an unbalanced hand with long spades. 2NT shows a scattering of strength and 3♠ is looking for more information. 4 shows where North's strength lies and South signs off in 4♠ needing red-suit strength, not club strength, for slam.

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