

THINKING BRIDGE

By Eddie Kantar

(From - NABC -FALL 2009 SAN DIEGO 5)

Dlr: South Vul: None	NORTH Q 9 8 8 3 2 K Q Q J 10 9 5		West	North	East	South
						1 NT
			Pass	3 NT	All Pass	
WEST K 6 J 10 9 6 A 7 6 8 7 3 2		EAST A J 10 2 7 5 4 J 8 5 3 6 4	Opening Lead = ♥J			
	SOUTH 7 5 4 3 A K Q 10 9 4 2 A K					

Bidding commentary: Although a little “off center,” it may be hard to describe the South hand if it is not opened 1NT. All’s well that ends well. North-South have arrived at the best contract.

Defensive commentary: East plays the ♥4 at trick one, denying a high honor: no encouraging signal, no overtake with honor doubleton, no overtake with K-x-x-(x) or A-x-x-(x) in case partner has led from the A-J-10 or K-J-10. (If the lead of a jack denies a higher honor, South does not overtake with K-x-x-(x), but rather signals encouragement.

Play commentary: As declarer, take the first trick with the ♥Q. Why? West knows you have the ♥Q from East’s discouraging signal and East knows you have the ♥Q from West’s lead of the ♥J. When both opponents know you have a card (♥Q), get rid of it! Treat it as a hot potato, a scalding hot potato.

Defensive commentary: You know declarer has three heart tricks from partner’s negative signal. Once declarer gets to dummy with a diamond, he will have five club tricks plus a diamond for nine tricks. In addition, South is known to have 9 HCP in hearts and 7 HCP in clubs for a total of 16 HCP. Partner must have the ♠A and may well have the ♠J. Grab the ♦A and shift to the ♠K, followed by a another spade. As East, do not signal encouragement with an honor when partner leads the ♠K. You are signaling with the setting trick! After all, if partner has two spades, declarer has four and you definitely need to keep all your high spades to run the suit.