

THINKING BRIDGE -- By Eddie Kantar
(From - NABC -FALL - 2013 - PHOENIX - ARIZONA - 6)

Dir: East Vul: E-W	NORTH ♠ 109 ♥ 97 ♦ KQ65 ♣ AKQJ10		West	North	East	South
			--	--	Pass	1 Doamond
			Pass	2 Club	Pass	2 Diamond
			Pass	4 Diamond	Pass	5 Diamond
			All Pass			
WEST ♠ K843 ♥ Q1085 ♦ 7 ♣ 9432		EAST ♠ AJ62 ♥ A432 ♦ 42 ♣ 765	Opening Lead = ♠ 3			
	SOUTH ♠ Q75 ♥ KJ6 ♦ AJ10983 ♣ 8					

Why 4♦? Playing 2/1, 3♦ would be forcing, but 4♦ is a descriptive slam try showing great clubs and diamonds. All South needs to go along with the ♦A is a major-suit ace and a major-suit king to make slam almost ice cold. Not too much to ask.

With the actual hand South, bids 5♦, though many top players play 4NT by South as natural in this sequence with good reason. Besides, I wanted the contract to end in 5♦ to illustrate a point.

What about missing 3NT? That is definitely a consideration. However, slam seems so likely that it is worth going past 3NT to try for it, particularly if you can get out at 4NT.

What about the lead? If the bidding had gone 1NT - Pass - 3NT, West should lead a heart because a suit with two honor cards is a stronger lead than a suit with only one.

On this bidding, West should lead a spade. Why? Because of the danger of a running club suit, the more aggressive lead is called for.

After he wins the ♠A, East should see that the best chance to defeat this contract is to play West for a major-suit king. Accordingly, East leads the ♥A at trick two, denying the king. West discourages with the ♥5 (East has the 4 3 2) and East gives up on West holding the ♥K and returns a spade for down one.