

THINKING BRIDGE

By Eddie Kantar

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Dir: South South Vul: N-S	NORTH ♠ A 4 3 2 ♥ 8 6 ♦ 7 ♣ J 10 7 5 3 2		West	North	East	South
						1 Diamond
			3 Heart	All Pass		
WEST ♠ J ♥ A Q J 10 9 3 2 ♦ J 6 5 4 ♣ Q		EAST ♠ Q 8 7 6 5 ♥ K ♦ Q 10 9 3 ♣ A 9 4	Opening Lead = ♦7			
	SOUTH ♠ K 10 9 ♥ 7 5 4 ♦ A K 8 2 ♣ K 8 6					

Bidding commentary: North is not strong enough to bid anything intelligent at this level and East is not strong enough to raise to 4♥. West promises about six-plus tricks for the 3♥ bid, and East can only offer two sure tricks in return. It doesn't add up. When partner preempts, add tricks to tricks, not points to points! South has nothing more to say with a balanced minimum.

Defensive commentary: South reads the lead as shortness. Holding ♦7 x x (x), the proper lead is low because diamonds is an unsupported suit. Had North supported diamonds, the proper lead would be the 7 to deny an honor. South cashes the ♦A and ♦K as North discards a discouraging club. At this point South knows, or strongly suspects, that North has the ♠A, given the fact that a non-vulnerable preempt shows a strong suit and little else. If West's distribution is a likely 1-7-4-1, South needs North to underlead the ♠A to be able to give North a second ruff! At trick three, South leads the ♦8, the higher of his two remaining diamonds, a suit-preference card asking North to return the higher-ranking side suit - spades. If South wants a club return, South returns the ♦2. When giving partner a ruff, tell partner which suit to return! Assuming North recognizes the ♦8 as asking for a spade, does South have a singleton spade or the king? If South had a singleton spade, South would have shifted to a spade at trick two to set up a crossruff. It is more likely that South has the ♠K, in which case it may be vital to lead a low spade. After all, if declarer has a singleton spade, North cannot afford to play the ♠A first. If North leads a low spade at trick four, as requested, South sticks up the king and returns a diamond to defeat the contract. Nice defense.