

THINKING BRIDGE

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(From - NABC - Spring 2010 - RENO - NV - (3))

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

Bidding commentary: With 5-4 in the minors along with two doubletons and no slam interest, North treats the hand as balanced and bids accordingly.

Lead commentary: Suits headed by the Q-J-8-x-(x) are not considered sequence suits at notrump, so a fourth-best card is led. To lead a queen at notrump you need a suit headed by the Q-J-10, Q-J-9 or the A-Q-J. At a suit contract the queen is led from any Q-J combination because at a suit contract *two, not three* adjacent honors are considered a sequence.

Play commentary: As South, you have seven top tricks and can easily set up three more in clubs. That is, it would be easy if the opponents couldn't set up their spades first! But they can. Even if the opposing spades are divided 5-4, as evenly as possible, the opponents can set up three spade tricks *before* you can set up your clubs. You can't win the spade-club race. You must look elsewhere for two extra tricks. "Elsewhere" is hearts. You need *three* heart tricks. This means finding East with the king and jack. It's your only chance. Win the spade lead in dummy and lead a heart to the 10. Now open your eyes. Guess what? The 10 has won the trick. Now all you have to do is repeat the heart finesse for nine tricks.

When you have a choice between a low chance play (double heart finesse) or a no-chance play (driving out the A and K), take the low percentage play. Live a little.