

THINKING BRIDGE -- By Eddie Kantar

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

Bidding commentary: 3♦ is a game-forcing splinter jump. It describes a game-forcing spade raise with a singleton diamond. 4♣ is a cuebid, and 4NT was Five Ace Blackwood! Playing this convention, the king of the agreed suit counts as an ace! So there are five aces! The 5♣ response shows one ace (the ♠K), and East bids slam expecting West to have both black kings. If you like this version of Blackwood, you will probably like Key Card Blackwood as well.

In that version both the king and the queen of the agreed suit can be shown or denied.

Defensive commentary: Although a diamond lead would have defeated the contract, a heart lead looks normal.

Play commentary: It looks for all the world as if there is a diamond and a heart loser, but there is a chance! Declarer must hope that the defender with the ♦A has fewer than three hearts. Declarer wins the opening lead, draws trump, strips clubs, cashes a second heart (key play) and exits a diamond, an equal length suit. Sure enough, East, the player with the ♦A, had two hearts and is forced to lead a diamond, allowing declarer to discard his remaining heart while ruffing in dummy.

Holding the A-K-x(x)-(x) opposite three low cards in a side suit in a trump contract does not necessarily mean a loser! If the hand can be stripped and the ace and king cashed before the throw-in, the player being throw in may be void in the A-K suit (East has no more hearts) and be forced to concede a ruff and a sluff. Something to think about.