

THINKING BRIDGE - - By **Eddie Kantar**
 (From - NABC -SUMMER - ATLANTA- 2013 -)

Dir: South Vul: None	NORTH ♠ A 7 5 ♥ K 7 4 ♦ 9 8 4 ♣ Q 7 4 3		West	North	East	South
			--	--	--	1 Spade
			Pass	2 Spade	All Pass	
WEST ♠ J 10 2 ♥ Q 6 5 ♦ K Q 10 5 ♣ J 9 5		EAST ♠ 9 3 ♥ A 10 9 8 ♦ 7 6 2 ♣ A 8 6 2	Opening Lead = ♦K.			
	SOUTH ♠ K Q 8 6 4 ♥ J 3 2 ♦ A J 3 ♣ K 10					

Bidding Commentary: North does best to raise to 2♠ with a flat 9-count. A raise is more encouraging than a 1NT response. Normally, when a five-card suit is supported, the hand can be upgraded. But when the distribution of the hand is 5-3-3-2, forget it.

Defensive commentary: When the king is led from the K-Q-(x) and low cards appear in the dummy, third hand signals encouragement with the jack or ace, but not with a doubleton.

Defensive commentary #2: On defense, when a balanced dummy appears, think “passive.” Lead safe suits, suits that cannot cost a trick. Side-suit tricks cannot get away. Where are they going? When there is no long suit in dummy for declarer to establish, defensive tricks will not vanish. Patience. After the ♦K holds, West does best to shift to a low spade, the safest exit. If East has the ♠Q or ♠K, nothing has been lost. It’s okay even if partner has no honor. Any other switch can (and does) cost a trick.

Play commentary: It is routine to duck the lead of a king holding A-J-x-(x) hoping the suit is continued. This hand is a dogfight to see who can avoid breaking new suits. Declarer has seven top tricks and will probably make eight, but it is not a certainty.