

THINKING BRIDGE - - By **Eddie Kantar - 9**
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Dir: South Vul: None	NORTH ♠ K J 9 5 ♥ K 9 7 5 ♦ K 7 6 4 2 ♣ —		West	North	East	South
			--	--	--	1 Club
			Pass	1 Heart	Pass	1 Spade
			Pass	3 Spade	Pass	4 Spade
			All Pass			
WEST ♠ 6 ♥ Q 10 8 4 ♦ J 10 9 ♣ A Q 10 7 5		EAST ♠ 8 7 3 2 ♥ J 2 ♦ A Q 8 5 3 ♣ 7 4	Opening Lead = ♦J (see lead commentary).			
	SOUTH ♠ A Q 10 4 ♥ A 6 3 ♦ — ♣ K J 9 6 3 2					

Bidding commentary: North is not quite strong enough to bid 1♦ holding five diamonds along with one or two four-card majors (needs at least 11 high-card points). North's leap to 3♠ may seem conservative (some would bid 4♠), but a void in partner's first bid suit is not all it's cracked up to be. If partner's strength is in the void suit, the void is not worth that much. When partner is weak in the void suit, the void is worth its weight in gold.

Lead commentary: The ♦J is certainly tempting. Another possibility is a trump lead holding strong clubs, declarer's first-bid suit. Though singleton trump leads are normally not on the top of the list of recommended opening leads, nothing is etched in stone. As it happens, only a trump lead defeats the contract.

Play commentary: With a void in each hand, a crossruff looms. Declarer can ruff four diamonds in dummy and four clubs in hand for eight trump tricks, and the top two hearts make 10. So what's the problem? The problem is that before launching a straight crossruff, one should cash the necessary number of side-suit winners first. Declarer should cash the ♥A and ♥K early. Why?

Look at the East hand. If a crossruff is started early, East can discard a heart when a third club is ruffed. Now it is impossible to take two heart tricks. Also, when crossruffing, start by ruffing low in each hand, saving the higher trumps for the later ruffs.