

**THINKING BRIDGE** -- By Eddie Kantar  
 (From - NABC -Summer 2012 - Philadelphia -(3) )

Dir: South Vul: None	NORTH ♠ 9 8 ♥ K 8 6 5 ♦ K J 5 4 ♣ 4 3 2		West	North	East	South
			--	--	--	2 NT
			Pass	3 Club	Pass	3 Heart
			Pass	4 Heart	All Pass	
WEST ♠ J 10 7 3 ♥ 10 ♦ 6 4 3 2 ♣ A 9 8 5	15-07-2012	EAST ♠ K 6 5 4 2 ♥ Q 9 7 ♦ 8 7 ♣ Q J 10	Opening Lead = ♠J.			
	SOUTH ♠ A Q ♥ A J 4 3 2 ♦ A Q 9 ♣ K 7 6					

**Bidding commentary:** It pays to open 2NT with a balanced 20-21 count, five-card major notwithstanding. The opening lead should come up to, not through, the strong hand. If South opens 1♥, hears a 1NT response (likely) and raises correctly to 3NT, the strong hand will be the dummy. Seeing the strong hand on the table makes for much more accurate defense.

**Lead commentary:** At a trump contract, a suit headed by two adjacent honors is considered enough of a sequence to justify leading the top honor. At notrump, three adjacent honors (J-10-9), or the third card missing by one (J-10-8) is considered a sequence and the top honor is led. When the third card is missing by more than one place (J-10-7-3), lead fourth best.

**Further lead commentary:** When partner leads a jack against a suit contract, third hand assumes a suit headed by the J-10, or shortness if the 10 is visible. It also might be from the K-J-10-(x) (playing standard leads). Rarely, if ever, from a suit headed by the A-J-10-(x). One seldom underleads aces at suit contracts to begin with and never smack into the strong hand. Please.

**Play commentary:** South, missing the ♥Q, is looking at a vulnerable club holding if East gets in. On the bright side, South is looking at a fourth diamond upon which a club can be discarded. To avoid an accident (East getting in prematurely), South crosses to the ♥K and then leads a heart to the jack (finessing through the danger hand). Even if West wins the queen, the ♣K is safe from attack. As it happens, the finesse works and 11 tricks are taken. "Eight ever, nine never" does not apply when there is a danger hand. Keeping the danger hand off lead takes precedence