

THINKING BRIDGE -- By Eddie Kantar
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Dir: West Vul: None	NORTH ♠ 10 6 ♥ 4 3 ♦ Q J 7 2 ♣ J10 9 8 5		West	North	East	South
			Pass	Pass	4 Heart	6 Spade
			All Pass			
WEST ♠ 7 4 ♥ Q ♦ K 8 6 5 4 3 ♣ 7 6 4 3	18-07-2012	EAST ♠ 2 ♥ A 10 9 8 7 6 5 2 ♦ A 10 9 ♣ 2	Opening Lead = ♥Q.			
	SOUTH ♠ A K Q J 9 8 5 3 ♥ K J ♦ — ♣ A K Q					

Bidding commentary: Think “four-level preempt” when looking at an eight-card suit with less than opening-bid values. After the 4♥ opening, South bids what he thinks he can make. Four-level preempts do that to you.

Play commentary: At trick one, South must play the ♥K under the ace! Why? When the ♥Q is led, East knows South has the king but doesn't know who has the jack. From South's point of view, the king and jack are equals once the queen is led. In order to protect himself, South must play the card he is known to hold, the king.

If the king is played at trick one, West may be torn between leading a second heart or trying to cash the ♦A. If South plays the ♥J at trick one, it's a no-brainer. East can safely lead a heart for West to ruff as East knows South still has the ♥K.

Declarer and the defenders have to be alert to play cards they are known to hold if it cannot cost a trick. When the card you are known to hold (♥K) has an equal (♥J) it is mandatory to unload the one you are known to hold.

Why hang on to a card the opponents know you have when you can play it and keep a card the opponents don't know you have? The longer you hold “known” cards that can safely be played, the easier you make life for your opponents.

Think of known cards that have equals as hot potatoes! Get rid of them!