

Thinking Bridge NABC FALL 2008-(4) By Eddie Kantar

Trick-one play

Dlr: North Vul: E-W	♠A 4 3 2 ♥J 4 3 2 ♦A 8 ♣K Q 4		West Pass All Pass	North 1 Club 2 Spade	East Pass Pass	South 1 Spade 4 Spade
♠ 7 6 ♥A 10 9 ♦J 9 4 3 ♣10 8 6 5		♠ 8 5 ♥K 7 5 ♦K 10 7 6 5 ♣ 7 3 2	Opening lead: ♦3			
	♠ K Q J 10 9 ♥ Q 8 6 ♦ Q 2 ♣ A J 9					

Bidding commentary: As North, with this distribution, if you are not strong enough to open 1NT, you are not strong enough to jump raise partner's 1♥ or 1♠ response to 3♥ or 3♠. You must content yourself with a single raise.

Lead commentary: As West, with a choice of two unbid suits to lead, lead the stronger. However, if one of the suits is headed by an ace, lead the other.

Defensive commentary: Defensive commentary: Hearts is the critical suit. Whichever side breaks hearts first loses a trick. If declarer misplays the hand and winds up leading hearts first, second hand plays low if a low heart is led and covers if an honor is led.

Play commentary: As South, considering diamonds in isolation, play low at trick one hoping West has led from the king. However, looking at the hand as a whole, you should notice that you have a "heart problem" meaning you would rather the opponents lead hearts first. You can force a heart lead by using an equally divided suit (diamonds) as your throw-in suit after the hand has been stripped.

Play commentary #2: Win the ♦A, draw trumps, strip clubs and exit with the ♦Q. No matter who wins the trick, that defender must either lead a heart, limiting your heart losses to two tricks, or concede a ruff and sluff. If given a ruff and sluff, discard a heart from South, the shorter heart hand, and ruff in North, the longer heart hand.