

Thinking Bridge – NABC – FALL 2008 (7) By Eddie Kantar

To cover or not to cover

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

Bidding commentary: As North, you are a point shy to jump shift to 2♠ with a balanced hand, and 2NT is out with no diamond stopper. South's 1NT rebid shows a good 7 to 10 high-card points and at least one diamond stopper – enough for North to bid 3NT. Lead commentary: With three low cards in partner's unsupported suit, lead low to show length. The lead of a high spot card in partner's unsupported suit shows shortness.

Defensive commentary: As East, with ♦ A Q J 10 6, normal third hand play at notrump is the 10 to drive out the king, retaining at least one diamond in partner's hand. As West, do not cover the ♠Q if it is led. Your length plus lack of intermediate spot cards dictate playing low.

Play commentary: Play commentary: As South, you have no "time" to drive out the ♥A. The opponents will take four diamonds and a heart. Take the spade finesse instead. This spade layout is tricky. Start with the 9, underplaying the 6 from dummy. After the 9 holds, continue with the queen, underplaying the 10, and finally low to the jack. If you start with the queen and West plays low, you will wind up in dummy the next time you lead the suit with no entry back to your hand to repeat the finesse. Play the same with J-9-x facing A Q-10-x. Start with the 9, not the jack