

Thinking Bridge – NABC – FALL 2008 (9) By Eddie Kantar

Reading the lead

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

Bidding commentary: As South, your hand improves once you know partner has at least two spades.

Lead commentary: When leading partner's suit through a notrump bidder, it is normal to lead the 10 from 10-x-x, the jack from J-x-x, and the queen from Q-x-x. Not the case this time, but the possibility exists.

Defensive commentary: As East, if dummy plays low, signal encouragement with the ♥8, and when partner leads a second heart, cover dummy's card and play a third heart putting partner in a position to overruff declarer.

Play commentary: As South, there is a reasonable chance that West has the ♠K and will overruff if you ruff high. If this happens, you are stuck with a diamond loser. Discard a diamond instead. It's a sure loser anyway. Now you can win any return and take the spade finesse. With 10 spades between the two hands, the percentage play (by far) is to take the finesse. It is wrong to play East for the singleton king unless the bidding absolutely tells you that East must have that card or it has fallen on the floor face up! As declarer, when there is a clear danger of being overtruffed (third heart), consider discarding a loser instead, particularly if the suit cannot be continued effectively.