

THINKING BRIDGE

By Eddie Kantar

(From – NABC-Nov 2007-San Francisco (10))

Dir: West Vul: E-W	NORTH ♠ A K 3 2 ♥ A J 4 ♦ J 9 3 2 ♣ J 4		West	North	East	South
			1 Club	X	2 Club	2 Heart
			All Pass			
WEST ♠ J 7 6 ♥ 8 5 3 ♦ A Q 7 ♣ A K 8 7		EAST ♠ 10 9 8 ♥ Q 7 6 ♦ 10 4 ♣ Q 10 9 3 2	Opening Lead = ♣K (king from A-K in supported suits)			
	SOUTH ♠ Q 5 4 ♥ K 10 9 2 ♦ K 8 6 5 ♣ 6 5					

Bidding commentary: At a different vulnerability, East might jump to 3♣, preemptive, after the double. Jumps by responder after a takeout double are weak. Additionally, the raise in clubs normally denies a four-card major.

Defensive commentary:

East plays the ♣10 at trick one to show the queen. It can't be a doubleton! West leads a low club to put partner in for a hoped-for diamond return. East wins the ♣Q and returns the ♦10, which West recognizes as a doubleton because the ♠9 is in the dummy. Whenever partner leads an honor and the next lower card is visible, the assumption is that partner has shortness. West wins two diamonds and leads a third for East to ruff. The defenders have now taken the first five tricks and East exits with the ♠10.

Play commentary: The ball is now in South's court. South must locate the ♥Q to make the contract. What does South know? South knows that West started with the ♣A K and the ♦A Q, plus and the ♠J, judging from East's lead of the 10. So, West has a total of 14 high-card points. If West has a balanced hand (likely), he can't have the ♥Q or he would have opened 1NT, not to mention not competing to 3♣ with 16 HCP. Ergo, East has the ♥Q. East probably has "something" besides the ♣Q to raise! When an opening bidder has a known balanced hand and doesn't open 1NT, opener has 12-14 HCP or 18-19 HCP. As declarer, assume 12-14 unless opener makes loud noises during the bidding.