

Thinking Bridge By Eddie Kantar

Responding to a takeout double

Dlr: West Vul: EBW	♠AQ 9 4 ♥A J 10 5 ♦A J ♣10 9 2		West 1♣ Pass	North Dbl 4♠	East Pass All Pass	South 2♣
			Opening lead: ♣A.			
♠8 6 3 ♥7 4 3 2 ♦K Q 5 ♣AK Q		♠2 ♥Q 6 ♦9 8 7 6 4 3 2 ♣7 6 4				
	♠K J 10 7 5 ♥K 9 8 ♦10 ♣J 8 5 3					

Bidding commentary: As South, you can revalue your hand facing a takeout double. An unbid five-card major is worth one extra point, minimum. The ♥K facing likely heart length and strength is worth an extra point as well. On the down side, don't count anything for the ♣J, a lonesome secondary honor in a suit bid by the opponents. All in all, your hand is worth at least 9 points, closer to 10 because of the strength of your spades. In any case, you have enough to make a non-forcing jump to 2♣, showing 9–11 revalued points, an important number to remember. As North, with 17 support points (one for the doubleton), you have enough to bid 4♠.

Defensive commentary: As West, start with three top clubs and then the ♦K.

Play commentary: As South, you must find the ♥Q to make your contract. You know West started with three clubs, so West has a balanced hand. When an opponent has a balanced hand and doesn't open 1NT or 2NT, that opponent must have 12–14 or 18–19 HCP. With 18–19, opener usually bids again. Assume 12–14 if opener remains silent. West has turned up with 9 HCP in clubs and figures to have the ♦K Q for 14 HCP. Ergo, West doesn't have the ♥Q or he would have opened 1NT. After drawing trumps, lead a heart to the ace and run the ♥J, intending to finesse if the queen doesn't appear.

To remember: If opener starts with 1♣ or 1♦ and turns up with three cards in that suit, opener must have a balanced hand – no singletons, no voids and no five-card suit.