

Thinking Bridge By Eddie Kantar

When not to open a weak two-bid.

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

Bidding commentary: As East, you have an awkward hand. It is usually not a good idea to open a weak two-bid with a side four-card major and the hand isn't strong enough to open 1♥. After North's 1♦ response, you might try bidding 2♥ now! Why now? If you think about it, a delayed 2♥ jump overcall should show six hearts and four spades, the reason for not opening 2♥ in the first place.

Defensive commentary: East does best to win the ♥A and continue the suit.

Play commentary: As South, you have two lines of play available. You can play three rounds of diamonds and hope they break 3-3 (35-36%). If they do, dummy's long diamond provides a resting place for your losing spade. Alternatively, you can take two spade finesses. If West has one or both of the spade honors (75%), you can set up a spade trick for a diamond discard. The double spade finesse is more than twice as likely to produce the extra trick you need, so that is the better line of play.

To remember: It is nice to know a little bit about suit distributions. If you have seven cards in a suit between your hand and dummy, you can expect a 3-3 break about one-third of the time, a 4-2 break close to 50% of the time. If you need one of two finesses to work, you can expect one of them will work about 75% of the time. Of course the bidding and previous plays must be considered, but those percentages are important to know.