

Thinking Bridge By Eddie Kantar

Placing the cards

Dealer- South Vul- ----None	♠ K J 8 5 ♥ 4 3 2 ♦ 9 3 2 ♣ AK 5		West	North	East	South
			Pass	3 NT	All Pass	1 NT
♠ 4 3 ♥ J 9 8 7 6 ♦ K J 5 ♣ 10 8 7		♠ Q 7 2 ♥ A 10 ♦ Q 10 6 4 ♣ 9 6 4 2	Opening lead: ♥ 7			
	♠ A 10 9 6 ♥ K Q 5 ♦ A 8 7 ♣ Q J 3					

Bidding commentary: As North, it is generally not a good idea to use Stayman with a flat hand. In this case, even though you have missed a 4-4 spade fit, 3NT is a better contract because both your hand and partner's hand have the same distribution.

Defensive commentary: West makes a normal fourth-highest lead. East wins the ♥A and returns the ♥10. As West, you can follow with the ♥6 to show a five-card suit or you can make an even stronger play, the ♥J. This play informs partner that the jack is your highest remaining equal informing partner that declarer has the ♥Q.

Play commentary: As South, win the ♥K at trick two, higher equal for deceptive purposes. As it happens, you can even misguess the ♠Q and take nine tricks, but if you were in a contract of 4♣, you would have to find the ♠Q to make your contract. Also, if you are playing in a tournament where overtricks are the heart and soul of the game, finding the ♠Q will give you a good score, perhaps a near top. There is a clue. West appears to have started with five hearts and eight "other cards." East has two hearts and 11 other cards. Play the defender who has more "other cards" (East) for the missing queen.

Play commentary #2: Play commentary #2: As South, if you want to further confirm your "other cards" count, it can't hurt to cash three rounds of clubs. As it happens, both follow to three rounds of clubs so you don't get any more information. Stick with plan A and play East for the ♠Q.