

THINKING BRIDGE (8)

Eddie Kantar Fall 2016 Orlando, Florida

| | |
|------------|------------------|
| Dlr: North | ♠ A |
| Vul: None | ♥ A Q 10 9 |
| | ♦ K 9 7 6 5 |
| | ♣ 8 7 2 |
| | ♠ 10 9 8 6 5 4 2 |
| | ♥ K J 5 |
| | ♦ — |
| | ♣ K 10 5 |

Partner opens 1♦ and rebids 1NT after your 1♠ response. Not expecting to be facing a singleton spade, you leap to 4♠, ending the bidding. West leads the ♣3. East wins the ace and returns the ♣J to your king, West following with the 6. When you lead a spade to dummy's ace, West plays the jack. Can you see any way out of this? Plan the play.

Solution

Ever hear of miracles? That is what you need here. The first miracle takes place when West follows with a spade honor. You hope West has the ♠Q J or ♠K J doubleton.

The second miracle you need is for hearts to be 3-3. If they are, you can play four rounds of hearts, discarding your ♠10. Whichever defender ruffs costs the defense a trump trick. If the hand with honor third ruffs, the two remaining spade honors will crash the next time a trump is led. If the hand with the two honors ruffs, all you lose is two spades and the club ace.

You can even do a little better. After crossing to the ♠A, whether or not an honor falls, lead a low diamond. If East has the ace without the queen, he may think you have the stiff queen and go up with the ace. If he does, ruff, cross to a heart and pitch your losing club on the ♦K, losing two spades and a club, thank you very much. Finally, if nothing wonderful happens in diamonds, you are still alive if hearts are 3-3.

The full deal:

| | | |
|-----------|------------------|-------------|
| | ♠ A | |
| | ♥ A Q 10 9 | |
| | ♦ K 9 7 6 5 | |
| | ♣ 8 7 2 | |
| ♠ Q J | | ♠ K 7 3 |
| ♥ 7 4 3 2 | | ♥ 8 6 |
| ♦ Q 10 8 | | ♦ A J 4 3 2 |
| ♣ Q 9 6 3 | | ♣ A J 4 |
| | ♠ 10 9 8 6 5 4 2 | |
| | ♥ K J 5 | |
| | ♦ — | |
| | ♣ K 10 5 | |

In the final analysis, it never hurts to give an opponent a chance to go wrong. It is often the best percentage play! Top players make this an art form. Given this layout, the contract cannot be made against best defense.

P.S Do not expect to be a winning player if you always get "best defense." Had hearts been 3-3, you would have made the contract. A little realism is needed here, however. Every contract doesn't make!