

THINKING BRIDGE (6)

Eddie Kantar Fall 2016 Orlando, Florida

Dir: South ♠ A K 2
Vul: None ♥ J 9 2
 ♦ A K J 10 4
 ♣ A 5

 ♠ Q J 5
 ♥ K 10 3
 ♦ Q 2
 ♣ K J 6 4 2

You open your aceless wonder with 1♣ and partner responds a quiet 1♦. You bid an even quieter 1NT. Partner, who can never take a joke, raises to 6NT, the final contract. The opening lead is the ♠10. When dummy comes down, you see partner has his bid. Plan the play. Solution You have 10 top tricks and have to decide whether to try for your two extra tricks in clubs or hearts. Look at it this way. If you run the ♥J, hoping East has the queen, you will make your slam 50% of the time. Perhaps more. Say West has the ♥Q and doesn't have the ♥A. He might not return a heart and now you have a chance if the club finesse works. So running the ♥J actually gives you a bit more than a 50% chance.

Now let's consider clubs. If you take the club finesse and it works, you still need the clubs to break 3-3. This comes to 18%. But you aren't exactly dead if they break 4-2. You can't give up a club, but you can cross to dummy and run the ♥J. You can't make the contract if East has the ♥A, (he will simply take it and the fourth club as well) you must play West for the ♥A. It's about a 30% chance that all this will happen.

The bottom line is that it is far better to attack hearts rather than clubs because you need only one piece of good news, the ♥Q with East, to make 6NT. Working with clubs and finding the ♣Q with East is still not enough to guarantee the contract. More good news is needed. The full deal:

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