

THINKING BRIDGE (4)

Eddie Kantar Summer 2016 Washington DC

Dlr: South	♠ K 8 6 4
Vul: Both	♥ K 8 7
	♦ 9 8
	♣ K 10 3 2
	♠ A Q 10 9 3 2
	♥ 6 3 2
	♦ K
	♣ A Q 7

After you open 1♠, a simple limit raise sequence lands you in 4♠. West leads the ♦Q, East wins the ace and returns the suit. Plan the play.

After ruffing the diamond return and drawing trumps, you have a 100% play. Did you spot it? It illustrates a theme known as the “safety play finesse.”

Cash the ♣A and ♣Q and lead a low club towards dummy’s K-10. If West shows out, rise with the king and play the ♣10, giving up the lead to East as you discard a heart. What can East do? If East leads a heart, the most you can lose is one heart trick. If East leads a diamond, giving you a ruff and discard, you know what to do. Discard a heart from your hand, the shorter heart hand, and ruff the shorter heart hand, and ruff in dummy. With one heart remaining in your hand the most you can lose is one heart trick. You wind up losing a club, a diamond and a heart.

If West follows to the third club, stick in the 10. If it wins, discard a heart on the ♣K and lead up to the ♥K for an overtrick. If the finesse loses to the J-x-x with East, East is faced with a choice of evils, leading a heart up to dummy’s king or giving you a trick-costing ruff and discard. Keep in mind you still have the ♣K in dummy for a heart discard. You can’t lose this contract regardless of who has the ♣J as long as you take a safety-play finesse.

It should be noted that the best play in clubs for four tricks without a count on the suit is to play three top clubs and hope the jack drops. On a good day, you can save a two-way suit like this until the bitter end. By that time you might have a count on the suit and discover that West started with four clubs, and finesse the 10 after cashing the A-Q.

The full deal:

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

