

THINKING BRIDGE (10)

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Dir: South	♠ 10 6 4		
Vul: E-W	♥ A K		
	♦ K 6 5 3 2		
	♣ K 10 8		
	♠ K Q		
	♥ —		
	♦ A Q J 10 9 8 4		
	♣ 7 4 3 2		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
3♥	3NT	4♥	1♦
All Pass			5♦

West leads the ♥Q. **Plan the play.**

Discard two spades on the ♥A and ♥K and ruff a spade high. Cross to the ♦K, saving the ♦4, and ruff a spade high. Return to dummy using your ♦4 and ruff dummy's last spade. With the major suits eliminated, lead a low club and cover whatever West plays. Once East wins the trick, you can only lose one more club trick. East has to lead a club, establishing your king, or give you a ruff and a sluff. If he does, ruff in your hand, the longer club hand, and discard a club from dummy, the shorter club hand.

As an aside, with this club combination and no possibility of eliminating suits, the best play for one of the first three tricks is to start by leading low to the 8! If this loses to the 9, lead low to the king next. If the 8 loses to an honor, lead low to the 10 next. You take a trick whenever West started with J-9-x(x) or Q-9-x(x). You lose the first three tricks when West started with ♣A 9 x (x). In other words, you are a 2-1 favorite to score a trick by playing as recommended.

Finally, as East holding the ♣Q J 9, take the 8 with an honor to encourage declarer to lead low to the 10 next. If you take the 8 with the 9, you force declarer to play partner for the ace by leading low to the king next.

The full deal:

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