

THINKING BRIDGE

By Eddie Kantar

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Dir: South Vul: Both	NORTH ♠ J ♥ A K Q 3 2 ♦ 9 8 5 4 ♣ AQ 4		West North East South
			1 Spade
		Pass 2 Heart Pass 3 NT	Pass 6 NT All Pass
WEST ♠ 9 4 ♥ 9 8 ♦ AQ 3 ♣ J 10 9 7 3 2		EAST ♠ 10 8 5 3 ♥ J 10 7 5 ♦ 7 6 2 ♣ 8 6	Opening Lead = ♣J
	SOUTH ♠ A K Q 7 6 2 ♥ 6 4 ♦ K J 10 ♣ K 5		

Bidding commentary: South, with stoppers in the unbids, decides 3NT is a more descriptive rebid than 3♣. After all, how can partner be expected to rebid 3NT lacking a minor-suit stopper? North clearly has enough to raise to 6NT facing a likely 17-18 high-card points. The six near-solid spades make up for the lack of HCP. In any case, that is what South is planning to tell North if anything goes wrong!

Play commentary: As South, count your tricks! You have six likely spades, at least three hearts and three clubs for a grand total of 12. Am I good to you or what? Any problems? Yes, spades are blocked! A good declarer (you!) notices blocked suits. A suit is considered blocked if it cannot be run uninterruptedly. In this case, spades cannot be run uninterruptedly unless the ♠J is overtaken and the suit breaks 3-3 (36%). Don't hold your breath. What South needs is an outside entry to the spades. That entry is the ♣K. The first club must be won in dummy (key play), the ♠J cashed, the closed hand entered via the ♣K and the spades, hearts and the remaining club are all high for at least 12 tricks.

When a suit is blocked, conserving an outside entry to that suit is critical. If no side-suit entry exists, a risky overtake is the default solution.