

# THINKING BRIDGE

By Eddie Kantar >> Using the bidding as a guide to play and defense

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Dir: South Vul: Both	NORTH ♠ A653 ♥ KQJ ♦ 932 ♣ A65		West	North	East	South
			--	--	--	1 Diamond
			4 Spade	X	Pass	5 Diamond
			Pass	6 Diamond	All Pass	
WEST ♠ KQJ109742 ♥ 109 ♦ Void ♣ K82		EAST ♠ Void ♥ 87642 ♦ 865 ♣ J10943	Opening Lead = ♠K			
	SOUTH ♠ 8 ♥ A53 ♦ AKQJ1074 ♣ Q7					

**Bidding commentary:** West has a “book” 4♠ vulnerable overcall and partner’s double indicates scattered values, *not* a spade stack. Partner would make the same double with three low spades and the ♠A J x x. The double suggests that you pass unless you have a distributional hand. If you do, bid! You do have a distributional hand, which is the reason for your 5♦ bid. East correctly ups the ante to 6♦.

**Play commentary:** You start with 12 top tricks: seven diamonds, three hearts and the two black aces. Not so fast. That ♠A may be a trick, but not if you play it at trick one! Remember the bidding? That vulnerable 4♠ overcall suggests an eight-card suit. There are only 13 spades in a deck, so East is void. If you play the ♠A at trick one and East ruff and returns the ♠J, the normal return, your 12 tricks have just become 11 because you have a club loser.

Be smart. Duck the opening lead and if a high spade is continued, duck again, ruff, draw trumps, and now you can use your ♠A to discard that losing club and wind up with 12 tricks.

Just for fun, say you play the ♠A at trick one and East ruffs but does not return the ♠J. Say East returns a heart instead. Can you see how to make the slam despite your mistake?

Suppose East returns a heart instead, perhaps thinking his partner has the ace. Now you can make the contract.

You should win the heart in dummy, pull trumps in three rounds, play a heart to dummy and a heart to your ace. Now play out all of your trumps. You can see that West, with no diamonds and only two hearts, will have to find eight discards on your diamonds and hearts. He has lots of spades to discard, and he can afford to let go of one club, but as you get ready to play your last diamond, this will be the layout:

Dir: South Vul: Both	NORTH ♠ 6 ♥ - ♦ - ♣ A6	EAST ♠ - ♥ 8 ♦ - ♣ J10
	WEST ♠ 10 ♥ - ♦ - ♣ K8	
	SOUTH ♠ - ♥ - ♦ 10 ♣ Q7	

When you play the ♦ 10, West is in trouble. If he throws the ♠ 10, dummy’s 6 is good. If West pitches the ♠ 8, you discard dummy’s ♠ 6 and play your ♣ 7, taking the king with the ace. Your ♣ Q will take the 12th trick. You have just made a slam on a squeeze without doing anything fancy

This problem would be slightly easier if North started with ♠ A 9 5 3. In that case, you would simply watch for the ♠ Q, ♠ J and ♠ 10 from the West hand. If you get to

the end position and have not seen each one of those cards, discard your ♠ 9 from dummy, then play the low club from your doubleton queen. If the ♠ K does not pop up - as it does in this case - you were never going to make the contract.