

THINKING BRIDGE - What can go wrong ?

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

Bidding commentary: Routine. Any other sequence would be scary.

Defensive commentary: If you are East and declarer plays low from dummy, win the ♠K and shift to the ♥Q while you still have the ♣A for a reentry.

Play commentary: As South, you are in a nice contract and appear to have at least nine tricks once you drive out the ♣A, perhaps more. Time to ask yourself the inevitable question: What can go wrong? Do you see anything?

A born pessimist would see that if the spade lead is ducked at trick one and East wins and shifts to a heart before the ♣A is driven out, this contract might be defeated. Can you do anything about it? Yes! Win the ♠A and drive out the ♣A before the ♥A is driven out. Count your tricks: you will have four clubs, three diamonds and two major-suit aces.

Why risk a vulnerable game contract for couple of overtricks? If you are playing matchpoints, it is a slam dunk to play low as two overtricks look very likely. The rule of 11 tells you that East has only one spade higher than the 6, so chances are that it is not the king. Besides, if you go down in this contract, you will have plenty of company as other declarers will be similarly tempted.