

THINKING BRIDGE

By Eddie Kantar

(From - NABC SUMMER 2011- TORONTO-CANADA-KANTAR 6)

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

Bidding commentary: 4♣ is key card Blackwood for spades. 4NT would be a natural raise to 4NT holding four hearts and about 15-16 HCP. It's called having your cake and eating it too. 4♠ showed two key cards without the queen. North was not interested in playing a grand slam missing the queen of trumps.

Lead commentary: As West, holding four trumps, it is normal to lead from your longest side suit unless holding a side-suit honor sequence.

Defensive commentary: As West, play low if South leads the ♠A and a low spade.

Play commentary: As South you are in a great contract. In fact, you have nine top tricks outside of spades and need three spade tricks to make your contract. It is like playing 6NT as no heart ruff in dummy is needed.

What is the best play for three spade tricks? If the suit breaks 3-2, there is no problem. However, 28% of the time it breaks 4-1 (more often for you and me). Can you make this contract if either opponent has four spades to the Q-10? If East has four spades, it is easy. Just play the king and low to the jack, but that loses if West has four spades. The correct way to play spades, guarding against either opponent having four spades, is to cash the ♠A and lead low to the 9 if West follows to the second spade. If it loses, spades have divided 3-2. If North shows out on the second spade, rise with the king and lead low to the jack. You have made a safety play to insure your slam. Cheers!