

THINKING BRIDGE -- By Eddie Kantar

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

Bidding commentary: As North, you can tack on 2 extra points holding a five-card suit headed by the A-K-Q, A-K-J, A-Q-J, A-Q-10 or K-Q-J facing a known balanced hand. Add 1 extra point with a five-card suit headed by three slightly weaker honors: the A-J-10, K-Q-10, K-J- 10 or Q-J-10.

Defensive commentary: As East, win the ♠A and return the ♠7, the higher of two remaining cards.

Play commentary: As South, fearing that West might duck the second spade thus retaining communications with the East hand, you might try a little subterfuge. One possibility is to play the 9 and then the queen, concealing the jack. Another is to play the jack and then the queen, concealing the 9.

Defensive commentary: As West, no matter how South plays her spades, go by the card your partner returns to get an honest count. If South plays the ♠9 and ♠Q and those are South's only two spades, partner has started with the A-J-7-4 and would (should) have returned the ♠4, the lowest of three remaining cards. If South plays the jack and queen, concealing the ♠9, that shouldn't work either. If the jack and queen are honest cards, partner started with the A-9-7-4 and would have returned the ♠4. The bottom line is that you should duck the second spade because declarer remains with a high spade and you want to keep a spade in partner's hand in case partner has an early entry.

Play commentary #2: Play commentary: As South, if West ducks the second spade, there is not much you can do other than take the club finesse. Not this time. East wins and returns the ♠4 allowing West to cash three spades and defeat the contract one trick.

After you make an opening lead and partner wins and returns your suit, watch the spot cards closely so you know what is going on. Remember, partner returns the higher of two remaining cards and the lowest of three remaining cards. That should help.