

*by Eddie Kantar*

Dlr: East		♠ J 9			
Vul: Both		♥ A 4 2			
		♦ K 8 7 3			
		♣ A K J 2			
		♠ 10 8 7 5		♠ K 6 3	
		♥ J 10 9		♥ 7 6 5 3	
		♦ Q 9 5 4 2		♦ J 10	
		♣ 9		♣ 8 6 4 3	
		♠ A Q 4 2			
		♥ K Q 8			
		♦ A 6			
		♣ Q 10 7 5			
West	North	East	South		
		Pass	1NT		
Pass	4NT	Pass	6NT		
All Pass					

**Opening lead:** ♥J

**Bidding commentary:** North's raise to 4NT shows 16-17 high-card points. It is not Blackwood and it can be passed. To ask for aces in response to a 1NT opening bid, leap to 4♣, Gerber. As South, accept partner's invitational bid of 4NT and bid slam with any 17-point hand or with any 16-point hand that is not divided 4-3-3-3. With 15 HCP or with 16 HCP divided 4-3-3-3, pass. Another possibility when accepting partner's invitation

minor, you have probably found a better spot than notrump. A hand usually plays one trick better in a 4-4 fit than at notrump. 6♣ is a far better contract than 6NT. If South had bid 5♣ over 4NT, North should raise to 6♣.

**Lead commentary:** As West, on lead against 3NT you might opt to lead a diamond or a spade, but against 6NT, the heart sequence, even with only three cards, stands out. Against 6NT, both opponents balanced, you want to make a safe rather than an attacking lead.

**Play commentary:** As South, count your sure tricks outside of the suit you plan to work with - spades. You have three hearts, two diamonds and four clubs - or nine in all. You need three spade tricks. The proper play is to lead low to the nine hoping West has the 10. If the nine loses to the 10, there is always tomorrow, though it can't hurt to run the jack in case West, with K-10-x, forgets to cover. Play the same way needing three tricks with A-J-x-x facing Q-9, A-10-x-x facing K-9, or K-10-x-x facing A-9. In all these cases, the best play for three tricks is to lead low to the nine. Nines deserve some respect.

**Defensive commentary:** As East, if the ♠J is ever led from dummy, cover! A vulnerable slam is hanging in the balance!