

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

Bidding commentary: South, with stoppers in the unbids, decides 3NT is a more descriptive rebid than 3♠. After all, how can partner be expected to rebid 3NT lacking a minor-suit stopper? North clearly has enough to raise to 6NT facing a likely 17-18 high-card points (or more). The six near- solid spades make up for the lack of HCP. In any case, that is what South is planning to tell North if anything goes wrong!

Play commentary: As South, count your tricks! You have six likely spades, at least three hearts and three clubs for a grand total of 12.

Am I good to you or what? Any problems? Yes, spades are blocked! A good declarer (you!) notices blocked suits. A suit is considered blocked if it cannot be run uninterruptedly. In this case, spades cannot be run uninterruptedly unless the ♠J is overtaken and the suit breaks 3-3 (36%).

Don't hold your breath. What South needs is an outside entry to the spades. That entry is the ♣K. The first club must be won in dummy (key play), the ♠J cashed, the closed hand entered via the ♣K and the spades, hearts and the remaining club are all high for at least 12 tricks.

When a suit is blocked, conserving an outside entry to that suit is critical. If no side suit entry exists, a risky overtake is the default solution