

THINKING BRIDGE

By Eddie Kantar

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

Bidding commentary: How should one respond to a 2♣ opening bid with a bust (no ace, no king and no two queens)? One method is to respond 2♥ directly. Another is to start with 2♦, denying a strong suit. If opener bids 2♥ or 2♠, a rebid of 3♣, artificial, shows a bust. If opener bids 3♣ a 3♦ rebid by responder, artificial, shows a bust.

Another possibility is to show high-card points at once by steps. A fourth method is to show controls (ace and kings) by steps. Each method has its pluses and minuses. What's important is a partnership agreement. Even a bad agreement is better than no agreement. Here 2♦ followed by 3♦ over 3♣ was used to show a bust.

Defensive commentary: East plays the ♦10 at trick one, higher equal when encouraging. Given the looks of this dummy, a passive defense (avoid breaking news suits) is in order. As West, continue with a low diamond at trick two as requested

Play commentary: As South, trump the second diamond high! If clubs divide 2-2, the ♣9 will provide a dummy entry – if you have saved the precious ♣4. After clubs divide 2-2, it can't cost to play the ♠A-K-Q in case they break 3-3. It's your lucky day, they do! Now it is easy enough to cross to the ♣9, discard a heart on dummy's ♠9, and take the heart finesse for an overtrick. Be sure to tell your partner after you make an overtrick that in the future you expect her to bid more aggressively with wonderful hands.

If you are holding a powerful trump suit facing a bleak dummy and you are forced to trump early, consider trumping high rather than low. That low trump may be your salvation – it may be your only egress to dummy