

THINKING BRIDGE

By Eddie Kantar

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

Bidding commentary: West has a minimum weak two – 6 high-card points, but compensating values (a strong suit with three honors). As South, doubling 2♠ and then bidding 3NT is stronger than bidding 3NT directly. Even so, with a 22-count, you may have a little “left-over” feeling.

Defensive commentary: As East, overtake the ♠Q with the ♠A to avoid blocking the suit and return a spade to drive out the ♠K. The defense is off to a good start

Play commentary: Play commentary: As South, the bidding and East’s play at trick one mark East with a doubleton spade. The idea of a holdup play is not necessarily to win the third round of a suit. The idea is to take the trick when the player with shortness is playing her last card in the suit. East is marked with two spades, so win the second spade. If you can’t be sure whether the opponent with shortness has two or three cards, win the third round of the suit. Finally, if one opponent is marked with a singleton, it is safe to win the first round of the suit. It really is.

Play commentary #2: As South, after winning the second spade, count your sure tricks. You have one spade, one heart, two diamonds and four clubs for a grand total of eight. You can always try the heart finesse, but that finesse goes into the danger hand, West, the hand with winning spades galore.

A better idea is to keep the danger hand off lead by working with diamonds and finessing into the non-danger hand, East – the one who has no more spades. Cash three top clubs and lead a diamond to the 9. After this loses, win the heart return with the ace, cross to the ♦K noticing West show out, cash the ♣J, discarding a heart, and lead a diamond to the 10. The ♦A is your ninth trick. Your 22 HCP were barely enough to bring this baby home.

A simple rule of thumb is to aim all finesses into the non-danger hand.