

THINKING BRIDGE

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

Bidding commentary: South opens 2♣ and rebids 2NT to show 22-24 high-card points, balanced. Many play a 2♦ response to a strong 2♣ opening as 'waiting' - waiting to hear what partner has in mind. When South bids 2NT, North responds as if South has opened 2NT, keeping in mind that South has 22-24 HCP.

Lead commentary: West, recognizing that North did not use Stayman, infers that dummy does not have a four-card major. Therefore, it is normal to lead from the stronger major, spades

Defensive Commentary: As East, assuming the ♠10 (or ♠J) is played from dummy, play the ♠6, standard count. The idea is this: When you can't top dummy's card (the queen or lower), at least tell partner how many small cards you have. With four cards (an even number) play second highest if you can afford to. If you can't, play the third highest card. Just don't play your lowest card! If you do, you will be telling partner you have an odd number of cards. If anything goes wrong after that, it will be on your head!

Play Commentary: As South, there are many reasons to take the first trick with the ♠K, retaining the option of leading low to the jack. The lead of a low card strongly suggests an honor which must be the queen. Furthermore, if East had the ♠Q, it would have been played at trick one as East would think West had the king from the lead of a low card. As South, you may need three spade tricks. If you win the first spade with the ten, the suit is blocked and you may have a hard (read-impossible) time getting to dummy's ace. As it happens, both diamonds and hearts fail to break 3-3, so you do need three spades tricks - the reason why winning the first trick with the king was crucial.

When a low card is led in an unbid suit against notrump, both declarer and third hand assume that the opening leader has at least one honor card in the suit and play accordingly. When giving standard count, low-high shows an odd number, high-low, an even number.