

# THINKING BRIDGE

By Eddie Kantar

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Dir: South Vul: N-S	NORTH ♠ A Q 7 3 ♥ Q 9 2 ♦ 10 9 8 ♣ 10 9 2		West	North	East	South
			--	--	--	Pass
			Pass	Pass	1 Diamond	1 Heart
			1 Spade	2 Heart	All Pass	
WEST ♠ 10 8 5 4 2 ♥ 8 5 3 ♦ A 6 ♣ K 8 3		EAST ♠ J 9 ♥ K 6 ♦ K Q 5 4 3 ♣ A 7 6 4	Opening Lead = ♦A			
	SOUTH ♠ K 6 ♥ A J 10 7 4 ♦ J 7 2 ♣ Q J 5					

**Bidding commentary:** West's 1♠ response shows five spades. With four spades and enough to respond, West normally makes a negative double. As West, you should assume that your partner, East, has fewer than three spades given the pass of 2♥. After all, East knows you have five spades.

**Lead commentary:** As West, when holding the ace in a suit partner has bid and you plan to lead, start with the ace. As East, you can't be sure of West's diamond length. However, because diamonds have not been supported, the inference is that partner has shortness.

**Defensive commentary:** Playing standard signaling methods, East encourages with the ♦5. West reads the 5 as encouraging! Why? When there are two or more lower cards outstanding than the one partner has played, assume partner is encouraging a continuation. If there is only one lower card outstanding, it's not clear whether partner is signaling encouragement or not. Clever declarers have been known to conceal low cards to deceive the defense. As the opening leader, train yourself to look beneath the card partner has played. This is the way to determine what partner's card means. Even a 7 can be a discouraging signal if all the lower cards are visible

**Play commentary:** As South, signal West, the opening leader, as if she were your partner using the opponents' signaling methods! Yes, you read that right. In this scenario, say the opponents are playing standard attitude signals. Looking at your hand and dummy and decide if you want West to continue a diamond (treat West as if she was your partner). If you want a diamond continuation, play the 7. If you don't (and in this case, you don't), play the ♦2. This technique should be added to your ever-growing arsenal of deceptive plays

**Further defensive commentary:** Say West continues a diamond to the queen and East plays the king. As West, you have a discard to make on the third round of diamonds. Try the ♣8, an encouraging discard. If partner is on the same wave length and shifts to a low club, win the king, return a club to partner's ace and ruff the club return. Your side takes the first six tricks. What a defense!