

THINKING BRIDGE - - By Eddie Kantar
(From - NABC -FALL - SANFRANCISCO- 2012 -2)

Dir: West Vul: None	NORTH ♠ K J 9 ♥ A K J 8 ♦ J 5 ♣ A 6 5 4		West	North	East	South
			1 Diamond	X	Pass	2 Heart
			Pass	4 Heart	All Pass	
WEST ♠ A 10 4 ♥ 4 3 ♦ K Q 10 9 3 ♣ K J 2	24-11-2012	EAST ♠ Q 8 7 3 2 ♥ 5 2 ♦ 8 7 6 ♣ 9 8 7	Opening Lead = ♦K			
	SOUTH ♠ 6 5 ♥ Q 10 9 7 6 ♦ A 4 2 ♣ Q 10 3					

Bidding commentary: As South, take at least one extra point for a five-card major facing a takeout double. This ups your count to 9-plus revalued points, enough to jump to 2♥ when East passes. A jump response to a takeout double is not forcing and shows 9-11 revalued points.

North counts his hand as having 16 HCP (but not counting the ♦J) plus one support point (SP) for the doubleton diamond. The North hand weighs in at 17 SP, enough to bid game facing a jump response.

Play commentary: As South, as a matter of course, add your HCP to dummy's and then use the bidding as a guide to determine how their HCP are divided. Your side has 25 HCP and they have 15. West figures to have at least 12 of those 15, so West is a virtual lock to own the ♠A and a heavy favorite to be gazing at the ♣K as well.

Duck the opening lead and win the likely continuation of the ♦Q. Your ducking play gives you later control of the suit, which is helpful. The plan is to strip the hand before leading a club to the 10, the critical suit. Start by leading a spade. If West plays low, rise with the king and play another spade. If East wins and exits a club, play the 10, but you are basically dead. If, however, East doesn't put up the ♠Q (not an easy play), West will win. West will probably continue with a spade. If so, ruff in hand, ruff a diamond in dummy, pull trumps, staying in dummy, and lead a club to the 10. As the card lie, West wins the ♣J, but is in big trouble. He can't safely lead a club from the king. A diamond return, which provides a ruff and a sluff, is not good either. If a diamond is led, ruff in dummy and discard a club from your hand, the hand that is shorter in clubs. This is the proper way to handle a ruff and a sluff when you have a more-or-less equally divided suit with a loser or two.

Defensive commentary: As East, you have a chance to be the hero here. If you get in with the ♠Q and find a club shift, you break up the later throwin play that declarer is planning. The shift allows the defense to take two club tricks, just enough to defeat the contract.