

THINKING BRIDGE - - By Eddie Kantar
 (From - NABC -FALL - SANFRANCISCO- 2012 - 3)

Dir: West Vul: None	NORTH ♠ A J 7 ♥ J 8 2 ♦ K 8 6 3 ♣ K 5 4		West	North	East	South
			1 NT	Pass	Pass	2 Spade
			Pass	3 Spade	All Pass	
WEST ♠ 6 5 2 ♥ A K Q 3 ♦ A 7 ♣ Q J 9 8	25-11-2012	EAST ♠ Q 3 ♥ 9 7 5 ♦ 10 9 5 ♣ 10 7 6 3 2	Opening Lead = ♥A			
	SOUTH ♠ K 10 9 8 4 ♥ 10 6 4 ♦ Q J 4 2 ♣ A					

Bidding commentary: As South, with a reasonable five-card major plus an unbalanced hand, do not sell out to 1NT. Partner must have some strength or the opponents wouldn't be stopping in 1NT. For North, it is not clear just how strong partner is. South is a non-passed hand and is in the "dead" or balancing seat. If South passes, the auction is over.

When in the dead seat, the bidder is allowed point-count leeway. In order to cover all bases, North raises to 3♠, allowing partner to make the final decision. As South, you have too many losers to accept the invitation.

Defensive commentary: As West, start with three top hearts and shift to the ♣Q. As East, holding the ♣10, an equal honor to partner's queen, signal encouragement with the ♣7. A player who leads the queen from the queen-jack loves to know who has the 10!

Play commentary: West has turned up with 9 high-card points in hearts and surely 3 in clubs for a total of 12. Assuming an opening 1NT range of 15-17 HCP, West cannot hold the ♦A and the ♠Q, the two missing honors. That would give West 18 HCP, too many to open 1NT.

Nor can West hold the ♠Q and not the ♦A. That would give him 14 HCP. West can, however, hold the ♦A and not the ♠Q, because that would give West 16 HCP, the winner! Translation: Play East, not West, for the ♠Q. If you do, you wind up losing three hearts and one diamond. What a detective you are!

When an opponent's bid has a known HCP range, use those numbers to place the missing high honor cards.