

THINKING BRIDGE - - By Eddie Kantar
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Dir: East Vul: E-W	NORTH ♠ K J 8 ♥ K 4 2 ♦ J 9 ♣ K 10 9 6 2		West	North	East	South
			--	--	Pass	1 NT
			Pass	3 NT	All Pass	
WEST ♠ A 5 ♥ Q 9 8 6 5 ♦ 10 8 5 4 ♣ 8 4		EAST ♠ 9 7 3 2 ♥ J 10 ♦ Q 7 6 2 ♣ A 7 3	Opening Lead = ♥6			
	SOUTH ♠ Q 10 6 4 ♥ A 7 3 ♦ A K 3 ♣ Q J 5					

Defensive commentary: Assuming dummy plays a low heart at trick one, As East, insert the 10, the lower equal. However, in cases where the dummy takes the trick and third hand has equal honors, third hand plays the higher or highest equal - the jack from J-10 or J-10-9, the queen from Q-J or Q-J-10.

Play commentary: As South, you have an easy make if hearts are 4-3 as all you can lose is two hearts and two aces. But what if hearts are divided 5-2? The opponents may be able to set up three heart tricks before you can knock out both black aces. Not so fast. If the aces are divided, you are in business.

A basic notrump play principle dictates a first-round holdup play with two stoppers along with two high cards to drive out.

If you win the first heart (error) and drive out the ♣A, your longer black suit, East wins, returns the ♥J, overtaken by the queen, and your last heart stopper is removed while West remains with the ♠A and winning hearts. You will lose three hearts and two aces.

Back up. Duck the first heart, win the second with the ♥A, and drive out the ♣A. East wins, but has no heart to return. Now you have time to drive out the ♠A, remaining with a heart stopper. Winning the second round of hearts, rather than the first, cuts the communications between the opposing hands when one defender has a doubleton.

Defensive commentary#2: As West, if declarer wins the first heart and drives out the ♣A, overtake partner's return of the ♥J so you can continue the suit while holding the ♠A.