

THINKING BRIDGE -- By Eddie Kantar

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Dir: West Vul: None	NORTH ♠ AK954 ♥ 1082 ♦ J4 ♣ A95		West	North	East	South
			Pass	1 Spade	Pass	2 Heart
			Pass	3 Heart	Pass	4 Heart
			All Pass			
WEST ♠ Q10832 ♥ 3 ♦ Q65 ♣ KQ104		EAST ♠ J7 ♥ QJ9 ♦ K10732 ♣ J72	Opening Lead = ♣K			
	SOUTH ♠ 5 ♥ AK7653 ♦ A98 ♣ 863					

Bidding and lead commentary: Normal.

Play commentary: It is usually right to duck the first trick with A-x-x facing x-x-x. It is unlikely either defender has a singleton with the suit not being bid, and if the suit is divided 5-2, you have cut the communication between the two hands in that suit.

Defensive commentary: If the opening lead is ducked, East gives attitude, telling partner he have the jack, not a doubleton. This assumes an unbid suit that has not been supported.

Play commentary: After ducking the first trick, win the club continuation, discard a club on a high spade, and lead the ♥8 to the ace. You are leading the 8 to induce a defensive error. East may cover with Q-J-9-3, Q-9-3 or J-9-3. The latter two covers allow you to pick up the suit if you can believe such a defensive boo boo has been made.

Assuming none of this happens, lead a diamond low diamond from hand. You want to do this before playing a second high trump. Your aim is to ruff a diamond, and you don't want the player who wins the diamond to be able to cash a high trump if hearts are 3-1.

Defensive commentary: If West plays low on the diamond from your hand, East will win the ♦K and play the ♥Q, trying to stop diamond ruffs. As it happens, there is nothing the defense can do at this point.

Play commentary: Win the heart shift and play the ace and ruff a diamond, conceding a heart. Three points:

1 When partner leads the king against a suit contract, play him for the K-Q if your agreement is to lead the ace from A-K. Third hand signals attitude with the ace or jack but not with a doubleton unless dummy has the jack.

2. As declarer with A-x-x facing x-x-x, it is usually right to duck the first round of the suit to possibly break communication between the defenders' hands if the suit is divided 5-2.

3. As declarer, do not give the defenders a chance to possibly draw dummy's last trump before you have used that trump to ruff a loser. On this deal, that meant giving up a diamond before playing a second high heart.