

THINKING BRIDGE -- By Eddie Kantar

(From - NABC -FALL - 2014 - PROVIDENCE - RHODE ISLAND - 5)

Dir: South Vul: E-W	NORTH ♠ J106 ♥ KQ ♦ 853 ♣ AQ985		West	North	East	South
			--	--	--	1 Spade
			Pass	2 Club	Pass	3 Club
			Pass	3 Spade	Pass	4 Spade
			All Pass			
WEST ♠ 73 ♥ 976432 ♦ AKJ ♣ 83		EAST ♠ K98 ♥ J105 ♦ Q1097 ♣ 742	Opening Lead = ♦ A - ace from A-K-x-(x) at trick one vs. suit contracts			
	SOUTH ♠ AQ542 ♥ A8 ♦ 642 ♣ KJ10					

Bidding commentary: Those who play 2/1 forcing to game might jump to 4♣ with the North hand after the raise to 3♣. This follows the concept of going slower to show a better hand and leaving room for slam exploration.

Those who do not play 2/1 would use the diagrammed bidding, where 3♠ (delayed support at the three level) is forcing.

Defensive commentary: When signaling encouragement using standard carding, encourage with the highest spot card you can afford, in this case the 10. Signaling with the 9 would deny the 10. It may not matter on this deal, but it does matter in many, many cases. Be careful when signaling encouragement with "equal" spot cards

Further defensive commentary: After East's encouraging signal with the 10, West continues with the ♦ K and ♦ J. East overtakes the jack with the queen. Can you see why? Read on.

In order for South to have an opening bid, he must have all of the missing honor cards, ♠ A Q, the ♥ A, the ♣ K and probably the ♣ J as well. If so, how are you going to beat this contract?

Go back to old faithful: When there are no further tricks coming from the side suits (hearts and clubs), think ruff-sluff! If you lead your fourth diamond and partner inserts the ♠ 7, driving out dummy's ♠ 10, your ♠ K 9 8 will produce a defensive trick for down one. All you have to do is cover the ♠ J if it is led.