

THINKING BRIDGE -- By Eddie Kantar
(From - NABC -Spring 2007 - St Louis 10)

Dir: South Vul: N-S	NORTH ♠ A 4 3 ♥ 2 ♦ Q 10 9 ♣ A J 8 7 6 5		West	North	East	South
			-	-	-	1 Club
			1 Heart	3 Heart	Pass	3 NT
			All Pass			
WEST ♠ Q 10 2 ♥ A Q 8 7 6 ♦ K 6 5 2 ♣ 4		EAST ♠ J 9 8 ♥ 10 5 4 3 ♦ J 8 7 ♣ Q 9 3	Opening Lead = ♥7			
	SOUTH ♠ K 7 6 5 ♥ K J 9 ♦ A 4 3 ♣ K 10 2					

Bidding commentary: West is not strong enough to double and then bid hearts (16 or more high-card points with that distribution), so he settles for a 1♥ overcall. North's leap to 3♥ is a jump cuebid. A cuebid of 2♥ shows a more balanced hand. Assuming partner has opened 1♣ or 1♦ this game -forcing jump shows opening bid values, five- or six-card support and denies a four-card major. Perfect. Had partner opened a major, a splinter jump can be made with four-card support. South has no trouble rebidding 3NT with reasonable hearts plus a balanced hand.

Lead commentary: Undaunted, West leads his longest suit. After East plays the ♥10 and South the jack, West knows that South remains with the ♥K 9. The play of the 10 by East has denied the 9, remember? The 10 also denies the king. Holding three hearts to the king, East would have played the ♥K at trick one. Please.

Play commentary: As declarer, after winning the ♥J, count your sure tricks outside of clubs, the suit you plan to set up. You have one heart, the jack, the two top spades plus the ♦A. You have four tricks outside of clubs.

Translation: You need five club tricks, not six, to make 3NT. However, there is a problem. See it? If a club trick must be lost, it must be lost to West, the non-danger hand. If East gets in and leads a heart through your K-9, you're a goner. If West gets in, your ♥K is still protected. You must keep East, the danger hand, off play.

Now hear this! Declarer's rule of survival: Direct all finesses into the non-danger hand. Cross to the ♠A and lead a club to the 10. If it loses, so be it, you have five club tricks and the contract is secure. As it happens, the finesse wins and you take at least 10 tricks, maybe more.