

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

Bidding commentary: South's sequence shows opening-bid values with a powerful six or seven-card suit. A direct response of 4♣ describes a weaker, preemptive-type hand.

Defensive commentary: East wins the ♣A and returns the ♣8.

Play commentary: South wins the second club with the king (not the queen - please!) and realizes (or should realize) that East is probably now void in clubs. If a spade is led and West has the ace, West can give East a club ruff. The ♥A would then be the setting trick. If East has the ♠A West may have the ♥A. If so, East will lead over to the ♥A to secure a club ruff. It is also possible that West is the one who is short in clubs. No matter. South is threatened with a club ruff and can put a stop to all this nonsense by playing the ♦A and ♦K and discarding the ♣Q - a winner that has become an albatross - before starting on trumps. Simple enough, but South has to see it.

Whenever a suit is led and continued (clubs in this case), declarer usually gets a fairly accurate reading of the distribution. If declarer is threatened with a defensive ruff, one technique to avoid the ruff is to discard a winner in the threatening suit before drawing trumps. It only hurts for a little while.