

THINKING BRIDGE -- By Eddie Kantar
(From - NABC -Spring 2007 - St Louis - 9)

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

Bidding commentary: It's not clear that North should even bother with Stayman given those "robust" spades. A direct 3NT is a viable option.

Defensive commentary: When East plays the ♦ 10 at trick one, West knows South has the ♦ A K Q 9. Why?

- (1) The play of the 10 denies the 9. With the 10?9, the proper play is the 9, the lower equal.
- (2) When the opening leader (West) has the card directly above the card partner has played (♦ J), this is a telltale sign that third hand has played his highest card. Two tips to tuck away.

Play commentary: As declarer, it is usually most deceptive when holding three equals to take a trick with the middle equal (♦ K). With two equals it is almost always right to take the trick with the higher equal.

One major exception: At notrump, holding the A-K-(x), take the trick with the king. After winning the ♦ K, South leads a club and, assuming East plays low, a second club.

Defensive commentary: On the second club, East discards a low heart, not a high spade. Keep winners, discard losers. Upon winning the ♣ A, West counts declarer for nine tricks: three diamonds, three clubs and by inference, three hearts. East must switch to the ♠ Q. Risky? Not really. North is known to have the ♦ A K Q, the ♣ Q and the ♥ A for 15 high-card points. Voila! Partner must have both top spades. When East leads the queen, West plays low (can't afford the 9 with the ♠ 8 5 4 3 in dummy). Not to worry, partner will continue the suit.