

THINKING BRIDGE -- By Eddie Kantar
 (From - NABC -Spring Detroit-Michigan 2008 1A)

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

Bidding commentary: South adds two extra points for a five-card major in response to a takeout double. In addition, the ♥K is worth extra facing presumed heart length and strength. On the other hand, both minor-suit jacks should be discounted. When the smoke clears, South logs in with 10 revalued points and makes a non-forcing jump to 2♠, showing 9-11. North's raise to 3♠ is invitational, and South decides to go for it with his skewered distribution.

Defensive commentary: West cashes three clubs and shifts to the ♦K.

Play commentary: Once South sees that West has exactly three clubs, South knows that West must have a balanced hand (anytime a player opens with a three-card minor, the hand must be balanced) and did not open 1NT. Why? West was either too strong (18-19 high-card points) or too weak (12-14 HCP). South sees 24 HCP between his hand and dummy, so West can't have 16 and not open 1NT. West has shown 9 HCP in clubs and presumably 5 in diamonds for 14 HCP. Ergo, East has the ♥Q. South plays accordingly and comes home a winner. When opener is known to have opened 1♣ or 1♦ with a three-card suit, opener must have a balanced hand with either 12-14 HCP or 18-19 HCP. With 15-17, the opening bid would be 1NT, and with 20-21, 2NT. Declarer uses these numbers to guide him in the play.