

THINKING BRIDGE 8

By Eddie Kantar

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Suit combinations, part 8

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

Bidding commentary: Neither West nor East has a weak two-bid opening at this vulnerability, not to mention that West only has a five-card suit (plus a three-suited hand - both flaws), and North has an anemic suit, not to mention he can stand a lead in two other suits (two more flaws)

Play commentary: Win the ♠A at trick one as there is a good chance that the suit is blocked if North has 10-x or J-x. Also, there is no point in holding up when the needed heart finesse heads into the hand with the spade length. In fact, it can be counterproductive.

Further play commentary: Basically, you need four heart tricks to make this contract, which means finding East with the ♥K. The proper card to lead originally is the 9. If it holds, continue with the jack, underplaying the 10 and eventually taking four heart tricks. If you start with the jack and it holds, you will not be able to pick up four or more to the king because you will be forced to win the second heart lead in your hand, with no way to get back to dummy.

Defensive commentary: As East, if the ♥J is led from dummy, do not cover. Partner is either void or has a singleton. That singleton could be the queen! Don't ask.

Further commentary: If the hearts were Q-9-x facing A-J-10-x, the proper card to lead originally is the 9. Two "nine is fine" card combinations to tuck away.