

Board 1

South Deals
None Vul

♠ Q J 3
♥ 4 3 2
♦ A 8 7 3
♣ 10 4 2

♠ A 7 6
♥ A 9 8
♦ J 10 9
♣ K Q 8 5



♠ K 10 8 5 2
♥ K 10 5
♦ 4 2
♣ 9 7 3

♠ 9 4
♥ Q J 7 6
♦ K Q 6 5
♣ A J 6

14
7 6
13

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	2 NT	Pass	1 ♦
All pass			3 NT
3 NT by North			
Lead: ♠ 5			

BIDDING COMMENTARY: Some play the direct jump response to 2 NT shows 11-12, HCP and is not forcing. Others (me) use 13-15. If you and partner are using 11-12, the proper response with the North hand is 3 NT. I don't like responding 3 NT with 13-15 only to find partner passing with a singleton in my 10xxx, J10x, or Qxx suit. Playing a forcing 2 NT response, there is more room to sort this stuff out; my main reason.

DEFENSIVE COMMENTARY: West plays the ♠ J at trick one (lower equal) and continues with the ♠ Q (higher of two remaining cards). If North ducks the second spade, East's spades are strong enough to overtake and continue with a high spade.

PLAY COMMENTARY: As North you have 6 top tricks: four clubs, two major suit aces, and need 3 more. The possible suits to develop are hearts and diamonds. As East is sitting over there with two good

spades, it is not healthy to aim a finesse into the East hand. Better to attack diamonds and hope West has the ace. After West wins the ♦ A, you have 9 tricks. Forget the heart finesse.

Count your tricks before you begin to play. And if turns out there is a danger hand (East), try to keep that hand off lead. One way is to try not to aim any finesses into the danger hand (a death wish finesse).

Thinking Bridge, by Eddie Kantar

Board 2

East Deals
Both Vul

♠ Q J 10
♥ K Q J 10 2
♦ 4 3
♣ J 6 4

♠ 8 5
♥ A 6 5
♦ Q 9 7 2
♣ Q 10 9 7



♠ K 4 2
♥ 7 4
♦ A K 6 5
♣ A K 3 2

♠ A 9 7 6 3
♥ 9 8 3
♦ J 10 8
♣ 8 5

8
10 17
5

West	North	East	South
		1 NT	Pass
2 ♦	Pass	2 ♥	Pass
3 NT	All pass		
3 NT by East			
Lead: ♠ 6			

BIDDING COMMENTARY: East is allowed to open 1 NT with a small doubleton. If East is the nervous type he might consider putting the ace or king of diamonds in with his hearts. West transfers to hearts and then gives partner a choice of game contracts, 3 NT or 4 ♥, by showing a 5 card heart suit with a balanced-type hand. East, with a small doubleton in hearts has no trouble choosing.

DEFENSIVE COMMENTARY: When the ♠ 10 is played from dummy, North plays the ♠ 8, count. The third hand rule is this: If partner leads low from length and dummy plays the queen or a lower card that third hand cannot top, third hand gives count. The opening leader knows it is count because third hand normally covers dummy's card when possible.

PLAY COMMENTARY: As East, look ahead! To make this hand you have to bring in the hearts. If the opponents take the second heart, where is your entry

to the hearts? If you play a low spade at trick one, there is no sure dummy entry in spades to the hearts once they are established. (South can duck the ♠ K and North has the ♣ Q over the ♣ J). However, if you win the opening lead with the ♠ K (key play), and then drive out the ♥ A, you have a spade entry (♠ Q) to the hearts.

Defensive Commentary #2 When declarer leads up to a strong suit in dummy missing the ace, the defender lacking the ace (South) gives count. Standard count is low from an odd and high-low from an even number of cards. When South plays the ♥ 3, North, seeing the ♥ 2, knows South has three hearts (odd) and East has two. North takes the 2nd heart, declarer's last, making it that much harder for declarer to get to dummy's hearts.

Thinking Bridge, by Eddie Kantar

Board 3

North Deals

None Vul

♠ A 10 8 7 3

♥ 10 8 6

♦ 5

♣ 8 7 6 2

13
4 9
14

West

North

East

South

1 ♦

Pass

2 ♣

Pass

2 ♦

Pass

3 NT

All pass

3 NT by South

Lead: ♠ 7

♠ 6

♥ K 7 3 2

♦ A Q 9 4 3 2

♣ A 4



♠ K J 9

♥ A 5 4

♦ K 10

♣ Q J 10 5 3

♠ Q 5 4 2

♥ Q J 9

♦ J 8 7 6

♣ K 9

BIDDING COMMENTARY: North has a borderline reverse into 2 ♥ after the two level response. As many play, a reverse (2 ♥) after a two level response with a 6-4 pattern, shows extras (14+ HCP, minimum). South has an easy 3 NT rebid. A 2 NT rebid is not forcing.

PLAY COMMENTARY: When East plays the ♠ Q, South knows from the Rule of 11 that East is playing her only spade higher than the 7. Subtract the card led from 11: 7 from 11 = 4. There are 4 cards higher than the 7 in the three remaining hands. South has three, dummy has none so East has one and it must be the queen. The Rule of 11 assumes a 4th highest lead. If the rule doesn't work, it means that a 4th highest card wasn't led.

DEFENSIVE COMMENTARY: When East plays the ♠ Q, West knows South has the ♠ J. With the QJ, East plays the jack, the lower equal.

PLAY COMMENTARY #2: As South, after winning the ♠ K, you know West has the A108(x) and you also know you can't stand to let East get in. Your next move is to count your sure tricks outside of your best suit, diamonds. You have four. The ♠ K, the ♣ A and the HAK. Translation: You need five, not six, diamond tricks to make 3 NT. The best play for five tricks, at the same time keeping East at bay (in case East has DJxxx) is to cross to the ♥ K and lead a diamond to the 10. If it wins, you have six diamond tricks and an overtrick. If it loses, you have five diamond tricks and your contract. You have just made an avoidance play keeping the danger hand, East, from getting in. Cheers.

Thinking Bridge, by Eddie Kantar

Board 4

West Deals

Both Vul

♠ A 4 3
♥ K Q 9
♦ A 10 6 5
♣ K 6 5

♠ 9 8 7

♥ A 10 6 5

♦ 9 4

♣ J 4 3 2



♠ K Q J

♥ 4 3 2

♦ K J 3 2

♣ A Q 10

♠ 10 6 5 2

♥ J 8 7

♦ Q 8 7

♣ 9 8 7

5
16 16
3

West

North

East

South

1 NT

Pass

4 NT

All pass

4 NT by West

Lead: ♥ 5

BIDDING COMMENTARY: East's raise to 4 NT is not Blackwood, it is quantitative (invitational) and can be passed. Facing a 15-17 hand, it shows 16-17 HCP. As opener, the 4 NT invitation should be accepted with all 17 point hands and most 16 points hands. Only 16 point hands that have a 4-3-3-3 pattern should pass, the reason why West passes. One can accept a 4 NT invitation in several ways. The most common is to bid 6 NT. Bidding a four card minor at the five level might lead to finding a 4-4 fit which usually plays one trick better than notrump. A jump to the six level in any suit shows a five card suit. One can also 'sort of accept' by bidding 5 NT that says, "partner, I'm still not sure, you make the last mistake." In any case, one does not answer aces.

LEAD COMMENTARY: One leads the same against 4 NT as against 3 NT. However against 6 NT, it is not healthy to lead from broken honor strength. The ♠ 9 is best against 6 NT.

PLAY COMMENTARY: After South plays the ♥ J denying the 10 or the ace, West wins with the king (higher equal, remember?) and counts sure tricks outside of his best suit, diamonds. West has three spades, one heart, and three clubs for grand total of 7. West needs three tricks in diamonds, not four, to make 4 NT. There is also a little problem in the heart suit. West knows that North has the A10x(x) of hearts from South's play of the jack which has denied both the ten and the ace. West must be careful not to let South, the danger hand, get the lead. Accordingly, all finesses are aimed into the non- danger hand, North. A diamond is led to the king and then a diamond to the 10. Even if the finesse loses, West has three diamond tricks and remains with hearts protected.

Thinking Bridge, by Eddie Kantar

Board 5

East Deals
E-W Vul

♠ 7 6 4

♥ K Q J 9 3 2

♦ K 7 6

♣ A

♠ 10 9

♥ 8

♦ Q 4 3 2

♣ Q J 10 9 8 2



♠ A K Q 8

♥ A 7 6

♦ 9 8 5

♣ K 7 5

♠ J 5 3 2

♥ 10 5 4

♦ A J 10

♣ 6 4 3

13
5 16
6

West

North

East

South

1 NT

Pass

3 ♣

3 ♥

All pass

3 ♥ by North

Lead: ♠ A

BIDDING COMMENTARY: There are several ways to sign off in a minor after partner opens 1 NT. West-East were using jumps to 3 ♣ and 3 ♦ as signoffs.

Others use the jumps as invitational and others as slam tries! What does this tell you? It tells you that you have to discuss your methods for responding to 1 NT with long minors with your partner.

DEFENSIVE COMMENTARY: East starts with three high spades, West discarding the ♣ Q, showing a sequence in clubs headed by the queen. East plays a fourth spade to kill dummy's established jack, and North overtrumps when West ruffs.

PLAY COMMENTARY: As declarer, the key card to find is the ♦ Q and there is no rush to play diamonds. As much information as possible (points and distribution) should be gleaned from the other suits before attacking diamonds, a suit that can be

finessed in either direction. North drives out the ♥ A. East wins and exits safely with a club to your ace. After drawing trump, you have the following information at your disposal: East started with 9 points in spades, 4 in hearts and the ♣ K from the discard of the ♣ Q for a total of 16 HCP. That's enough. If East had the ♦ Q, he would have 18 HCP and would have been too strong to open 1 NT. Play West for the ♦ Q. Had the HCP count been inconclusive (either player could hold the ♦ Q), try to work out the distribution, eventually playing the opponent with the greater original length in diamonds for the queen. For example, if the opponents were playing a 16-18 point notrump range, you couldn't be sure who had the ♦ Q. However, the count would tell you that West started with four diamonds and East three. The odds are now 4-3 that West has the ♦ Q.

Thinking Bridge, by Eddie Kantar

Board 6

West Deals

E-W Vul

♠ A 6
♥ A 6 4
♦ J 7 4
♣ A 10 9 6 4

♠ J 9 7 4

♥ Q 10 9 5 2

♦ K 9 5 2

♣ —



♠ K 5 3

♥ K 7

♦ Q 8 6

♣ K J 5 3 2

♠ Q 10 8 2

♥ J 8 3

♦ A 10 3

♣ Q 8 7

6
13 12
9

West	North	East	South
1 ♣	Pass	2 NT	Pass
3 NT	All pass		
3 NT by East			
Lead: ♠ 2			

BIDDING COMMENTARY: Some play a 2 NT response to a minor suit opening shows 13-15 HCP, a game force. Others play the response shows 11-12 HCP and is not a game force. This hand sort of fits both methods because the five card suit ups the strength of the East hand. West, with a strongish five card suit, has enough to risk 3 NT even facing an 11-12 point hand.

LEAD COMMENTARY: Playing fourth highest leads, the lead of a deuce shows a four card suit. This information can help both declarer and third hand. This time it helps declarer more.

PLAY COMMENTARY: As declarer, to make this hand you need five club tricks. Easy enough if clubs break 2-1. But what if they are 3-0? Now it is important to know who has the length. If you suspect that it is North, start with the ace. If you suspect it is

South, start with the king. Any clues? Yes. South is known to have four spades. In order for South to be void in clubs, South must have a side five card suit or longer. If South had a side five card suit or longer, why didn't he lead it? Ergo, South cannot logically be void in clubs, but North can. Start with the CKA. Guess what? It is North. After finessing South for the ♣ Q, you take five clubs, two spades and two hearts. Nine big ones.

When the lead against a notrump contract is from a known four card suit, the opening leader is very unlikely to have a side suit void.