

ThinkingBridge by Eddie Kantar

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The opening lead at suit contracts, third hand play, discarding, trump control

Dir: North	♠ A Q 7 6		
Vul: Both	♥ K 9 7 6		
	♦ 10 2		
	♣ A 10 3		
♠ K J		♠ 10 9 4 2	
♥ 8 5 4 2		♥ 3	
♦ Q J 8 4		♦ A 9 7 6 3	
♣ 7 6 2		♣ K 5 4	
	♠ 8 5 3		
	♥ A Q J 10		
	♦ K 5		
	♣ Q J 9 8		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1♣	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

Opening lead: Q

Bidding commentary: North has an automatic raise to 2 . It is a major error to rebid 1 after the 1 response, intending to support hearts later. Delayed support shows three-card support. As South, even if North has three hearts for the raise to 2 , bidding 4 stands out given the strength of your hand and the strength of your hearts, not to mention a double fit.

Lead commentary: Only two adjacent honors (Q-J in this case) are needed to lead an honor against a suit contract. At notrump, the lead of the queen shows a suit headed by the Q-J-10, Q-J-9 or, exceptionally, the A-Q-J.

Defensive commentary: As East, rise with the A in case South has a singleton king. At trick two, looking at this non-threatening dummy, a passive defense seems best, so return the 6, your original fourth highest diamond. It is important to return the proper card. Some partners watch! **Play commentary:** As South, after winning the K, play the A and Q, intending to draw trumps before taking the club finesse. When East discards on the second heart, switch to plan B. You dare not draw trumps and turn this into a notrump deal before taking the club finesse. If you do and the finesse loses, their diamonds are all winners. Finesse the club now. After it loses and a likely club is returned, draw trumps, run the clubs and take the spade finesse. It works!

Defensive commentary #2: As East, when discarding on hearts, keep length parity with dummy's spades. When dummy has a four-card side suit, a defender who has four cards in the suit, at least one of them higher than dummy's lowest card, that defender should hang on to all four cards. For example, if dummy has the A K Q 9 and you have the 10 7 6 2, hang on to your spades, but with the 8 6 3 2, you can afford to discard spades.