

Thinking bridge By Eddie Kantar

NABC Summer 2018 - Atlanta 3

Opener's rebid. Third-hand play. Retaining control

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

Bidding commentary: With two four-card majors, bid hearts first when partner bids 2♣ (Stayman). However, some bid the stronger major first in case responder also has both majors. If so, the partnership plays in the stronger 4-4 fit.

Defensive commentary: As East, when partner leads a king from the K-Q, denying the ace, signal encouragement with the ace or jack, not with a doubleton. As West, if your king wins the trick, watch partner's signal carefully. If partner has discouraged, denying the ace or jack, declarer probably has the A-J- x-(x) and could be sitting in the bushes hoping you continue the suit. In this case, East encourages with the ♠9, so it is safe to continue the suit.

Play commentary: A spade trick must be lost in any event, so as South, duck the first round and win the second, retaining control of the suit. Also, when you have a side suit divided 3-3 (clubs) that entails a finesse for a queen, save that suit until the end. Sometimes a friendly West will lead the suit, ending the need to take a finesse.

Play commentary #2: With side-suit shortness in spades and diamonds, both suits under control after the first-round duck in spades, win West's likely spade return, play the ♥A and ♥K and crossruff spades and diamonds. If you are overruffed, it will be with the high trump, so no matter. The way the cards lie, if you start by ruffing a spade before a diamond, you will score 11 tricks without needing the club finesse!