

Thinking bridge By Eddie Kantar

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Hand evaluation. Responder's rebid. Third-hand play. Counting your tricks.

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

Bidding commentary: As South, partner's bidding shows two spades, not three. Partner usually supports directly with three trumps. To bid on in this sequence requires 16+ HCP. But if you are strong enough to bid again with this distribution, try 3♥ to show a singleton club as well three hearts (your 2♦ rebid has denied four hearts) catering to a possible five hearts in partner's hand. As North, holding two spades, a 2♥ rebid after partner bids 2♦ shows six hearts, exceptionally, five headed by three of the top four honor cards. Opener can pass 2♥ with a singleton heart.

Defensive commentary: As East, if declarer plays low at trick one, signal encouragement with the ♣9, your highest equal spot card. Signaling with the ♣8 denies the ♣9!

Play commentary: With the ♣A marked on your right, duck the first club, ruff the club honor return and try to make as many low trumps as you can. Play the ♦A and ♦K, ruff a diamond low, ruff a club, ruff a diamond with the ♠A and lead dummy's last club. If West still has a club, you can ruff, your seventh trick. The ♠K and ♥A bring your trick total to nine. Don't worry about ruffing a diamond with the ♠A, it's a loser in any case and it provides you with a dummy entry to ruff a club.

Defensive commentary: Defenders often give count when declarer initiates a suit (diamonds). However, when the count in the suit is known (diamonds is declarer's second-bid suit), giving count is counter-productive. As West, if declarer plays a fourth diamond, intending to ruff with dummy's ♠A, discard your last club. Now declarer cannot enjoy a third club ruff and is held to eight tricks