

THINKING BRIDGE

EDDIE KANTER

Responding to 1NT, entry consideration

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

Bidding commentary: The sequence assumes that 2NT is natural, not a transfer. If 2NT is played as a transfer, responder has to go through Stayman to raise to 2NT. As South, with a balanced 15 HCP, pass 2NT. With any 17-point hand and most 16-point hands, bid 3NT. A 16-point hand divided 4-3-3-3 and lacking intermediates also does best to pass a raise to 2NT. As North, with a 4-3-3-3 hand pattern, you need 9 HCP to raise to 2NT, 8 HCP is not enough.

Defensive commentary: As East, win the ♥A and return the ♥4. Had the opponents gone through Stayman, South denying a four-card major, you would know partner has at least five hearts. Also, both defenders should play South for 15 HCP when he passes 2NT.

Play commentary: As South, plan ahead before playing to the first trick. Your plan should be to try to bring in clubs for four tricks if the finesse works. Even if the finesse works, you may have to repeat it three times (East might have four or five clubs headed by the king. Three finesses mean three dummy entries. Do you see three? It looks like there are two, but there are three – if you unblock the ♥K at trick one! You really aren't costing yourself a trick as the queen is marked in the West hand after the lead of a low heart. Your unblock creates a third dummy entry in hearts. Play the same with ♥Qxx. Dump the queen at trick one to make sure you have a dummy entry.

Defensive commentary #2. As West, win the second heart and play a third, clearing the suit.

Play commentary #2. As South, win the third heart in dummy and take club finesse #1, leading a low to the queen (playing the higher equal for deceptive purposes). After the ♣Q holds, cross to the ♠K and take club finesse #2, this time leading a club to the jack (higher remaining equal). When that holds, cross to the ♦A and take club finesse #3. When the smoke clears, you have eight tricks: four clubs, two spades one heart and one diamond. You play so beautifully.