

Thinking bridge

By Eddie Kantar

The first trick. Taking charge

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

Bidding commentary: As South, treat a solid five-card major suit as a six-card suit and bid accordingly.

Defensive commentary: As East, avoid the common defensive error of signaling interest or disinterest in the suit partner has led (♥K) before looking at the rest of the hand. Here you have the blank ♣A and would like a club ruff.

You can get it but you must overtake the ♥K, cash the ♣A, exit a heart to partner's queen, and ruff the club return. Down one. If you look only at hearts, you are apt to signal encouragement to show the ace. Once partner continues a heart, goodbye club ruff, goodbye defeating 4♠.

The lesson to be learned here is that third hand should take a moment to get an overview of the deal, not just the suit partner has led, before playing to the first trick.