

Thinking bridge

By Eddie Kantar @ NABC Spring 2019 Memphis-2

<i>Dummy</i>
♠ Q J
♥ 7
♦ 7 5 4 2
♣ A K 7 5 4 2
<i>Declarer (You)</i>
♠ A 7 6
♥ A 10 8 5 2
♦ A K 3
♣ Q 6

You open 1♥, partner responds 2♣ intending to rebid 3♣, invitational, but your jump to 3NT ends the bidding. If a 2♣ response is played as a game force, then 1NT is the proper response. You would raise 1NT to 2NT and partner would bid 3NT. All roads lead to Rome.

The opening lead is the ♠4 and dummy's jack wins, East playing the ♠3, count. Plan the play.

You have eight top tricks and need but one more. In spite of those impressive clubs, if you rely entirely on a 3-2 break, you will be giving yourself a 68% chance to make the hand. Not bad, but you can do better. Much better.

Duck a diamond at trick two, win the likely spade return and play the ♦A K. If diamonds break 3-3 (36%), dummy's fourth diamond is your ninth trick. If they don't, you still have 3-2 clubs to fall back on (68%). You stay alive by playing diamonds before clubs, giving yourself an 80% chance of making the hand. Why consign the diamonds to oblivion? It doesn't cost anything to test them.

Take full credit if you played the ♦A K and a low diamond instead of ducking a diamond. Notice that you can't test clubs first and if they don't break 3-2, fall back on diamonds being 3-3. The club suit is the entry to the fourth diamond; diamonds have to be attacked before clubs.

The full deal:	
	♠ Q J
	♥ 7
	♦ 7 5 4 2
	♣ A K 7 5 4 2
♠ K 10 8 4 2	♠ 9 5 3
♥ Q 9 4 3	♥ K J 6
♦ J 9 8	♦ Q 10 6
♣ 9	♣ J 10 8 3
	♠ A 7 6
	♥ A 10 8 5 2
	♦ A K 3
	♣ Q 6