

Thinking bridge

By Eddie Kantar @ NABC Spring 2019 Memphis-7

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| | <i>North</i> | |
| | ♠ K J 10 | |
| | ♥ 10 4 2 | |
| | ♦ J 5 3 | |
| | ♣ A Q J 5 | |
| ♠ 5 2 | | ♠ 7 6 |
| ♥ Q 8 7 | | ♥ 9 6 3 |
| ♦ A K 10 6 4 | | ♦ 9 7 |
| ♣ K 10 9 | | ♣ 8 7 6 4 3 2 |
| | <i>South (You)</i> | |
| | ♠ A Q 9 8 4 3 | |
| | ♥ A K J 5 | |
| | ♦ Q 8 2 | |
| | ♣ — | |

With both sides vulnerable, West opens 1♦, North and East pass, you double, partner responds 3♣, too strong to make a forced 2♣ response. You bid 3♠, forcing, and partner raises to 4♠. Incidentally, when making or responding to a takeout double, devalue jacks and queens in any suit or suits the opponents have bid unless responding in notrump or having a death wish.

West leads the ♦A K and a third diamond. East ruffs the third diamond and exits with a low heart. Spades are 2-2. What is your plan? (Notice that the ♦J and ♦Q are worthless).

Well, 12 HCP are missing and West, the opening bidder, is a heavy favorite to have all 12. Win the ♥A, cross to a spade, play the ace of clubs, discarding a heart, and ruff a club. Return to dummy with a spade and ruff another club. If the king appears, use the ♣Q to discard a second heart. If the king doesn't appear, try to drop the ♥Q in the West hand. Why finesse into a player who is known to have the queen?

Tip No. 1: When the bidding tells you that a particular defender must have a particular card, play that defender for that card even if it means going against the odds in the play of that suit.

Tip No. 2: Assume an opening bidder has at least 12 HCP unless the opener is known to have a distributional hand in which case 10 or 11 HCP is possible.