

Thinking bridge

By Eddie Kantar @ NABC Spring 2019 Memphis-9

♠ K J 3
♥ K 7 6 4
♦ A J 2
♣ 7 4 3
♠ A Q 2
♥ A 5 2
♦ K Q 8 7
♣ A K J

You open 2♣ and rebid 2NT showing 22 to 24 HCP after partner's 2♦ "waiting" response. With a perfectly balanced hand, partner disdains Stayman and boosts you to 6NT knowing of at least 33 HCP between the two hands.

The opening lead is the ♠10. Plan the play.

You have 11 top tricks with two chances for a 12th: hearts 3-3 (36%) or the ♣Q with East (50%). Once again, trying to set up an extra trick in the longer suit (hearts) is best because if the suit does not break 3-3, you are still alive and can take the club finesse. The plan, therefore, is to duck a heart and then test hearts. If hearts are 3-3, you won't need the club finesse. Your chance for success is 68%.

The technique of ducking a heart and then playing the ace-king is far superior to playing the ace-king and a heart to see if they divide 3-3 for two reasons: (1) You retain control of the suit if they break 4-2 so you can still take the club finesse. (2) If hearts are 4-2, the opponents can take two heart tricks in which case you never do get a chance to take a club finesse (after cashing the ace).

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