

Thinking bridge

By Eddie Kantar @ NABC Spring 2019 Memphis-9

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

Partner opens 1♦, you respond 2♣, partner raises to 3♣, you try 3♠ hoping partner can bid 3NT with a heart stopper. No luck, partner takes you back to 4♣, and you bid 5♣.

The opening lead is the ♥K (surprise), and then a heart to East's ace. At trick three, East shifts to a low spade. Plan the play.

Stick in the queen. A 50% chance is better than trying to set up the diamonds for two spade discards. In order for that to happen, you need diamonds to be 3-3, a 36% chance.

Ideally, you would like to have had time to test the diamonds first, but you didn't have that luxury. You were forced to make an early decision, so knowing the odds helps.

Say you had one less spade and one more club. Now you can make the hand needing only one spade discard. In other words, you can make the hand if diamonds divide 3-3 (36%) or 4-2 (48%). In that case, it would be better to rise with the ♠A and try to set up the diamonds, an 84% chance.

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