

Chalk Talk



Eddie Kantar

www.kantarbridge.com

Dir: East ♠ –
 Vul: N–S ♥ K 7 5
 ♦ A Q 10 7 4 2
 ♣ 7 4 3 2

♠ 10 7 6 3 2 ♠ 5 4
 ♥ J ♥ A 9 8 6 4 3 2
 ♦ K J 8 6 3 ♦ –
 ♣ 8 6 ♣ J 10 9 5

W E
 N S

♠ A K Q J 9 8
 ♥ Q 10
 ♦ 9 5
 ♣ A K Q

West North East South
 3♥ 4♠

Pass Pass Pass
 West leads the ♥J.

Bidding Commentary: After East's 3♥ opening bid, South, with nine winning tricks, bids 4♠, not 3♠. One assumes a silent partner has a trick or two to help out when backed into a corner after an adverse preempt. If one always thought partner was broke, nobody would ever bid. Take some chances!

Defensive Commentary: East wins the ♥A. If South follows with the ♥10, East knows that South has the ♥Q and partner can ruff a heart. Furthermore, after West ruffs a heart, East can ruff the diamond return and lead yet another heart hoping to promote a spade trick for West. If South follows with the ♥Q at trick one, a card he is known to hold, East may decide to give up on hearts and look for tricks in clubs. That won't work.

Play Commentary: When an honor card is led (♥J), as declarer, put yourself in the head of the defender (East). East knows from the lead that you have the ♥Q, but can't possibly know who has the ♥10. The ♥10 and the ♥Q are equals

once the jack is led. A good declarer (you) must play cards you are known to hold (♥Q) as quickly as possible. The ♥Q should be treated like a hot potato — actually a scalding potato — and played at trick one. Get in the habit of playing cards you are known to hold.

Dir: South ♠ 9 8 7
 Vul: Both ♥ K 7 4 3
 ♦ Q J 10 9
 ♣ J 4

♠ Q J 10 3 2 ♠ K 6
 ♥ 5 ♥ Q J 10 9 8
 ♦ K 3 2 ♦ 8 7 4
 ♣ 9 8 6 2 ♣ 10 7 5

W E
 N S

♠ A 5 4
 ♥ A 6 2
 ♦ A 6 5
 ♣ A K Q 3

West North East South
 2NT

Pass 3♣ Pass 3♦
 Pass 3NT All Pass
 West leads the ♠Q.

Bidding Commentary: A standard Stayman sequence reveals that South has no four-card major. At times, information like this comes in handy when defending.

Defensive Commentary: When partner leads the queen vs. notrump, and dummy has low cards, third hand is expected to overtake with K-x or A-x and unblock with 10-x. The overtake is necessary so the suit can be continued a third time if necessary. East knows from the bidding that South has no more than three spades, so West has at least five spades headed by the Q-J-10 or the Q-J-9. An unblock can't cost. If East plays low at trick one, the suit is blocked and the ace cannot be removed. After East overtakes and returns a spade,

West can play a third spade to drive out the ace. It is a standard play to overtake partner's queen lead with K-x or A-x unless dummy's holding tells you not to. Just do it!

Play Commentary: East's play of the ♠K suggests a doubleton. When East returns a spade, South takes the ace, retaining the low spade. Patience. Before taking the diamond finesse into the danger hand, it doesn't hurt to play four rounds of clubs. West follows to all four. A possible discard from East is the ♥Q showing a complete sequence in hearts. Before taking the diamond finesse, South plays the ♥A and ♥K, West discarding a diamond. At this point West has three winning spades and two diamonds.

Rather than take the diamond finesse, declarer does better to exit a spade and let West take three winning spades. But fun and games are over. West has to return a diamond, allowing South to take the last two tricks or nine in all: four clubs, two in each red suit and the ♠A. Throw-in plays are safer than finesses if you can strip the safe exit cards (clubs and hearts) from the player you are throwing in, thus forcing the lead you want. □