

These Hands are from Eddie Kantar's wonderful "Thinking Bridge"

#52 Dlr: West
Vul: Both

	North	
	S. 1052	
	H. 9732	
	D. 8432	
	C. A9	
West		East
S. A4		S. KQ7
H. AQ4		H. K65
D. KQJ1097		D. 65
C. Q3		C. 87654
	South	
	S. J9863	
	H. J108	
	D. A	
	C. KJ102	

West	North	East	South
1D	Pass	1NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Opening lead: S6

Bidding Commentary: West is far too strong to make a non-forcing rebid of 3D, 3NT is a much better rebid.

Play Commentary: East does best to win the SA hoping to conceal the spade strength in the closed hand.

Defensive Commentary: When on lead with the DA, South should try to count declarer's sure tricks. Given the discouraging S2 from North at trick one, declarer figures to have the KQx of spades for three tricks. Five diamond winners are in clear view and the HA makes nine. If declarer has the CA, there is no defense. South must play North for the CA and shift to the C2 at trick three. If North has been invited to the same party, he will win the CA and return a club. The defenders cash four clubs and a diamond. This is not an easy contract to defeat: (1) South must lead a **low** club, (2) North has to be clever enough to return a club, not a spade, after winning the DA.

When declarer has enough tricks in three suits to make the contract, and there is any hope in the fourth suit to take quick tricks (North needing the CA) shift to the 4th suit.

As declarer, with a weak suit that has **not** been led (clubs), consider throwing away a trick in the suit that has been led to encourage a continuation (dumping the SQ under the SA at trick one)-providing you still have enough tricks to make the contract if the first suit is continued. Here you still take 10 tricks. This is more of a rubber bridge or IMP play than a matchpoint play where overtricks are so important.

#53 Dir: North
Vul: Both

	North	
	S. 862	
	H. 976543	
	D. AJ	
	C. K8	
West		East
S. 97		S. AKJ1043
H. K102		H. 8
D. 9543		D. 1087
C. Q1093		C. J76
	South	
	S. Q5	
	H. AQJ	
	D. KQ62	
	C. A542	

North	East	South	West
Pass	2S	Dbl.	Pass
4H	All Pass		

Opening lead: SA (A from AK)

Bidding commentary: North has the high card strength for a Weak Two opening, but the suit is decrepit. East on the other hand, has the kind of suit one dreams about for a Weak Two opening. South has a clear-cut takeout double, and North can do no less than leap to 4H. A 3H response is far too timid. A non-jump response to a takeout double is made with 0-8 revalued points. A jump response shows 9-11 revalued points. Incidentally, a six card suit in response to a takeout double clocks in for three extra points - at least.

Defensive Commentary: East begins with three rounds of spades and dummy ruffs with the HJ.

Further Defensive Commentary: If West overruffs the HJ, that is the last defensive trick. However, if West discards, **two** trump tricks are coming with the K102 sitting over the blank AQ in dummy.

Before overtrumping an honor with an honor, ask yourself how many trump tricks you are entitled to if you **don't** overtrump. If there is a chance that not overtrumping will produce an extra trump trick, discard.

A **vulnerable** Weak Two opening bid in first or second seat typically shows a six card suit headed by two of the top three honors, three of the top five honors, or any two honors along with the 98 or the 97 (KJ97xx but not KJxxxx).

#58 Dir: South
Vul: Neither

	North	
	S. J74	
	H. 92	
	D. 9732	
	C. 9742	
West		East
S. AKQ82		S. 1096
H. J105		H. 763
D. Q6		D. AKJ10
C. AK6		C. 853
	South	
	S. 53	
	H. AKQ84	
	D. 854	
	C. QJ10	

South	West	North	East
1H	Dbl.	Pass	2D
Pass	2S	Pass	4S
All Pass			

Opening lead: H9

Bidding Commentary: East's leap to 4S is not that far out. After all, West's has doubled and then introduced a new suit after a minimum response. With a doubleton in opener's suit and a five card suit of one's own, West's sequence shows 17-19 points.

Lead Commentary: The lead of a high card in an **unsupported** suit shows shortness. Give North the 962 of hearts and proper lead would be the deuce. Very important.

Defensive Commentary: South knows North has heart shortness and can confidently cash three heart tricks.

Further Defensive Commentary: On the third heart North must make a discard. Before discarding a defender should ask, "Which suit do I want my partner to lead next?" The answer here is a fourth heart to promote the SJ to the setting trick. The next concern is how to get partner to lead that a heart particularly when another suit, clubs, might look attractive. The trick is to make a negative discard in the suit that looks attractive. Therefore, North discards a discouraging club, **not** a discouraging diamond, a suit partner never was going to lead in a thousand years. Help partner out! If partner leads a club, it's all over but the shouting. West wins, draws trump and pitches the club loser on a winning diamond. If South leads a fourth heart, down one.

#61 Dlr: South
Vul: E-W

	North	
	S. J432	
	H. 52	
	D. KJ8	
	C. QJ109	
West		East
S. 86		S. A5
H. QJ1094		H. AK73
D. 7654		D. 2
C. K5		C. 876432
	South	
	S. KQ1097	
	H. 86	
	D. AQ1093	
	C. A	

South	West	North	East
1S	Pass	2S	Pass
4S	All Pass		

Opening lead: HQ

Bidding Commentary: East may have a 'left over' feeling about passing, but has no reasonable way to enter the bidding. A takeout double normally denies a singleton in an unbid suit as well as a doubleton in an unbid major. Unless interested in a slam, South, facing silent opponents, does best to conceal a second suit. However, In competition, it is wise to show a second suit to help partner judge whether to double, bid on, or sacrifice if the opponents get frisky.

Defensive Commentary: East has to look ahead. From East's point of view two hearts and a spade trick are available. The best bet for a fourth trick is a diamond ruff. East should take charge; overtake the HQ, shift to the D2, win the first spade and lead a low heart over to West to get the diamond ruff.

Play Commentary: There is not much South can do against this defense. However, he might try the ploy of leading the SJ from dummy at trick three (the 'fake finesse' in action). If East loses concentration and plays low, the diamond ruff is lost.

Observation: When third hand sees ten cards in an unbid suit (clubs) between his hand and dummy and the suit is not led, third hand assumes declarer is the one with the singleton-or void. Partners usually lead singletons when they have one; some would lead a void if they could.

#63 Dlr: West
Vul: Neither

	North	
	S. 5432	
	H. 1085	
	D. AKQ	
	C. AQJ	
West		East
S. K6		S. J109
H. AKQ76		H. 432
D. 1072		D. 9843
C. 732		C. 854
	South	
	S. AQ87	
	H. J9	
	D. J65	
	C. K1096	

West	North	East	South
1H	Dbl.	Pass	2S
Pass	4S	All Pass	

Opening lead: HA (A from AKx).

Bidding Commentary: In response to a takeout double if responder has 0-8 points, responder makes a non-jump response. With 9-11 points, responder makes a **non-forcing** jump response. With 12+ points, responder cuebids, the strongest response to a takeout double. In addition, responder adds one point for any unbid five card suit and three points for any unbid six card suit. Translation: If responder has 8 HCP with a five card suit, the hand is now worth 9 points and a non-forcing jump response can be made. On the minus side of the ledger, responder does not count anything for the HJ, a secondary honor in an opponent's bid suit, nor does South count for shortness. Responder counts extra for side suit **length**. South has 10+ HCP (the + is for the four card club suit). North figures South for about 10 points (the average) and raises to game. A raise to 3S is also possible because of North's flawed holding in hearts.

Defensive Commentary: West starts with three rounds of hearts, South ruffing.

Play Commentary: South has to avoid two spade losers. The normal play is the finesse. However, first things first - South adds his HCP (11), to dummy's HCP (16); the total is 27 meaning the opponents have 13. West figures to have at least 12 of those 13 points. The bottom line is that West has the SK and the finesse isn't going to work. The only chance is to play West for Kx and play the ace and a low spade. As it happens, justice triumphs... for once. West has the Kx of spades and the contract is made.

Before playing the hand, add your HCP to dummy's. If the opponents have been in the bidding, this count will help you place the missing honors.

#68 Dir: East
Vul: E-W

North
S. AKJ932
H. AKJ3
D. 865
C. -

West
S. 54
H. 987
D. J2
C. J97543

East
S. 76
H. Q65
D. AK943
C. K102

South
S. Q108
H. 1042
D. Q107
C. AQ86

East	South	West	North
1D	Pass	Pass	Dbl.
Pass	1NT	Pass	3S
Pass	4S	All Pass	

Opening lead: DA (A from AKx at trick one)

Bidding Commentary: North has a choice of reopening bids, but double seems the best bet as North can always bid spades if South insists on clubs. Also, a takeout double does get hearts into the game. South's 1NT response facing a balancing double shows 8-11 HCP. North's jump to 3S is a game force. As it happens, a simple 1S reopening bid also leads to a 4S contract.

Defensive Commentary: West starts a high-low in diamonds and East continues with the ace and 9 of diamonds, suit preference for hearts. West ruffs and returns the H9 to North's ace.

Play Commentary: North adds his HCP to dummy's HCP and comes up with 26, leaving E-W with 14. East figures to have at least 12 for the opening bid, leaving poor West with 2, max. Once West turns up with the DJ, he can only have 1 more HCP, max. Bottom line: East has the HQ and the CK.

Play Commentary: #2: Rather than bank everything on hoping East has Qx of hearts, North has an extra chance in clubs. North enters dummy with a trump, ruffs a club high, returns to dummy with a trump, plays the CA, discarding a heart, and ruffs a club high. Success, East follows with the king! Dummy is reentered with a trump and declarer's HJ goes off on the CQ. If the CK does not appear, not to worry, the HQ will drop! Count. East started with five diamonds (known), and must have at least four clubs (still has the king) and two spades (known). Bingo! East started with two hearts and one must be the queen. Good thinking, South!

Questions? Contact me at LynnYokel@gmail.com