

These Hands come from Eddie Kantar's wonderful book "Thinking Bridge"  
Please feel free to contact me at [LynnYokel@gmail.com](mailto:LynnYokel@gmail.com)

Dlr: East

Vul: East-West

	North	
	S. K2	
	H. AJ32	
	D. AQ63	
	C. Q105	
West		East
S. 743		S. QJ10865
H. 1075		H. 986
D. K108		D. J97
C. K432		C. A
	South	
	S. A9	
	H. KQ4	
	D. 542	
	C. J9876	

East	South	West	North
2S	Pass	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Opening lead: SQ

Bidding Commentary: North's reopening bid of 2NT shows 15-17 HCP and South has a no brainer raise to 3NT. A 3C response by South would be Stayman.

Play Commentary: As North, you start with 7 top tricks and need two more. You can easily set up three extra tricks in clubs- IF you had time. Unfortunately, you have only one spade stopper left and have to let the opponents in **twice**. It doesn't compute. When they get in with the first club, they knock out your last spade stop and when they get in with a second club, a torrent of spades will rain down upon you. Down two. You must look elsewhere for tricks.

How about diamonds? Given this meager diamond combination, you need to find West with exactly Kxx (an 18% chance) to build up two extra diamond tricks. An 18% chance is better than a 0% chance. Enter dummy with a heart, finesse the DQ and play the ace and a diamond (or duck a diamond and then play the ace. Whatever you do works (am I good to you, or what?) as long as you attack diamonds, not clubs. It's all a matter of time. When a contract looks desperate, dream up a winning lie of the opponent's cards and play for it. When a contract looks too good to be true, start looking around for safety plays. This contract falls into the desperate category.

Dlr: East  
Vul: Neither

North  
S. QJ9  
H. 72  
D. 105432  
C. A98

West  
S. K43  
H. QJ10964  
D. A  
C. K32

East  
S. A62  
H. A85  
D. KQ6  
C. 7654

South  
S. 10875  
H. K3  
D. J987  
C. QJ10

East	South	West	North
1C	Pass	1H	Pass
1NT	Pass	4H	All Pass

Opening lead: SQ

Bidding Commentary: The opening bidder should open any four card club suit in preference to any three card diamond suit. Also, with this distribution, East's first priority is to rebid 1NT, not raise hearts. West has enough to bid game. A leap to 3H would not be forcing. The one who knows, goes!

Defensive Commentary: As South, when partner leads a queen, the 10 or the king are considered equal honors and an encouraging signal (S8), is in order. North assumes you have the 10 or the king when you play the 8, **not** a doubleton. It is dangerous to signal high-low with a doubleton when partner leads the queen unless the honor strength in dummy (AK10 perhaps) tells partner you can't possibly have an honor.

Play Commentary: As declarer, taking a heart finesse before discarding losers on the DKQ hints strongly of a death wish. First things first. Win the SK, unblock the DA, cross to the SA and discard a club and a spade on the D KQ. At this point you can ruff a spade high and take the heart finesse. Even if it loses, the most you can lose is two clubs and a heart. Had you taken the heart finesse prematurely (time to enroll in Finesseaholics Anonymous for immediate treatment), you lose three clubs and a heart assuming South shifts to the CQ upon winning the HK.

Before playing to the first trick, take a good look at your dummy to see if there are any goodies over there (DKQ) that you need to use before letting the opponents in. Look ahead.

Dlr: South  
Vul: Both

North  
S. KQJ  
H. 432  
D. KJ32  
C. AQ10

West  
S. 987  
H. A1065  
D. 94  
C. 7432

East  
S. 10652  
H. J87  
D. Q87  
C. J98

South  
S. A43  
H. KQ9  
D. A1065  
C. K65

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	4NT	All Pass

Opening lead: H5

Bidding Commentary: North's raise to 4NT is **not** Blackwood, it is quantitative (invitational) and can be passed. Facing a 15-17 hand, it shows 16-17 HCP. As opener, the 4NT invitation should be accepted with all 17 point hands and most 16 points hands. Only 16 point hands that have some 4-3-3-3 pattern should pass, the reason why South passes. One can accept a 4NT invitation in several ways. The most common is to bid 6NT. Bidding a four card minor at the five level might lead to finding a 4-4 fit which usually plays one trick better than notrump. A jump to the six level in a minor shows a five card suit. One can also 'sort of accept' by bidding 5NT. This says "partner, I'm still not sure, you make the last mistake." In any case, one does **not** answer aces.

Lead Commentary: One leads the same against 4NT as against 3NT. However against 6NT, it is not healthy to lead from broken honor strength. The S9 is best against 6NT.

Play Commentary: After East plays the HJ denying the 10 or the ace, South wins with the king (higher equal, remember?) and counts sure tricks outside of his best suit, diamonds. South has three spades, one heart, and three clubs for grand total of 7. South needs three tricks in diamonds, not four, to make 4NT. There is also a little problem in the heart suit. South knows that West has the A10x(x) of hearts from East's play of the jack which has denied both the ten and the ace. South must be careful not to let East, the danger hand, get the lead. Accordingly, all finesses are aimed into the non-danger hand, West. A diamond is led to the king and then a diamond to the 10. Even if the finesse loses, South has three diamond tricks and remains with hearts protected.

Dlr: West

Vul: E-W

(This hand was rotated for the lesson – declarer was East today holding the South hand in the diagram.)

			North	
			S. 653	
			H. A82	
			D. 962	
			C. A653	
	West			East
	S. KQ10			S. A872
	H. 75			H. 943
	D. AQJ1053			D. 874
	C. Q4			C. 1098
			South	
			S. J94	
			H. KQJ106	
			D. K	
			C. KJ72	
West	North	East	South	
1D	Pass	Pass	1H	
2D	2H	3D	3H	
All Pass				

Opening lead: SK

**Bidding Commentary:** West's 2D rebid facing a passing partner promises at least 6 diamonds with extras. East is allowed to compete one level higher with an ace plus 3 card support. East-West make 3D. South has extras for the reopening bid of 1H not counting the DK (South needs only 8+ HCP with a presentable suit to reopen). South's distribution (singleton diamond) makes competing to 3H attractive.

**Lead Commentary:** Pretty obvious.

**Defensive Commentary:** East signals encouragement with the S8 (not the 7!), the higher of equals. The S8 also denies the S9. The defense reels off three spades and East switches to a diamond. West plays the ace and queen of diamonds, South ruffing.

**Play Commentary:** East, a responder who has passed an opening bid, has shown up with 4HCP, the SA. If East had the CQ, he would have had enough to respond. West must have the CQ, so there is no point in finessing. After trumps are drawn, declarer plays the king-ace of clubs hoping the queen drops doubleton. Guess what?

Dlr: West

Vul: Both

North  
S. 84  
H. 72  
D. KJ932  
C. 10987

West  
S. AQJ93  
H. 10853  
D. A  
C. AK5

East  
S. K1065  
H. AJ94  
D. Q  
C. QJ32

South  
S. 72  
H. KQ6  
D. 1087654  
C. 64

West	North	East	South
1S	Pass	4D	Pass
6S	All Pass		

Opening lead: C10

Bidding Commentary: East's leap to 4D is a 'splinter jump'. It shows opening bid strength, primary support (4+cards), and most important, a singleton in the jump suit. Splinter jumps often lead to slams. West knows that East, who has opening bid values, must have heart values because West has everything else!

Lead Commentary: Normal, but only a heart lead defeats this contract.

Play Commentary: There are losers in only one suit, hearts. Whenever there are losers in only one suit, it behooves declarer to try to strip the hand (remove all of their safe exit cards) before attacking the critical suit. The play should go like this: West wins the opening lead, draws trump and plays three more rounds of clubs, discarding a heart (clubs are now stripped). Declarer returns to the DA, stripping that suit, and runs the H8 into South's queen. (**Defenders normally win tricks with the lower equal.**) This leaves South with a choice of two uncomfortable options. South can either lead a heart into the AJ and lose a heart trick or exit with a diamond giving declarer a ruff and sluff - and also lose a heart trick. If a ruff-sluff diamond is returned, West, with two hearts in the closed hand and three in dummy, discards from the short heart hand and ruffs in the long heart hand. Declarer has the rest with the HA and high trump.

If the hand is not stripped before hearts are broached, South will have safe exit cards upon winning the HQ and will wind up taking two heart tricks.

Dlr: East

Vul: Neither

North  
S. 987  
H. Q105  
D. 96  
C. K7532

West  
S. K543  
H. AKJ6  
D. 752  
C. 104

East  
S. AJ10  
H. 72  
D. AKQJ108  
C. J9

South  
S. Q62  
H. 9843  
D. 43  
C. AQ86

East	South	West	North
1D	Pass	1H	Pass
3D	Pass	3S	Pass
4S	Pass	5D	All Pass

Opening lead: CA

Bidding Commentary: West bids 3S hoping East can bid 3NT. East is allowed to raise a second suit with only three cards because East has previously denied four spades with the 3D rebid. The raise to 4S shows three strong spades. West's spades are relatively weak so West decides to play in a contract where there are 9 trump as opposed to seven.

Lead Commentary: Eskimos in Alaska know that neither East nor West have a club stopper. If West had one, he would have bid 3NT over 3D. If East had one, he would have bid 3NT over 3S. It doesn't matter what South has in clubs, a club lead is automatic given this revealing sequence.

Defensive Commentary: If South wins the second club, South should exit passively with a diamond or a heart. If North wins the second club, the only safe exit is a diamond. Sometimes you have to sit back and wait for the setting trick and not break a suit (spades) that could cost a trick.

Play Commentary: Declarer needs to take the rest of the tricks and has a choice of several finesses. There is the heart finesse or the spade finesse in either direction. In order to maximize chances, declarer draws trump and plays the ace-king and trumps a heart. If the queen falls (it does), East's spade problems are over. A spade can be discarded on the HJ. If the HQ doesn't drop, East has to guess spades. A good ploy is to lead the SJ. If South covers, East's problems are over. If South ducks smoothly, East might decide to rise with the SK and play North for the SQ.