

These hands are from Eddie Kantar's wonderful book "Thinking Bridge"

#149 Dlr: South

Vul: E-W

	North	
	S. 107632	
	H. J	
	D. KJ863	
	C. 86	
West		East
S. AKQJ98		S. -
H. Q10		H. K75
D. 95		D. AQ10742
C. AKQ		C. 7432
	South	
	S. 54	
	H. A986432	
	D. -	
	C. J1095	

South	West	North	East
3H	4S	All Pass	

Opening lead: HJ

Bidding Commentary: South has a normal 3H opening bid and West, with 9 winning tricks, bids 4S, not 3S. One actually 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 dead broke, nobody would ever bid! Take some chances!

Defensive Commentary: South wins the HA. If West follows with the H10, South knows that West remains with the HQ and can trump a heart. Furthermore, after North trumps a heart, South can trump the diamond return and lead yet another heart hoping to promote a spade trick for North. However, if West follows with the HQ at trick one, a card West is known to hold, and retains the H10, an equal to the HQ, South 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 (HJ) as declarer put yourself in the head of the defender (South), who plays third hand. South knows from the lead that you have the HQ, but can't possibly know who has the H10. The H10 and the HQ are equals once the jack is led. A good declarer (you) must play cards you are known to hold (HQ) as quickly as possible. The HQ 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-if you have equals to that card in your hand or dummy.

#87 Dlr: North
Vul: E-W

North
S. 10
H. K72
D. AJ863
C. AKJ3

West
S. AJ43
H. 8653
D. K9
C. 1087

East
S. K9652
H. 94
D. Q105
C. 942

South
S. Q87
H. AQJ10
D. 742
C. Q65

North	East	South	West
1D	Pass	1H	Pass
2C	Pass	2NT	Pass
3H	Pass	4H	All Pass

Opening lead: H3

Bidding Commentary: This is a bidding problem for North-South to arrive at a contract of 4H **intelligently**, the only game contract that makes, with a 4-3 fit no less. It all starts with North rebidding 2C. The North hand is too strong to raise to 2H. Hands with this distribution and 15+ 17 HCP bid both suits, and then support partner's major. The 2NT rebid is not forcing and shows 11-12 HCP (conceivably 10 with a strong five card suit). However, the 3H rebid is **forcing**, promises 3 card support, and describes the strength and distribution to a 'tee'.

It is now up to South to realize that a 4-3 fit is more than playable, it is desirable! How does South come to this conclusion?

1. South's spades are not strong enough to play notrump facing a known singleton.
2. The four card trump holding is very strong, typically AKQx, AKJx, AQJx or KQJx.
3. Spade ruffs can be taken in the **short** trump hand allowing the longer, stronger four card holding to draw trump.

Defensive Commentary: With dummy marked with a singleton spade and three hearts, a trump lead will cut down spade ruffs.

Play Commentary: South counts nine notrump tricks: four hearts, four clubs and the DA. A spade ruff is needed. South wins the lead, exits a spade, wins the trump return, ruffs a spade, back to the CQ, trumps drawn and runs clubs for 10 tricks.

#137 Dlr: West
Vul: Both

North
S. A853
H. 76542
D. 85
C. 87

West
S. QJ
H. AKQJ9
D. 432
C. 542

East
S. K4
H. -
D. AKQJ10976
C. AK6

South
S. 109762
H. 1083
D. -
C. QJ1093

West	North	East	South
1H	Pass	2D	Pass
2H	Pass	4NT	Pass
5D	Pass	6D	All Pass

Opening lead: CQ

Bidding Commentary: The moment West opens, East plans to end up in 6D or 7D. Bidding Blackwood with a void is not recommended. If partner shows one ace, you may not know which it is. However, in this sequence it looks very much like it would be in hearts. East was hoping to find two aces so he could bid 7NT, being able to count 13 tricks.

Lead Commentary: With two sequence leads available (S10, CQ) lead from the stronger. As it happens, this is a great hand with either lead. First the CQ.

Play Commentary: East wins, draws trump, and desperate for a dummy entry, plays the SK.

Defensive Commentary: It should be clear to North that East is void in hearts and is desperate for a dummy entry. North counters by ducking the SK.

Play Commentary: #2: If North ducks the SK, East has one last hope. East cashes a second club and exits a spade. As it happens when North wins the SA he is void in clubs and has to put declarer in dummy with either a heart or a spade return. If the S10 is led, North plays the ace at trick one and East alertly unblocks the SK. The SJ is now the entry to the hearts.

This hand was rotated for the lesson (the West hand shown was held by South)

#84 Dlr: West
Vul: Both

			North	
			S. 6	
			H. Q97654	
			D. J8	
			C. J832	
	West			East
	S. AKQJ43			S. 975
	H. KJ83			H. A2
	D. AK			D. 9732
	C. A			C. Q754
			South	
			S. 1082	
			H. 10	
			D. Q10654	
			C. K1096	
West	North	East	South	
2C	Pass	2D	Pass	
2S	Pass	3S	Pass	
6S	All Pass			

Opening lead: C2

Bidding Commentary: Right or wrong, West decides to give up on a grand slam.

Lead Commentary: Not clear and not much to go on.

Defensive Commentary: When dummy plays low at trick one, South inserts the **9**. When dummy has an honor and third hand has a higher and a lower honor, the lower honor is inserted. Here, the 9 and 10 are equals, so the 9 is the correct play. The play of the 10 would deny the 9. Do not be careless with equals on defense! Also third hand takes tricks with the lower or lowest equal.

Play Commentary: Declarer plans to ruff at least one heart in dummy, hopefully two. West wins the CA, cashes the SA, leads a heart to the ace and then a heart from dummy.

Defensive Commentary #2: If South ruffs the second heart, South is ruffing a loser, called "ruffing air". Declarer plays low, wins the likely diamond return, cashes a second spade, removing South's last spade. Now it easy enough to ruff the HJ in dummy. West loses one trick. If South **doesn't** ruff the second heart, discarding a diamond instead, West wins the king but has to lose **two** more tricks! Each time West tries to ruff a heart, South overruffs. Down one. Conclusion: Do not trump air if you can later overtrump dummy in that suit.

#83 Dlr: South
Vul: E-W

	North	
	S. 43	
	H. 1098	
	D. AQ1098	
	C. AJ6	
West		East
S. Q872		S. KJ65
H. 654		H. KQJ7
D. 6542		D. K3
C. 73		C. 942
	South	
	S. A109	
	H. A32	
	D. J7	
	C. KQ1085	

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

Opening lead: S2 (4th best)

Bidding Commentary: East's takeout double shows opening bid values with at least four cards in the two unbids. South's 1NT rebid shows at least one stopper in each major with 13-14 HCP.

North's hand is worth more than 11 HCP. A strong five card suit facing a balanced hand is worth at **least** one extra point. Also, having honors concentrated in one's long suit as well as in partner's bid suit is yet another upgrade.

Defensive Commentary: East's proper play at trick one is the SK, the higher of non-equals. If the king is allowed to hold, East should shift to the HK. East can see that three hearts tricks can be established before the DK can be knocked out. Three hearts + one spade + one diamond = five tricks. What about returning partner's suit? What about it? When a defender can see a sure set by not returning partner's suit, why return it?

Play Commentary: West's lead of the S2 indicates four spades, so East also has four spades. Translation: The opponents are entitled to three spade tricks, holdup or no holdup. Holdup plays are **not** designed for suits that are evenly divided in the opponents' hands. Holdup plays work best when the opponents' suit is unevenly divided, perhaps 5-3, etc. The idea is to void the shorter hand and then aim all finesses into that hand. Another compelling reason not to hold up is vulnerability in another suit (hearts). South can't stand a heart shift and does best to win the first spade and run the DJ. East wins and the defense cashes three spades. End of story. South remains with the balance of tricks.

#141 Dlr: West
Vul: Neither

			North		
			S. A		
			H. A653		
			D. J1092		
			C. 10872		
	West			East	
	S. QJ964			S. K102	
	H. K4			H. 108	
	D. A7			D. K85	
	C. A954			C. KQJ63	
			South		
			S. 8753		
			H. QJ972		
			D. Q643		
			C. -		
West	North	East	South		
1S	Pass	2C	Pass		
3C	Pass	3S	Pass		
4S	Dbl.	All Pass			

Opening lead: C8

Bidding Commentary: East's 3S bid, delayed support at the three level, is forcing and shows three card support. But what is the double all about? If the East-West bidding can be trusted, South either has a singleton or void in clubs. Holding the SA, a quick entry, and the HA, yet another entry, North figures to be able to give South at **least** two club ruffs.

Lead Commentary: North leads a high club. In case South ruffs, hopefully South will consider the C8 as a suit preference request for a return in the higher ranking side suit, hearts.

Defensive Commentary: South ruffs the opening lead and returns the HQ. Assuming West covers, North wins and gives South a second club ruff. South cashes the HJ and gets out with a diamond. Declarer wins and plays a spade. North wins and gives South a third club ruff. Down 3. That's why North doubled.

When the bidding indicates partner has extreme shortness in a side suit and the opening leader has the ace of trump along with a side suit ace, the opening leader should double and lead partner's short suit!

Feel free to contact me with any questions at LynnYokel@gmail.com