

Six Hands (from Eddie Kantar's "Thinking Bridge")

#73 Dlr: South

Vul: None

North
S. AKJ2
H. K63
D. 762
C. 532

West
S. Q10873
H. 10542
D. J10
C. 107

East
S. 5
H. QJ7
D. Q943
C. KQJ98

South
S. 964
H. A98
D. AK85
C. A76

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Opening lead: S7

Bidding Commentary: With a 4-3-3-3 hand pattern including a four card major, in the long run responder does best not to use Stayman.

Lead Commentary: Normal with the given bidding. However, if North responds 2C, Stayman, East makes a lead directing double, and now West leads the C10 against any eventual contract.

Play Commentary: If West leads the S7, presumably 4th highest, South can use the Rule of 11 as a guide in the play. The size of the spot card led is subtracted from 11. The remainder (4) tells South how many cards above the 7 there are in the three remaining hands, North, East and South. North has three cards above the 7 and South has one which takes care of all four spades higher than the 7. Translation: East has no card higher than the 7 and South can play low from dummy at trick one and win the S9.

Later South leads a spade to the jack and takes four spade tricks along with five other top tricks to make 3NT. Unless South plays a low spade at trick one, the contract cannot be made. Also, a club lead, the suit which would have been led had North responded 2C, dooms 3NT.

Defensive Commentary: Third hand, East, can also use the Rule of 11 to determine how many spades above the 7 South has. East knows that there are four spades above the 7 in the North, East and South hands. East can see three in the dummy and East has none.

Voila, South has one spade higher than the 7.

#72 Dlr: South

Vul: Neither

		North	
		S. 83	
		H. 984	
		D. 109875	
		C. 832	
	West		East
	S. A652		S. KJ104
	H. A32		H. KQ105
	D. AJ6		D. KQ
	C. 1075		C. 964
		South	
		S. Q97	
		H. J76	
		D. 432	
		C. AKQJ	
South	West	North	East
1C	Dbl.	Pass	2C
Pass	2S	Pass	4S
All Pass			

Opening lead: C2

Bidding Commentary: East is far too strong to make a **non-forcing** jump response to a takeout double. With two four card **majors** and 10+ HCP, a cuebid is the way to begin. In response to a cuebid, both the doubler and the cuebidder bid four (or five) card suits in **ascending** order. West's 2S rebid denies four cards in either red suit and East raises to game. A raise after a cuebid is **not** forcing. In general, when raising partner, bid the limit of your hand. The one who knows, goes!

Lead Commentary: When leading partner's unsupported suit, the **lowest** card is led from three or four small cards. Had the suit been supported, the **highest** card is led from three or four small cards. However, with three or four cards headed by an **honor**, (10, J, Q or K) the lowest card is led whether or not the suit has been supported. At a trump contract holding Axx(x) the ace is led.

Defensive Commentary: South cashes three clubs and takes stock. Three aces are missing and West surely has them to justify the bidding. In addition, West knows that

South needs the SQ to open the bidding. What a game! Everyone knows what everybody has, so what should South do?

Simply stated: If a defender is **absolutely** sure there are **zero** tricks coming from the side suits, try giving declarer a ruff and a sluff! It works here. North ruffs the fourth club with the S8, promoting South's Q97 to the setting trick.

#79 Dlr: South
 Vul: Neither

		North	
		S. 543	
		H. 52	
		D. KQJ105	
		C. QJ10	
	West		East
	S. J9		S. 10876
	H. Q109		H. J843
	D. 762		D. A98
	C. K9732		C. 86
		South	
		S. AKQ2	
		H. AK76	
		D. 43	
		C. A54	
South	West	North	East
2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Opening lead: C3

Bidding Commentary: It is acceptable to open 1NT or 2NT with a small doubleton. A good partner will have strength in your weak suit. If it scares you, stick the HK in with your diamonds and if something goes wrong, tell your partner the lighting in the room is awful.

Defensive Commentary: When third hand cannot beat dummy's card (assuming dummy plays the queen or lower), third hand gives count. Playing 'standard count' East plays the C8 high-low to show an even number of cards; low-high shows an odd number. Playing 'upside down count', a popular variant, high-low shows an even number and low-high an odd number of cards.

Play Commentary: In order to enjoy dummy's diamonds, assuming the defenders win the **second** diamond, South needs a **later** entry to dummy. To **ensure** a later entry, South wins the first club with the **ace** and then attacks diamonds. Even if East takes the second diamond, there is no way South can be prevented from entering dummy with a club to

take 11 tricks: 4 diamonds, 3 spades, 2 hearts and 2 clubs. If South wins the first club in dummy and East wins the second diamond and returns a club, South can't use the diamonds and winds up with 8 tricks - a 3 trick swing.

Defensive Commentary: When dummy's diamonds are attacked, the hand with weakness (West) is obligated to give count! Assuming West gives count, East can figure South for two diamonds and will win the second diamond. This is optimum defense and forces declarer to find a side suit entry to dummy.

Note: This hand has been rotated for the lesson. (South hand is East's, etc.)

#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.

#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.

Note: This hand was rotated for the lesson (East has South's hand, etc.)

#89 Dlr: North
Vul: N-S

	North	
	S. A642	
	H. J10	
	D. AQ5	
	C. A642	
West		East
S. J985		S. 103
H. AK		H. Q7654
D. 1098		D. J763
C. Q1098		C. 75
	South	
	S. KQ7	
	H. 9832	
	D. K42	
	C. KJ3	

North	East	South	West
1NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Opening lead: H5

Bidding Commentary: South does not bother using Stayman with a 4-3-3-3 hand pattern. There are more downsides than upsides.

Defensive Commentary: South takes the AK of hearts, playing equal honors out of order to show a doubleton, and exits with the D10.

Play Commentary: North has eight top tricks with many possibilities for a ninth: Spades 3-3; the CQ with East; the club finesse, clubs breaking 3-3 if the finesse loses. However, none are sure things. The 100% line is to develop a ninth trick in hearts! Dummy has the 98 and the AKJ10 have already been played. The only higher heart outstanding is the queen. To ensure 9 tricks, the diamond return can be won in dummy and a heart played discarding a **club**. After North takes the queen, the H8 is the ninth trick. A tenth trick is possible if declarer cashes his red suit winners discarding clubs before attacking either black suit. Poor West has to make two discards. A spade discard is instant death and discarding two clubs is probably not going to work either.

The importance of following the progression of intermediate cards to winning or **near** winning rank cannot be overstressed. There will be times when eights and nines come to the fore because most or all of the other higher honors have been played. Give intermediate cards their due. They will love you for it.

#90 Dlr: West
Vul: E-W

	North		
	S. 32		
	H. QJ98		
	D. AJ3		
	C. AQ107		
West		East	
S. AQ765		S. 4	
H. A43		H. 10652	
D. Q76		D. K854	
C. 84		C. 6532	
	South		
	S. KJ1098		
	H. K7		
	D. 1092		
	C. KJ9		
West	North	East	South
1S	Dbl.	All Pass	

Opening lead: S2

Bidding Commentary: When partner makes a takeout double and catches you with five or six cards in opener's suit, it is not an automatic 'pass'. What matters is the strength of the

intermediates in opener's suit. With strong intermediates, particularly not vul. versus vul, passing is usually a better option than bidding. However, responder should have at least **three natural** trump tricks to even think about passing a one level takeout double. Change South's spades to QJ743, K10843 or K95432 and South should **not** pass the double. South does not have anything resembling three natural trump tricks. South must find another bid. After South passes, West has no place to hide. If East or West decide to run, any eventual contract should be doubled.

Lead Commentary: When partner passes a one level takeout double he is not only asking for a trump lead, he is **begging** for one. A pass of a low level takeout double says, "I have stronger trump than the opener. I want to draw declarer's trump!" The idea is to prevent declarer from making any of his small trump by ruffing, if possible.

Defensive Commentary: The defenders should play trump at every opportunity eventually drawing West's trump. If they do, West takes four tricks.

Play Commentary: This is not a fun hand to play. Declarer can only hope the defense slips and perhaps allows a club ruff. If they don't, it's down three for an 800 point loss, more than enough to compensate North-South for not bidding 3NT. It is a common error to think big sets cannot be obtained by doubling low level contracts.

Questions? Contact Lynn Yokel at LynnYokel@gmail.com