

**These hands are from Eddie Kantar's**  
**"Thinking Bridge"**  
*(some hands were rotated for the lesson)*

#91 Dlr: West  
 Vul: N-S

	North	
	S. K765	
	H. 93	
	D. Q1082	
	C. K108	
West		East
S. A102		S. J4
H. 4		H. KQJ108765
D. 754		D. AJ3
C. QJ7432		C. -
	South	
	S. Q983	
	H. A2	
	D. K96	
	C. A965	

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	4H	All Pass

Opening lead: S3

Bidding Commentary: East does best to open 4H facing a passed partner. Opening four bids give the opponents fits. South is strong enough to double 1H, even 2H, weak, but with a doubleton heart needs the strength of a strong 1NT opening to double 3H or 4H, both takeout doubles. With a singleton heart, South can double with as few as 14+ HCP.

Lead Commentary: There is no clear-cut lead from the South hand.

Defensive Commentary: Dummy plays low at trick one and North wins the king. North decides to attack diamonds, a reasonable shift. Leading back "partner's suit" would be a terrible mistake.

Play Commentary: This hand is decided by East's play at trick one! East knows from the play of the king that South has the SQ. If East unblocks the SJ (the key play), East can later lead a low spade to the 10 and discard a losing diamond on the SA. If South does not unblock the jack, East takes one spade trick - assuming South does not cover the SJ, and is held to nine tricks. Declarer makes the same unblock holding Qx facing A10x (again no side suit entry to dummy) when a low card is led, dummy plays low and third hand wins the king. Dump the queen! Do it!

#104 Dlr: East  
Vul: Both

North  
S. 7  
H. QJ108  
D. Q107632  
C. 85

West  
S. KJ984  
H. 753  
D. K  
C. K1094

East  
S. AQ102  
H. AK62  
D. J  
C. AQJ6

South  
S. 653  
H. 94  
D. A9854  
C. 732

East	South	West	North
1C	Pass	1S	Pass
3D	Pass	4C	Pass
4NT	Pass	5C	Pass
6S	All Pass		

Opening lead: HQ

**Bidding Commentary:** 3D is a game forcing splinter jump. It describes a game forcing spade raise with a singleton diamond. 4C is a cuebid and 4NT was Key Card Blackwood where the king of the agreed suit counts as an ace! So there are five aces! The 5C response shows one ace (the SK), and East bids slam expecting West to have both black kings. If you like this version of Blackwood, you will probably like Roman Key Card Blackwood as well. In that version both the king and the queen of the agreed suit can be shown – or denied.

**Defensive Commentary:** Although a diamond lead would have defeated the contract, a heart lead looks normal.

**Play Commentary:** It looks as if there is a diamond and a heart loser, but there is a chance! Declarer must hope that the defender with the DA has fewer than three hearts. Declarer wins the opening lead, draws trump, strips clubs, cashes a 2<sup>nd</sup> heart (key play) and exits a diamond, an equal length suit. Sure enough, South, the player with the DA, has two hearts and is forced to lead a diamond allowing West to discard his remaining heart while ruffing in dummy.

**Holding the AKx(x)x opposite xxx in a side suit in a trump contract does not necessarily mean a loser!** If the hand can be stripped and the AK cashed before the throw-in, the player being throw in may be void in the AK suit (South has no more hearts) and be forced to concede a ruff and sluff. Something to think about.

# 101 Dlr: South  
Vul: Neither

North  
S. A75  
H. K74  
D. 984  
C. Q743

West  
S. J102  
H. Q65  
D. KQ105  
C. J95

East  
S. 93  
H. A1098  
D. 762  
C. A862

South  
S. KQ864  
H. J32  
D. AJ3  
C. K10

South	West	North	East
1S	Pass	2S	All Pass

Opening lead: DK

**Bidding Commentary:** North should raise to 2S with a flat 9 count. A raise is more encouraging than a 1NT response. Normally when a 5 card suit is supported, the hand can be upgraded. But when the distribution of the hand is 5-3-3-2, forget it.

**Defensive Commentary:** When the king is led from the KQ(x), and small cards appear in the dummy, third hand signals encouragement with the jack or ace, not with a doubleton.

**Defensive Commentary #2:** On defense, when a balanced dummy appears, think 'passive'; lead safe suits, suits that cannot cost a trick. Side suit tricks cannot get away. Where are they going? When there is no long suit in dummy for declarer to establish, defensive tricks will not vanish. Patience. After the DK holds, West does best to shift to a low spade, the safest exit. If East has the Q or K, nothing has been lost, and if partner has no honor nothing has been lost. Any other switch can (and does) cost a trick.

**Play Commentary:** It is routine to duck the lead of a king holding AJx(x) hoping the suit is continued. This hand is a dogfight to see who can avoid breaking new suits. Declarer has 7 top tricks and will probably make 8, but it is not a certainty.

#107 Dlr: North  
Vul: Both

	North	
	S. 3	
	H. AQJ109643	
	D. 98	
	C. 104	
West		East
S. QJ107		S. A965
H. 8		H. 2
D. K5		D. 7643
C. 876532		C. KQJ9
	South	
	S. K842	
	H. K75	
	D. AQJ102	
	C. A	

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

Opening lead: CK

**Bidding Commentary:** Strong eight card suits with less than opening bid strength (fewer than 10 HCP) should open four, not three! South checks for aces and bids the slam. North must have a play for slam with this dummy.

**Defensive Commentary:** When holding the KQJ of a suit along with a side suit ace, the KQJ suit is the preferred lead. Also, when dummy tables, West knows that East has an ace.

**Play Commentary:** North has two chances to make this hand, not one! He crosses to the closed hand with a trump and leads a spade, not a diamond! If East has the SA, the diamond finesse is not necessary. After East takes the SA, the SK furnishes a diamond discard. If West has the SA, a diamond finesse is still available. In effect, declarer is taking two finesses. If the diamond finesse is taken first and it loses, declarer is down even though East may have the SA. Two chances are better than one.

When declarer has a singleton facing a king plus another finesse available in a long suit and declarer can afford to lose one trick, lead the singleton suit first. If the ace is well placed it may mean no finesse will be necessary in the longer suit.

#109 Dlr: North  
Vul: None

	<b>North</b>	
	S. AQ104	
	H. A63	
	D. -	
	C. KJ9632	
<b>West</b>		<b>East</b>
S. 8732		S. 6
H. J2		H. Q1084
D. AQ853		D. J109
C. 74		C. AQ1075
	<b>South</b>	
	S. KJ95	
	H. K975	
	D. K7642	
	C. -	

North	East	South	West
1C	Pass	1H	Pass
1S	Pass	3S	Pass
4S	All Pass		

Opening lead: DJ (See 'lead commentary')

**Bidding Commentary:** South is not quite strong enough to bid 1D holding five diamonds along with one or two four card majors (needs at least 11 HCP). South's leap to 3S may seem conservative (some would leap to 4S), however a void in partner's first bid suit is not all it's cracked up to be. If partner's strength is in the void suit, the void is not worth that much. However, when partner is weak in the void suit, the void is worth its weight in gold.

**Lead Commentary:** The DJ is certainly tempting. Another possibility is a trump lead holding strong clubs, declarer's first bid suit. Though singleton trump leads are normally not on the top of the recommended list of opening leads, nothing is written in stone. As it happens, only a trump lead defeats the contract.

**Play Commentary:** With a void in each hand, a crossruff looms. Declarer can trump four diamonds in dummy and four clubs in his hand for eight trump tricks, and the AK of hearts make ten. So what's the problem? The problem is that before launching a straight crossruff, one should cash the necessary number of side suit winners first. Declarer should cash the HAK early. Why? Look at the West hand. If a crossruff is started early, West can discard a heart when a third club is ruffed. Now it is impossible to take two heart tricks. Also, when crossruffing, start by ruffing low in each hand saving the higher trumps for the later ruffs.

#110 Dlr: East  
Vul: Both

	<b>North</b>	
	S. 8765	
	H. 632	
	D. 97	
	C. Q1086	
<b>West</b>		<b>East</b>
S. A9		S. Q102
H. Q75		H. AK4
D. KJ2		D. AQ105
C. AK942		C. J53
	<b>South</b>	
	S. KJ43	
	H. J1098	
	D. 8643	
	C. 7	

East	South	West	North
1NT	Pass	6NT	All Pass

Opening lead: HJ

**Bidding Commentary:** West has a 17 point balanced hand with a good five card suit facing a strong notrump opener. If this isn't enough for slam, what is? The one who knows goes. Certainly West is the one who knows.

**Lead Commentary:** If you are lucky enough to have an honor sequence to lead against a slam contract, don't look a gift horse in the mouth-lead it! A spade lead is from outer space.

**Play Commentary:** As declarer this is the basic formula for notrump play: (1) Count your sure tricks **OUTSIDE** of the suit you plan to establish (clubs). You have one spade, three hearts, and four diamond tricks for a grand total of eight. This total tells you how many club tricks you need (4). (2) What is the best play for 4 tricks? If clubs break 3-2, there is no problem, so no need to concern yourself with irrelevancies. Concern yourself with a relevancy, a 4-1 club division.

The best play for four club tricks is to cash one high club and then lead low to the jack. This play produces 4 tricks no matter which opponent has Q10xx. (Play it out with the suit face up on a table if you are having trouble seeing it). Had the contract been 7NT, 5 club tricks would be needed and the best play for five tricks is to cash the AK and hope the queen drops.

#96 Dlr: North  
Vul: N-S

	North	
	S. J765	
	H. 6	
	D. A843	
	C. Q1072	
West		East
S. K4		S. Q1032
H. AQ9832		H. KJ10
D. 76		D. QJ10
C. AK8	South	C. 654
	S. A98	
	H. 754	
	D. K952	
	C. J93	

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

Opening lead: C2

Bidding Commentary: North has the ideal distribution for a passed hand takeout double, but lacks the necessary minimum strength, 8-9 HCP. East is better placed to raise hearts immediately as opposed to responding 1S. If East responds 1S and then prefers hearts at the two level (say West rebids 2C or 2D) East shows a **doubleton** heart. A good rule of thumb is to support partner's major suit opening bid directly with three card support and 7-10 support points.

Lead Commentary: Singleton trump leads as well as unsupported aces (excluding Ax with trump control) can be costly leads. Look elsewhere, like a spade or a club. With a choice of two unbid suits, tend to lead from the stronger, but not from one headed by an unsupported ace. In this case clubs are headed by 2 honors and spades by only one.

Play Commentary: West has four losers: one club, two diamonds and one spade. The spade and diamond losers are 'fast' losers, losers that can be taken any time the opponents get in. The club loser is 'slow', a loser that cannot be taken immediately. Declarer does not have time to work with diamonds which means letting the opponents in **twice**. Before the declarer can set up a diamond winner, the opponents can set up a club winner. However, with a trump lead, declarer has time to set up a diamond winner for a club pitch. Clearly, declarer must work with spades to try to discard a club. Best is to cross to a trump at trick two and lead a spade to the king. If it holds, a spade is led to the 10 hoping it drives out the ace. It does! If the king loses to the ace, declarer wins the club return and leads a spade to the ten hoping North has the jack. He does! After drawing trump the losing club goes on the SQ. You play so beautifully.

#108 Dlr: West  
Vul: Both

	<b>North</b>	
	S. 6	
	H. Q96	
	D. J8742	
	C. Q876	
<b>West</b>		<b>East</b>
S. KQ943		S. AJ752
H. AJ2		H. K743
D. A65		D. 3
C. A4		C. KJ5
	<b>South</b>	
	S. 108	
	H. 1085	
	D. KQ109	
	C. 10932	

West	North	East	South
1S	Pass	4D	Dbl.
4NT	Pass	5D	Pass
5NT	Pass	6H	Pass
7S	All Pass		

**Opening lead: D4**

**Bidding Commentary:** East's leap to 4D is a splinter jump showing a singleton diamond, strong spade support plus opening bid values. South's double of an artificial bid is lead directing. West has a perfect hand for slam: nothing wasted in diamonds, and when West finds the SA plus the heart and club kings in the East hand, he decides to gamble for a grand. Most would settle for a small slam.

**Play Commentary:** West can make this contract if South has the HQ or North has the CQ. Assuming one of these finesses works, West still has to take the right one! When two queens are missing and taking the right finesse means making the contract, play the AK of the longer suit (hearts). If the queen doesn't drop, take a finesse in the shorter suit, clubs. Yes, I know, you may have stopped in six and didn't have to worry about which finesse to take. But one day you might.

Many partnerships use a direct jump from 1S to 4C, 4D or 4H (second hand passing) to show a singleton in the jump suit, opening bid values and at least four card spade support. In response to a 1H opening, jumps to 3S (not 4S), 4C and 4D (second hand passing) are also splinter jumps. A direct jump to 4S is natural showing a zillion spades with less than opening bid strength. A 1S response to an opening bid followed by a leap to 4S after a minimum rebid also shows long, strong spades with opening bid strength.