

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

Hand 284 2C Opening. Reading the Lead. The First Trick. Avoiding a Ruff.

Dlr: North

Vul: N-S

North
S. KQJ1096
H. AKQJ8
D. A8
C. -

West
S. A32
H. 10
D. QJ10976
C. QJ9

East
S. 54
H. 96532
D. 5
C. K10843

South
S. 87
H. 74
D. K432
C. A7652

North	East	South	West
2C	Pass	2D	3D
3S	Pass	3NT	Pass
6S	All Pass		

Opening lead: D5

Bidding Commentary: As North, you can practically make slam in your own hand. All you need is one measly trick from partner for his 3NT bid, a bid which should show something in diamonds-maybe the king or maybe the QJx. Go for it!

Play Commentary: As North, the bidding and the lead (lowest spot card outstanding) screams at you that it is a singleton. The danger is that West has the SA and will give East a diamond ruff. The answer is to win the DK (key play #1), discard the DA on the CA (spectacular key play #2), and now lead a spade.

Defensive Commentary: As West, if a spade is led at trick two, rush up with the ace and give partner a diamond ruff. As East, clutch your five hearts for dear life. If declarer plays a slew of spades, there is no need to hang on to clubs, declarer is void. As it happens, your H9 is the setting trick-but only if you save all five hearts.

Play Commentary: As North, your last five cards should be hearts. In case one opponent has five hearts, you want to give that opponent every opportunity in the world to discard one before you cash your heart winners.

Hand 285 Suit Preference. Placing the Cards

Dlr: South

Vul: Both

North

S. 1064

H. 104

D. A63

C. K8753

West

S. AQ32

H. Q73

D. 72

C. AQ109

East

S. KJ87

H. 865

D. KJ54

C. J2

South

S. 95

H. AKJ92

D. Q1092

C. 64

South	West	North	East
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Pass	1C	Pass	1S
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2H	2S	All Pass	
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Opening lead: HA

Bidding Commentary: As East, with four diamonds, four spades and fewer than 12 HCP, respond 1S. However, with 12+ HCP, strong diamonds and weak spades, bid 1D and then bid spades next. If East-West use support doubles, West's raise to 2S shows four spades and a double of 2H shows three spades. As East, you are not strong enough to bid after partner's single raise. With a balanced hand and four spades, you need 10+ HCP to bid again.

Defensive Commentary: As North, start a high-low in hearts, and as South, continue with the ace and jack of hearts, suit preference, asking for a return in the higher ranking side suit, diamonds. As North, ruff the third heart, and as requested, lead a low diamond.

Play Commentary: As East, South, a passed hand, figures to have fewer than 12 HCP. South has turned up with the AKJ9x in hearts so doesn't figure to own the DA. Rise with the DK, draw trumps and take the club finesse. You wind up losing five tricks. The key play is the DK at trick four.

As declarer, pay attention to original passes when trying to place missing honor cards. It is an exception for a player who passes to have 12 HCP. Don't play for exceptions!

This hand was rotated 90 degrees for the lesson

Hand 289 Deception. Extra Tricks in the Trump Suit.

Dlr: East

Vul: E-W

North
S. 42
H. KJ1094
D. Q83
C. AK8

West	East
S. AJ10865	S. 3
H. A2	H. 65
D. 2	D. J97654
C. QJ42	C. 9765

South
S. KQ97
H. Q873
D. AK10
C. 103

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

Opening lead: S3

Bidding Commentary: As West, your hand is too strong to make a weak jump overcall. the equivalent of a Weak Two opening. As North, your 2H response in competition with a five-card suit shows 10+ HCP. With 7-9 HCP, make a negative double. With a good-looking six-card suit, a two level response in competition can show as few as 9-10 HCP.

Play Commentary: As North, after West captures a high honor with the SA, play the S4, concealing the S2, a card lower than the one that has been led. This deceptive play comes up time and time again. It is a ploy every aspiring declarer must learn to do automatically.

Defensive Commentary: As West, whether North plays the S2 or S4 at trick one, though it makes life easier if the S2 is played, your best chance to defeat the contract looking at the trump ace plus a singleton of your own, is to grab the SA and switch to your singleton. Why? You can always give partner a spade ruff when you get in with the HA, but the ruff can wait until you are void in diamonds. Now when you give partner a ruff, leading the SJ, suit preference for diamonds, partner ruffs and gives you a diamond ruff.

Hand 295 Preemptive Jump Overcall. Disappearing Trump Losers.

Dlr: West

Vul: E-W

North

S. 982

H. A10

D. K843

C. AQJ5

West

S. K5

H. KQJ8

D. A1054

C. 873

East

S. A

H. 97532

D. QJ76

C. 962

South

S. QJ107643

H. 64

D. 2

C. K104

West	North	East	South
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1D	Pass	1H	3S
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Pass	4S	All Pass	
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Opening lead: HK

Bidding Commentary: As North, you aren't quite strong enough to overcall 1NT, and your diamond length plus major suit shortness make a takeout double inadvisable. As South, your 3S overcall is equivalent to an opening 3S bid. As West, you aren't strong enough to bid 4H, when all you really wanted to do was bid two hearts! As North, you are strong enough (finally, someone is strong enough to bid something) to bid 4S with your minor suit honors well placed. As East, don't even think about bidding over 4S.

Play Commentary: After the heart lead you seemingly have four losers staring you in the face, one heart, one diamond and two spades. However, when you have a 10-card trump fit missing the ace-king, you may have a little magic at your disposal. If their clubs are divided 3-3 and you win the HA and immediately play four rounds of clubs discarding a heart, one of your opponents will trump the fourth club.

If one opponent has a singleton trump honor (East), and the other a doubleton trump honor (West), whoever trumps costs their side a trick! If West trumps, the ace-king of spades crash on the first round of spades and you lose two spades and a diamond, period. If East trumps with the SA, you lose two spades and a diamond, period. This is a neat slight of hand move to store in your memory bank when you have 10 trumps missing the ace-king, a solid side suit divided 4-3, plus a loser you have to get rid of early. It's magic!

Hand 299 The Negative Double. Promoting Defensive Trump Tricks.

Dlr: South

Vul: N-S

North
S. 10976
H. AKJ3
D. QJ
C. A109

West
S. A532
H. 109
D. AK1093
C. 86

East
S. 4
H. 87652
D. 8762
C. 532

South
S. KQJ8
H. Q4
D. 54
C. KQJ74

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

Opening lead: DA

Bidding Commentary: As North, your negative double of the 1D overcall with 4-4 in the majors is unlimited. It shows 6+ HCP. With a strong hand you come out of the bushes on your next bid. As South, after partner's negative double of 1D, bid as if partner has responded 1H and rebid 1S. As North, even though the DQJ figure to be worth diddly-squat, you are strong enough to leap to 4S. The one who knows, goes!

Defensive Commentary: As West, your Axxx of trumps along with a strong side suit can be a powerful defensive weapon, particularly when defending against a 4-4 trump fit. Your goal is to force either hand to trump a diamond. Once you do (even if it means giving them a ruff and a sluff), the opponents are now playing a 4-3 trump fit. When trumps are played, win the third round. At this point one opponent has a higher trump than you, the other is void and you have a low trump. But it's your lead! Play a fourth diamond and force out their last trump. You are left with the only remaining trump plus your last diamond, also a winner.

Play Commentary: As South, if West starts with three diamonds, discard a club from dummy, ruff in your hand and draw trumps. If West ducks twice (best defense), stop playing spades! Cash two rounds of hearts and play clubs. West has no answer.

Hand 300 Lead Directing Dbl. Responding to KCB With a Void. Strip and End Play.

Dlr: West

Vul: E-W

North

S. KQ10

H. AJ1073

D. A87

C. A8

West

S. 74

H. -

D. KQJ93

C. 975432

East

S. J986

H. K5

D. 106542

C. K6

South

S. A532

H. Q98642

D. -

C. QJ10

West	North	East	South
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Pass	1H	Pass	4D
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Dbl.	4NT	Pass	6D
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Pass	6H	All Pass	
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Opening lead: D4

Bidding Commentary: 4D is a splinter jump showing diamond shortness, usually a singleton, plus a hand with slam potential. This jump is stronger than a preemptive jump to 4H. As West, the double of 4D is lead directing. You can't stand any other lead! As South, when responding to Blackwood (or Keycard Blackwood) with a void and one ace, jump in the void suit! As North, you have all the aces, but unless you can be sure partner has the HK (helps to be playing Keycard Blackwood), it is too risky to bid a grand slam.

Lead Commentary: As East, when partner makes a lead directing double, lead the card that you would have led if partner had bid the suit.

Play Commentary: As North, trump the opening lead and lead the HQ from dummy. Who knows, maybe West will cover with Kx! When West discards, win the ace and make East pay for that HK. Discard a club on the DA, ruff a diamond, stripping diamonds, and now cash three rounds of spades. If spades break 3-3, discard a club on a winning spade. When spades are 4-2, ruff a spade and exit a heart to East's king. East has to lead a club from the king (death) or a diamond (slower death). If East leads a diamond, ruff in dummy, the longer club hand, and discard your losing club.

Questions? Feel free to contact me at LynnYokel@gmail.com