

Third Hand Not So High



By Marjorie Michelin

michelinonbridge@aol.com

We are all used to the phrase “Second Hand Low - Third Hand High.” Many still don’t understand that “BRIDGE LOGIC” trumps rules and adages.

Eddie Kantar’s columns always start with “THINK BRIDGE”. That is the best place to start. Don’t play cards aimlessly, pause, plan, and think! Here are his favorite examples.

REASONS NOT TO PLAY THIRD HAND HIGH

♠643
♠Q7 ♠AJ85
♠K1092

You have bid spades and partner leads the queen against a suit or notrump contract. Partner probably has a doubleton, leaving declarer with a likely K109x. You should play low. If you take the ace and return the suit, declarer can insert the ten and later lead low to the nine, limiting your side to one spade trick. But if you play low at trick one, you are sure to get two tricks.

♠KJ2
♠10763 ♠Q94
♠A85

Against a suit contract, partner leads a low spade, dummy plays low, and you have to assume that declarer has the ace (partner should not be underleading an ace on opening lead versus a suit contract). If so, it is better to stick in the nine, saving the queen over dummy’s jack. If partner is leading from the ten (she did lead low, usually from an honor), the nine will drive out the ace.

♠K103
♠Q962 ♠J84
♠A75

Against a suit contract, partner leads the ♠2, dummy plays low, and there is no point in playing the jack. Declarer (almost certainly) has the ace and if you play the jack, declarer will win and later finesse the ten to get three spade tricks. A better play is the ♠8. If partner led from the Q9x(x), the eight forces the ace, and declarer is held to two spade tricks.

Contract 3NT

Dummy

♠QJ10

Lead ♠9

You

♠AK875

♥J98

♦987

♣43

You have no entry to your spade suit

You must duck the first spade to keep communication with Partner and hope he has an entry to enjoy 4 spade tricks.

However, play an encouraging spade!

To delve deeper, check out my online class below: ♣