318. Length before strength

By Ron Klinger

Dealer North : East-West vulnerable

North ▲ 32 ♥ AK76 ♦ KQ106 ♣ 65	52		
South ♠ AK95 ♥ J943 ♦ ♣ Q8742			
West	North 1♦	East Pass	South 1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	$2NT^{(1)}$
Pass	4 ♣ ⁽²⁾	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	
(1) Game-force, asking about heart length			
(2) 4 heart		-	U

In reply to the 2NT ask, many would play 44 as showing club shortage. West leads the 4J. Plan the play.

The deal is from the 2017 Spingold (USA K-O Open Teams) semi-final between LAVAZZA and SCHWARTZ.

Board 3: Dealer North : East-West vulnerable

	North	
	▲ 32	
	🕈 AK76	
	♦ KQ1062	
	★ 65	
West		East
▲ J1087		♠ Q64
♥ Q2		V 1085
♦ 8753		♦ AJ94
♣ A103		🜲 KJ9
	South	
	♠ AK95	
	♥ J943	
	♦	
	♣ Q8742	

This was yesterday's question:

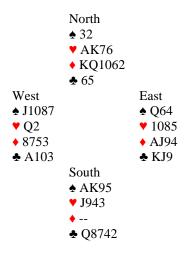
Dealer North : East-West vulnerable

What would you do as South with

West	North	East	South	♠ AK95
	1♦	Pass	1♥	♥ J943
Pass	2♥	Pass	?	+
				♣ Q8742

With SCHWARTZ North-South, 2^{\checkmark} was passed out. With South having a 6½ loser hand facing a 6-7 loser hand, that was a very conservative action by South. Recommended is a 2NT rebid to ask North about the heart length and the hand strength. In reply $3^{\checkmark} = 4$ trumps, minimum, 3-other-suit = 3 hearts only and 4-level = 4 trumps, maximum. West led the \bigstar J. Declarer made eight tricks (to justify the pass), North-South +110.

Board 3: Dealer North : East-West vulnerable



LAVAZZA North-South had the auction to 4♥ at the top of page 1. North has only 12 HCP, but with the two doubletons and the excellent location of the high cards (in the long suits), North has a 6-loser hand and that justifies insisting on game.

West led the ΔJ : two – six – king. The recommended approach for situations like this is to set up your long suit. You can deal with the spade losers by setting up a diamond winner and, if need be, ruffing a spade in dummy.

At trick 2, Alejandro Bianchedi, South, played the \clubsuit 7: ten – six – nine. West switched to the \clubsuit 2: ace – five – three. South continued with the \clubsuit 5: jack – two – three. East returned the \clubsuit 8: nine – queen – king. After \blacklozenge K, ace, ruffed, and a club ruffed in dummy, South played diamonds and had ten tricks, losing two clubs and a heart. That was worth +420 and 6 Imps to LAVAZZA.

This was the auction when the deal was replayed in a game on BBO:

West	North	East	South
	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

If partner is allowed to raise 1^{\checkmark} to 2^{\checkmark} with three trumps and a suitable hand, it is risky to jump to 4^{\checkmark} . It cannot hurt to check on partner's heart length via 2NT. It could go:

West	North	East	South
	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	27	Pass	2NT
Pass	4 ♥ ⁽¹⁾	All Pass	
(1) 4 have	nto and mad		

(1) 4 hearts and maximum values

West led the $\bigstar J$; South took the $\bigstar A$, $\bigstar K$ and went off track, ruffing the $\bigstar 5$ with the $\checkmark 6$. Next came the $\bigstar K$, ace, ruffed, and the $\bigstar 9$: ten – $\checkmark K - \bigstar 9$. Declarer discarded a club on the $\blacklozenge Q$ and ruffed a diamond in hand. After $\bigstar 4$: three – five – jack, West switched to the $\checkmark 5$: nine – queen – ace. Down to a trump in each hand, declarer played the $\checkmark 7$ to the $\checkmark J$ and lost the last three tricks for one down, –50.

Notice that declarer did not touch the long suit until much too late and never enjoyed the benefit of the 3-3 split in clubs.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer West : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♣	?

What would you do as South with:

- ▲ K765
 ♥ Q64
 ♦ A42
- \Lambda KQJ

Why not phone or email your bridge partners and compare your answers and your reasoning?

I used to eat a lot of natural foods, until I found out that most people die of natural causes.