

326. First in, best served

By Ron Klinger

Dealer East : North-South vulnerable

What would you do as East with:

♠ 72
♥ Q
♦ J874
♣ AJ10742

Today's deal arose in the 2017 Spingold (USA K-O Open Teams) semi-final between [LAVAZZA](#) and [SCHWARTZ](#). Given the vulnerability, I would have expected both Easts to open 3♣. Neither did.

Yes, I know it is only a 6-card suit, but the 6-4 pattern makes up for that. The shortage in both majors makes a pre-emptive opening attractive. Given the A-J-10 holding in clubs, the hand is close to 7 losers and so 6 playing tricks. Maybe their standards for a 3♣ opening at favourable vulnerability are lower than this holding.

Session 2 : Board 18

Dealer East : North-South vulnerable

	North	
	♠ AQ83	
	♥ J108	
	♦ AK96	
	♣ 63	
West		East
♠ K104		♠ 72
♥ 9543		♥ Q
♦ 1032		♦ J874
♣ K85		♣ AJ10742
	South	
	♠ J965	
	♥ AK762	
	♦ Q5	
	♣ Q9	

West	North	East	South
<i>Stamatov</i>	<i>Bianchedi</i>	<i>Danatov</i>	<i>Madala</i>
		Pass	1♥
Pass	2♣ ⁽¹⁾	3♣	Pass
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) Artificial, game-force

West led the ♣K, followed by the ♣5 to the ♣A. East switched to the ♦4: five – ten – ace. Declarer played the ♥J: queen – ace – five, followed by the ♠5 to the ♠Q, ♦6 to the ♦Q, ♠6: ten – ace – seven and ♦K, pitching the ♠9. Then came ♦9: ♦J – ♠J – ♠K. East exited with a club. South ruffed and made the last three tricks for +620.

Dealer East : North-South vulnerable

<p>North</p> <p>♠ AQ83</p> <p>♥ J108</p> <p>♦ AK96</p> <p>♣ 63</p>	<p>East</p> <p>♠ 72</p> <p>♥ Q</p> <p>♦ J874</p> <p>♣ AJ10742</p>
<p>West</p> <p>♠ K104</p> <p>♥ 9543</p> <p>♦ 1032</p> <p>♣ K85</p>	<p>South</p> <p>♠ J965</p> <p>♥ AK762</p> <p>♦ Q5</p> <p>♣ Q9</p>

West	North	East	South
<i>Duboin</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Bilde</i>	<i>M.Bell</i>
		Pass	1♥
Pass	2♣ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	2♥ ⁽²⁾
Pass	2♠ ⁽³⁾	Pass	2NT ⁽⁴⁾
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

- (1) Artificial, game-force
- (2) Hearts and spades
- (3) Spade support or heart support
- (4) Which is it?

There are two interesting features about the auction: (1) As 2♣ was artificial, East could have doubled to suggest a club lead or a sacrifice; (2) Did North choose hearts as the trump suit to protect against the opening lead in case South had ♠K-x or ♣A-Q?

West led the ♦2: six – seven – queen. South played the ♥A at trick 2, dropping East's ♥Q. That made life much easier for South than South's play of the ♥J from dummy at the other table. Then came the ♥10, ♥J, ♦A, ♦K, discarding the ♣9, followed by the ♠A and the ♣3 to the ♠J and ♠K. West switched to the ♣5. East took the ♣A and played the ♦J, ruffed with the ♥7 and over-ruffed by the ♥9. South had the rest, 10 tricks, +620, no swing.

When the deal was replayed in a game on BBO, East opened 3♣.

West	North	East	South
		3♣	Pass
4♣	Pass	Pass	Pass

Declarer made six clubs and a diamond ruff in dummy. That was three off, –150, but a good score for East-West.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer West : East-West vulnerable

What would you do as North with:

West	North	East	South
2♥ ⁽¹⁾	?		

(1) Weak two

♠ AJ1076
 ♥ A7
 ♦ AKJ986
 ♣ --

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

Why not go to a costume party as a tortoise? You'll have a shell of a time.