326. First in, best served

By Ron Klinger

Dealer East: North-South vulnerable

What would you do as East with:

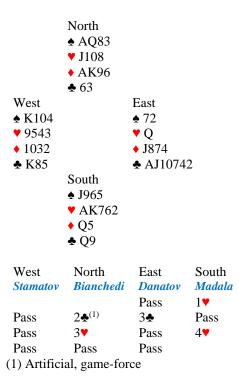
- **★**72
- **♥** Q
- ♦ J874
- ♣ AJ10742

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



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

Dealer East: North-South vulnerable

```
North
            ◆ AO83
            ♥ J108
            ♦ AK96
            ♣ 63
 West
                         East
                         ♦ 72
 ★ K104
 9543
                         Y O
 ♦ 1032
                         ♦ J874
                         ♣ AJ10742
 ♣ K85
            South
            ♦ J965
            ♥ AK762
            ♦ O5
            ♣ Q9
 West
                            South
           North
                    East
                            M.Bell
 Duboin
                    Bilde
           Gold
                    Pass
                            1♥
           2♣<sup>(1)</sup>
                            2<del>v</del>(2)
 Pass
                    Pass
           2 \stackrel{(3)}{\bullet}
                            2NT^{(4)}
 Pass
                    Pass
           3♥
 Pass
                    Pass
 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 $\blacklozenge 2$: six – seven – queen. South played the $\blacktriangledown A$ at trick 2, dropping East's $\blacktriangledown Q$. That made life much easier for South than South's play of the $\blacktriangledown J$ from dummy at the other table. Then came the $\blacktriangledown 10$, $\blacktriangledown J$, $\blacklozenge A$, $\blacklozenge K$, discarding the $\clubsuit 9$, followed by the $\spadesuit A$ and the $\spadesuit 3$ to the $\spadesuit J$ and $\spadesuit K$. West switched to the $\clubsuit 5$. East took the $\clubsuit A$ and played the $\blacklozenge J$, ruffed with the $\blacktriangledown 7$ and over-ruffed by the $\blacktriangledown 9$. South had the rest, 10 tricks, $\dotplus 620$, 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:

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West North East South 

2▼¹¹ ? 

(1) Weak two

AJ1076

✓ A7

AKJ986
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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.