

Salsomaggiore Terme

– Brilliances in Autumn

2019 Italian IMPs Pairs

By Maurizio Di Sacco

My regular partner Enrico Castellani and I did not shine at this year's Italian Open IMP Pairs Championship, finishing in 15th place in a field of 208 competitors, but a couple of hands proved most brilliant.

In the first session of the final I picked up the North cards on this hand.

Dealer EAST	♠ 5 2		
North/South	♥ Q 9		
vulnerable	♦ A 10 4		
	♣ A K 9 7 5 2		
♠ Q 8		North	♠ 10 9 4 3
♥ J 10 7 6 5		West East	♥ K 8 4
♦ 6 5		South	♦ Q J 8 7 3
♣ J 8 6 4			♣ 3
	♠ A K J 7 6		
	♥ A 3 2		
	♦ K 9 2		
	♣ Q 10		

Contr.	Sco.	N/S	E/W
6♣+1	1390 (1)	137,00	-137,00
6♣=	1370 (2)	134,00	-134,00
3SA+3	690 (1)	46,00	-46,00
3SA+2	660 (2)	43,00	-43,00
3SA-1	-100 (4)	-75,00	75,00
3SA-2	-200 (1)	-95,00	95,00
6SA-5	-500 (1)	-142,00	142,00

I'll let the frequencies introduce my story - out of thirteen NS pairs, five rather embarrassingly went down in 3NT, with an excellent 6♣ contract available. We reached it on this auction:

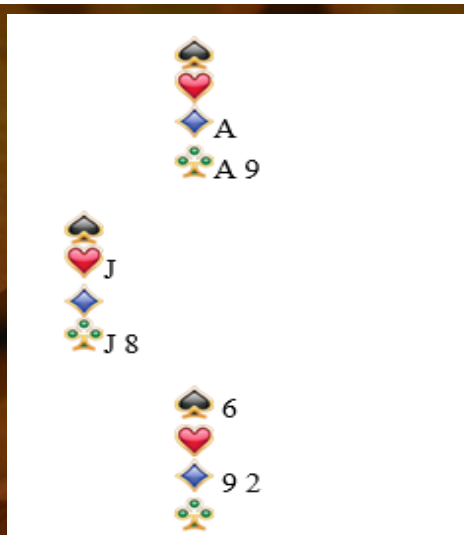
West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♠	
Pass	2♣ ¹	Pass	2NT ²
pass	3♣	pass	4♣
pass	4NT ³	pass	5NT ⁴
pass	6♣	all pass	

1. Game forcing relay
2. 15+
3. odd number of key-cards, no control in either major
4. anything extra?

My partner bypassed 3NT giving full value to his pointed pictures cards and spade suit with 4♣, then checked for the grand slam, just in case I had held any useful extras.

East led a heart, which ran to my queen, I played the queen and king of clubs, revealing the bad break. Next, I cashed AK spades getting good news, and continued with the jack of spades pitching a diamond. West erred pitching a heart, allowing me to produce a classic trump coup ending.

I trumped a spade (a too little too late diamond from West), played ace of hearts and ruffed a heart, then entered dummy with the king of diamonds, leaving:



On the last spade West was powerless: he decided to pitch the jack of hearts, but I ditched the ace of diamonds to score the last two tricks thanks to my club tenace over West.

Then on the penultimate board of the final:

Dealer SOUTH
NORTH/SOUTH vulnerable

	♠ 8 6		
	♥ J 10 9 6 5 2		
	♦ 9 2		
	♣ 9 8 5		
♠ 10 9 7 5 4 ♥ 3 ♦ A K 10 4 ♣ Q J 4	North West East South	♠ A K J 3 2 ♥ A 8 7 ♦ J 8 ♣ A 7 2	
	♠ Q		
	♥ K Q 4		
	♦ Q 7 6 5 3		
	♣ K 10 6 3		

We were the only pair in the field to reach the excellent 6♠ (it goes down only when the Queen of spades is third with South, and no extra chance materialises: so it makes roughly 95% of the time), the cherry on the icing of the cake being the thirteenth trick.

West	North	East	South
			P
P	P	1♠	P
3♥ ¹	P	3♠ ²	P
4♦ ³	P	4♥ ⁴	P
5♦ ⁵	P	6♠ ⁶	P

All Pass

1. game going values and a singleton somewhere

2. asking

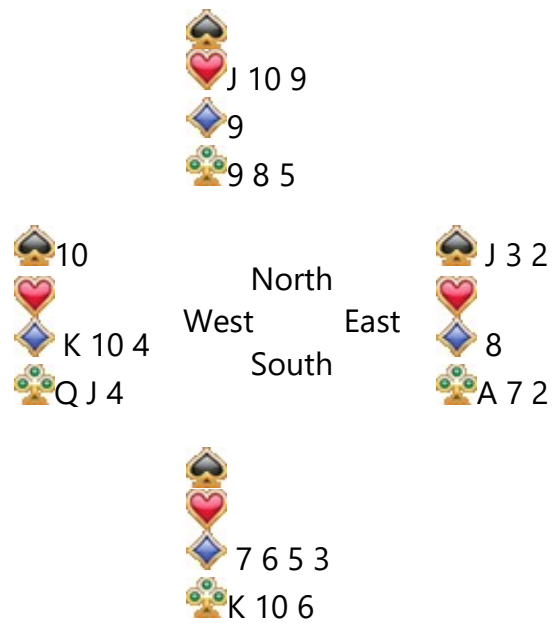
3. singleton heart

4. some more information?

5. maximum, diamond control

6. I was passed hand so Enrico did not check for seven, knowing that I would have opened with values such as xxxxx x AKxxx Kx. That said there is one hand I might still have held : xxxxx x AKQx xxx.

South led the king of hearts. Enrico won, ruffed a heart, cashed the king of spades and ruffed another heart before cashing the ace of spades. He then tabled the jack of diamonds, covered and overtaken, leaving:



Now playing trumps squeezes South in the minors to make all thirteen tricks. Nicely done!

