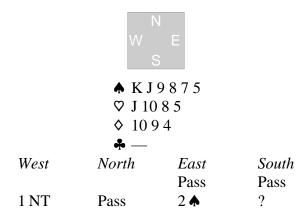
The Buttinski Rule

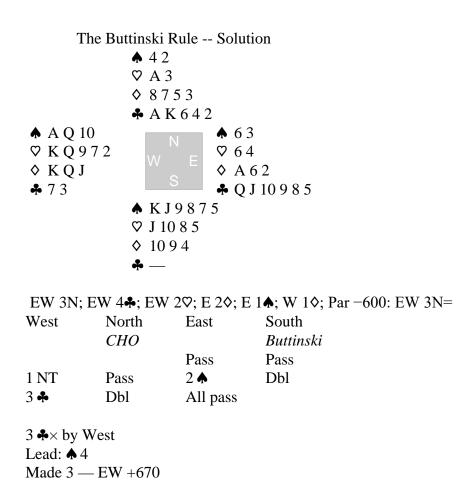




East's 2 ♠ is a relay to 3 ♣, for signoff in a minor suit.

Playing matchpoints, would you double the artificial 2 \(\bhi \) bid, or pass?

Board 4East Deals
Both Vul



North cannot be blamed for doubling $3 \clubsuit$, which appears likely to get the magic +200 score. North takes four tricks, when declarer mistakenly shortens dummy's trumps, but we take no tricks at all.

We can see this coming, as partner's double implies a poor spade fit. We have no place to hide, since we are vulnerable and should go down doubled, costing at least 800 points, if we bid.

My new Buttinski rule:

When only the opponents have bid, a non-jump action promises 8 HCP – and usually more, when vulnerable.

The Buttinski rule applies in these common cases:

- An overcall.
- A two-suited bid.
- A reopening double or overcall.
- A lead-directing double.

The Buttinski rule does not apply to a preemptive jump overcall.

Violating this rule turns partner into center-hand opponent! They may get us into big trouble, through something as simple as competing sensibly in our suit.