

Matters Arising 112

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 2 - 6 Jan 2023

Interior Sequence

K 8 7 On Thursday's board 10 South had to lead
6 3 2 from the hand left after East's opening weak
8 4 3 NT was passed out. Time for a standard 4th
K J 10 7 best felt some. They got a bad score. The
normal lead from this club holding is the J,
and those selecting it scored well.

Suits such as AQJx, AJ10x, KJ10x, all possibly with additional xs, which are headed by several honours with the lower ones being adjacent are said to have an interior sequence, and the standard lead from these is the top of the interior sequence.


Consider South's clubs: K J 10 7.

If declarer owns both the Ace and Queen, whether in hand or on the table, any club lead will allow them to make both. All leading the 7 does is allow the 9 to come into play, and we certainly don't want declarer making three tricks from AQ9 if they haven't 4 cards in the suit.

If partner holds both Ace and Queen, or just the Queen then all leads are equal - declarer makes no tricks or just the Ace.

Suppose though that partner holds the Ace. If the Queen is on table the lead of the Knave traps it. If the Queen is in declarer's hand partner can rise with the Ace and return the suit trapping declarer's Queen.

Admittedly if partner has a singleton honour then the lead of the Knave allows declarer to set up a trick on the fourth round, but do we need to allow for that?

	Q 9 5	
	K 8 4	
	9 7 6 2	
	A 8 4	
10 3 2		A J 6 4
A J 10 5		Q 9 7
Q J 5		A K 10
Q 3 2		9 6 5
	K 8 7	
	6 3 2	
	8 4 3	
	K J 10 7	

On the lead of the 7C declarer has a club trick by playing low from the table, which naturally they did. The Knave however trapped dummy's Queen and declarer made no trick in the suit.

With the heart finesse failing, declarer is restricted to AS and 6 red tricks on the lead of JC, but additionally makes a club on the lead of 7C.

Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (4 tables): Chris Wilkinson & Chris Walker

Tuesday F2F (3½ tables):

Chris Needham & Sheila Wilson

Tuesday BBO (7½ tables): Mike & Sally-Ann Rothwell

Thursday (7½ tables):

Alan Wearmouth & Martyn Harris

Total 22½ tables for the week.

Not So Fast

Some players are in too much of a hurry to show their point count or to agree a suit, and for such East-Wests on Thursday this counted against them on board 21.

--		A 9 4 3
A 9 5 3		J 8 7 2
A Q J 5		K 7 4 3
A K 8 6 4		10

After three passes West opened 1C. For some Easts this was an opportunity to show their point count with a 1NT response. West reversed into diamonds, and with East having previously hidden their suits it is no surprise that diamonds became the denomination of the final contract.


There is no hurry for East to show their point count. Much more important is to discover any fit. Reply 1D. From East's point of view if West can rebid a major that is great, whilst a NT rebid from West is no inconvenience. Only if West rebids 2C will East feel that 1NT might have worked better for now they are forced to pass. However since West would have opened 1NT on many weak hands containing 5 clubs they shouldn't find themselves with that feeling very often.

After East has replied 1D West knows of the fit, but there is still no hurry, for a major suit fit would be even better. Thus West rebids 1H.

Such slow auctions alarm some players, and indeed there is a school of thought that says that the bid of a third suit at the one level shows limited values. But there is no need to require opener to start jumping to show a strong hand when bidding a third suit. Simply regard it as if the third suit was the opening bid, except

of course that each partner already knows of a suit the other holds.

Over a 1H opening East would either give a limit raise of 2H or 3H depending on whether they attach greater importance to points or the losing trick count, or reply 1S. The same options apply after 1C – 1D – 1H, and all should lead to a 4H contract.

	Q 10 7 6 5 2	
	Q	
	9 6	
	J 7 5 3	
--		A 9 4 3
A 9 5 3		J 8 7 2
A Q J 5		K 7 4 3
A K 8 6 4		10
	K J 8	
	K 10 6 4	
	10 8 2	
	Q 9 2	

This should make with the help of 2 spade ruffs.

For example ruff the opening spade lead and duck a trump. Win the diamond continuation on table, play AS and ruff a spade. Lay down AH and get the bad news. AK C, throw the last spade from dummy and play diamonds. If South ruffs it simply creates a trump trick on table in exchange.

Declarer makes AS, 2 spade ruffs, 2 clubs, AH and 4 diamonds, though some of those diamonds become trump tricks instead if South ruffs as then dummy has more trumps than South..

I welcome any comments or queries sent me at martyn@orpheusmail.co.uk though they may be used in future issues should I choose to produce such. Or they may not. You have been warned.

NB, I do try replying to mails raising a specific point, so if I seem to ignore you do check your spam folder after a day or three.

Martyn Harris
spadeilike on BBO