

## Matters Arising 114

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal Online 16 - 20 Jan 2023

### Strong Two

Monday's Board 11 caused problems in both the bidding and play, with only two of six pairs reaching 4S on the East-West hands, with another securing the consolation prize of 3NT, and only one of the 4 declarers in spades making the tricks for game.

A K Q 10 4 2  
A J  
A 9 3  
A 6

9 6  
8 6 5  
7 2  
K 8 7 5 4 2

11

West has a good old-fashioned 2S opening, with 8 playing tricks being a conservative estimate of strength. Such hands now tend to be packed into the all strong purpose 2C bid.

I am not a fan of a 2D relay response on all hands to a 2C opening, preferring to make 2D a negative response with anything else positive and game forcing, with at least a hint of slam interest, so that the fact opener has yet to reveal their suit is not a problem.

2D (negative) from East draws 2S from West. Again I regard this as a one round force, so that having at least a hint of more than 8 playing tricks in the West hand is helpful. 2NT from East would now be a second negative, showing very little or even less, after which the partnership would likely subside in 3S. However the KC and a possible diamond ruff within the context of a hand which has already made a negative reply represent useful values, so 3C seems better than a second negative.

West needs no further prompting and happily bids 4S.

The opening lead is QD; time now to plan the play.

I fear several declarer's thought no further than 6 trumps and 4 side suit winners, if that far, and started on trumps after winning trick 1. When North showed out on the second round of trumps declarer had an inescapable trump loser and no way of making up for it.

My partner showed better technique, returning a diamond at trick 2 to establish the opportunity for a diamond ruff. North rose with an honour (why? - South rather than West surely has the KD on this play), and switched to a trump to cut down on ruffs. Often a correct idea, here the switch simply served to trap their partner's J and declarer had an easy 11 tricks.

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

9 6  
8 6 5  
7 2  
K 8 7 5 4 2

11

J 7 5 3  
Q 9 7 4  
K 8 4  
10 3

10

Q 5 4 2  
9 8 5 3  
--  
A Q 9 3 2

A 10 9  
--  
Q J 10 7 3  
K J 10 8 5

How does East not make at least 11 tricks in 5C on the lead of a top diamond on this hand from Thursday? Ten clubs and the AS, though not in that order, look certainties. Ruff the lead low, return to hand with AS and ruff another diamond low. Now a heart ruffed with the 5, after which the cross-ruff is high - the enemy trumps are too small to interfere.

10

K 3  
A Q 10 6 4  
8 6 4 2  
6 4

Q 5 4 2  
9 8 5 3  
--  
A Q 9 3 2

A 10 9  
--  
Q J 10 7 3  
K J 10 8 5

J 8 7 6  
K J 7 2  
A K 9 5  
7

Those who had no trouble making 11 tricks on a cross-ruff can entertain themselves by searching for a 12 trick line.

## NT Problems

West opened a middle of the road weak 1NT on Thursday's board 16, little knowing the difficulties this would create.

Q 9 8 5	--	A K 7	J 10 6 4 3 2
Q J 5		K Q 9 8 6 4	10 2
J 2		Q 8 7 6	10 7
A K 10 3			9 4 2
	• 16		
		A K 7	
		9 8 6 4 3	
		A 5 3	
		J 5	

Four North-Souths ended up in 2D or 3D, presumably with North having overcalled diamonds.

North should only overcall 2D if they have a reputation for making very sound overcalls, which should lead to South essaying 3NT despite the doubleton club, for they would then wish to be in game.

Otherwise 3D seems better as an overcall to distinguish the hand from those of dubious value on which so many still find it in them to overcall. Again this should lead to further action from South.

Two Norths took a different approach, electing to pass on the basis that a natural diamond lead could well be effective at the prevailing colour.

1NT contracts where the opposition have the balance of the points are rarely desirable places to play, and when one East inexplicably passed despite having a 6 card suit to run to it is easy to see that the natural diamond lead caused carnage.

At the last table East started a transfer sequence by bidding 2H, and South doubled to show hearts. As with many examples of interference this double is not without its risks, as it may lure North into a phantom sacrifice or leading away from a heart honour in defence. This time though North was very happy to bid 4H and chalk up game for the loss of a trump and two clubs.

## Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (6½ tables): Chris Banks & Mike Ollerton

Tuesday F2F (5 tables): Jean Dale & Ralph Rogerson

Tuesday BBO (8 tables):

Amanda Etherington & Martyn Harris

Thursday (6 tables teams): Mike & Sally-Ann Rothwell

with Robin Rose & Martyn Harris

Total 25½ tables for the week.

I welcome any comments or queries sent me at [martyn@orpheusmail.co.uk](mailto: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