


## Matters Arising 118

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 13 - 17 Feb 2023

### Error

Bidding errors come in two forms, valuation errors and system errors. One assumes players tot up their points correctly, so valuation errors occur when the point count assessment is not modified correctly in the light of distributional factors, presence of intermediates, and the bidding. As a result the player fails to upgrade or downgrade their hand, and so misinform partner of the qualities of their hand. System errors occur when the player correctly assesses the value of their hand but selects a bid from their system which does not reflect it.

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

What are we to make of some East's failure to push on to game on Tuesday's hand 4 after their partner opened 1S? It is difficult to believe that they downgraded their hand's 15 points so much that they thought game uncertain, so there must have been a system error.

Playing at the most elementary level east replies 3NT to show a balanced 13–15-ish points, though most players soon appreciate that if partner is weak in hearts this is not the best approach.


A simple change of suit response by a non-passed hand is a 1 round force, so East can afford to respond 2C or 2D to see what happens next.

2H from West is what happens next. From which East deduces that West is near minimum and holds at least 5 spades, for with 4–4 in the majors we open 1H.

With slam ruled out East bids game, probably 4S on the known 8+ card fit, though there are sufficient values in the East hand for them perhaps to gamble on 3NT making the same number of tricks.

What East must not do is rebid any of


- 2S, as this simple preference suggests any further action is up to opener.
- 3S, as this jump preference is only invitational, keeping the bidding alive in case partner is better than minimum for their previous actions. Rather like an initial jump to 3S, but without a 4th spade.
- 2NT, as this shows a flat 11/ poor 12 count.

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

Declarer has 9 top tricks and generating a tenth is not difficult. Indeed in practice 11 tricks make.

Valuation errors are difficult to eradicate completely, for the judgements involved cannot be codified. But system errors should all but disappear if you make the effort to learn your system.

### Split Honours

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

Thursday teams, and West is in 4H on either a small club or a trump lead. Plan the play.


With 2 obvious diamond losers we cannot afford to lose 2 tricks in spades. The title suggests we should play for split honours - KS in one defender's hand, QS in the other, but a careful look at our resources shows we are missing the 9S, and without that card we will struggle to take advantage of the spade honours being split unless one defender holds H9 doubleton.

In fact the split honours in the title refers to the club suit, with the idea that by losing 1 club trick we can make 3, thereby creating 2 discards for spades.

A small club lead is most welcome, suggesting at least one club honour North. Play the 9 and South wins. Suppose they switch to a spade. Rise with A, draw trumps and play a club towards 10. If as expected this holds your spade spot cards disappear on AK C.

On a trump lead draw trumps and lead a club to the 9. South wins, but we are effectively back where we were with a club lead, but without the strong hint that North

has at least one honour.

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

Declarer makes 3 clubs, 1 spade, 5 natural trumps and a diamond ruff.

Note that if forced to play spades themselves declarer cannot make a second trick there against best defence. North ducks if declarer leads from hand, as does South if an honour is led from table. If the 2 is led first from table South inserts the 9.

## Around The Club

Monday (8½ tables Pro-Am):

Martyn Harris & Alison Jones

Tuesday BBO (5½ tables): Ray & Irene Gregory

Tuesday F2F (4½ tables):

Angela Davenport & Jennifer Spencer

Thursday (teams, 4 tables): Mike & Stella Howse,

Carolynne & Alan Farmer

Total 22½ 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