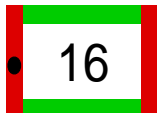


Matters Arising 126

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 10 - 14 Apr 2023

Good Trumps

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

You are West on this hand from Monday, playing in 4H on a club lead, the opposition having been silent throughout the bidding. Your mission is to make 12 tricks. Get planning.


No prizes for working out the trick you are going to lose - the Ace of trumps. Avoiding a club loser should present no problem, but how are we to handle the other two suits. There seem to be main two possibilities for avoiding a spade loser

- Finesse against the K
- Discard 3 spades from table on diamonds - this needs diamonds 3-3 with the Q onside.

b) also takes care of diamond losers, though under a) we could look to ruff two diamonds to cater for a 4-2 diamond break - three of dummy's trumps can only be beaten by the Ace so there is scope to do this safely.

- requires KS onside and diamonds no worse than 4-2,
- requires QD onside and diamonds 3-3.


a) is a better bet, so win T1 with AC and lead QS. North covers so you are on table with the A. Now AK D, to be followed by a third one, ruffed high on table unless North shows out. Try to return to hand with a trump - it may or may not work. Suppose the enemy win and return a trump. Now you win in hand, ruff another diamond, and your hand is good.

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

In practice the QD tumbles on the second round and you need only one ruff to set the diamonds up.

Operation Bodged ... (... but the Patient Thrived)

A double dummy problem for you based on Thursday's board 5. South to make 6S on the lead of a diamond (or a club or a trump).

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

There appear to be 2 heart and a diamond loser, but it is the club finesse that is key to success.

Win trick one on table and come to hand via a trump. Now take the club finesse, which works, and discard a diamond on AC. Play a second trump hoping they break - they don't - and cash the second top diamond. Now a diamond ruff establishes the suit and dummy can be re-entered via the last trump there to play two more diamonds, jettisoning 2 hearts from hand. You end up losing just one heart at the end.

The variations for a club or trump lead should be easy to see once you have handled a diamond lead. In essence: take the club finesse so that you can discard a diamond, so that you can establish that suit without losing the lead, so that you can discard hearts on the long diamonds.

On the night I drew two rounds of trumps before taking the club finesse, which could have been embarrassing, for if East holds KC and returns a third trump I'd even go down in the 4S contract I was in. With only one round of trumps taken if the club finesse is wrong the best the defence can do is take their two heart tricks and all I've done is swap a diamond loser for a club loser.

Two Chances

K Q J 10 6 5 3
9
9 6
Q 6 4

As South on Thursday you open hand 11 2NT. Partner quickly dumps you in 6S with the aid of a transfer. Plan the play on a trump lead.

11

A 9 8
A K J 2
A 2
A 9 3 2

Declarer can see an easy 11 tricks via 7 trumps and A K A A in the side suits. There are two main possibilities for a 12th trick: West has KC in front of the Q, so leading towards the Q works, and East has QH so the heart finesse works. Minor possibilities are that KC is singleton or QH doubleton or the defence make poor discards on the run of the spades (for a squeeze to work one of KC, QH will be advantageously placed).

Can we combine the two main chances? Yes, by testing the club first. Thus win T1 in hand with the 8 and lead a small club towards the Queen - we cannot afford to cash AC first as then the KC offside would leave us with 2 club losers.

Suppose the KC is wrong, and East wins and returns a minor suit. Win in hand, cross to table via a trump and take the heart finesse. We have now tried both chances.

Note that the club must be tried first, for if we lose to a heart early on we cannot then afford to lose to a club to set QC up.

K Q J 10 6 5 3 9 9 6 Q 6 4 7 4 2 Q 10 8 4 K J 10 K 10 7	<div style="border: 2px solid green; padding: 5px; display: inline-block; margin-bottom: 5px;">11</div> A 9 8 A K J 2 A 2 A 9 3 2	-- 7 6 5 3 Q 8 7 5 4 3 J 8 5
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As it happens KC is onside so the heart finesse is not needed. However if KC is offside it is essential to have a trump to use as entry to take the heart finesse. Consequently we cannot afford to draw all the trumps when they break 3-0, though we could cash AS at trick 2.

A spade lead was neither help nor hindrance, a heart lead gifts the contract, a club lead starts your plan at trick one. A diamond lead though forces you to decide which chance to go for - if you want to try for KC offside you have to cash AK H first to discard a

diamond before leading a club - or you can just try for QH onside.

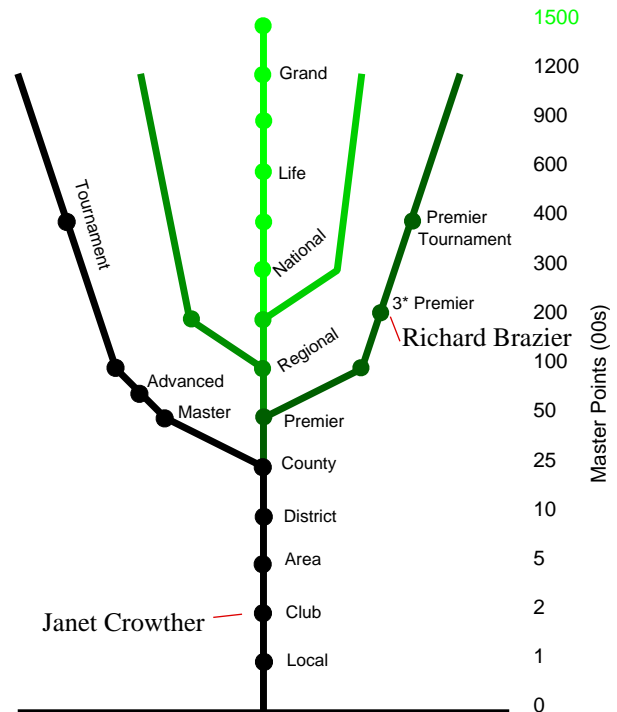
Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (5½ tables): Russell White & Jeremy Harris
Tuesday F2F (8 tables): Margaret & Dennis Pook
Tuesday BBO (6½ tables): Irene & Ray Gregory
Thursday (6 tables): Tim Harrison & Martyn Harris

Total 26 tables for the week.

Two Master Point promotions to show this month, for Richard Brazier and Janet Crowther:



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