

# Matters Arising 127

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 17 - 21 Apr 2023

## Around The Club

This week's winners:

Monday (5½ tables): Tim Harrison & Richard Brazier

Tuesday BBO (7½ tables):

Keith Bainbridge & Allen Brown

Tuesday F2F (6½ tables): David & Shirley Harris

Thursday (teams, 2 tables): Short session, no winner

Total 21½ tables for the week.

## Weak and Strong

A J  
K x x x  
A x  
A K 10 x x

Arguably the most interesting hand of the week appeared on board 2 of Thursday's abbreviated teams session. North (left) is vulnerable and hears their partner open 2H (weak). Their bidding plans are interrupted by West overcalling 2S, which turns out to be partly justified by the West hand containing a heart void. Time to dredge your memory. If you normally play 2NT as an enquiry in response to a weak two, have you agreed with partner to play it that way after an overcall? Being red partner's opening should be reasonably sane, so you elect to ignore the scenic route. 4NT.

One key card.  
6H.

You can now sit back and allow everyone to admire your hand whilst partner has the pleasure(?) of playing the contract.

Now swap over to the South seat. You are declaring in 6H against the lead of KS. Like so many real-life contracts this one is not fireproof but has chances. How do you intend to play it?

Suggestions later.

A J  
K x x x  
A x  
A K 10 x x



x x  
A Q J 10 x x  
Q x x  
J x

## Gentle Outing

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



K 9  
A J 8 7 3  
10  
A K 10 6 5

Monday night saw this gentle 4H contract, with West leading a top diamond and switching to a spade. How many tricks would you make?

With no likely black suit losers, one in diamonds and maybe one in trumps, your answer should be 11 or 12 depending on the trumps.

Those with an approach of *see trick, take trick* may be inclined to start ruffing diamonds in hand, but this is a distraction which serves only to shorten declarer's trumps, possibly leading to loss of control.

Win the spade switch on table and go straight for trumps, leading the Q with intent to run it and still be on table to repeat the finesse if it works. In practice East covers with the K, so you win with A and return to the 10 on table. When West shows out on the second round of trumps you have a marked finesse against the 9 to pick up the trump suit without loss. Note that playing small to the J on the first round of trumps does not allow you to pick up the 9 later.

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

10 8 3 2  
6  
A K J 6 4  
7 4 2

Q J 7 5 4  
K 9 5 2  
8 7  
9 8

K 9  
A J 8 7 3  
10  
A K 10 6 5

Five trump tricks, five in clubs and two in spades comes to a pleasant dozen, which is more than two of the 4 declarers in hearts managed.

## Later

A J  
K x x x  
A x  
A K 10 x x



x x  
A Q J 10 x x  
Q x x  
J x

At first sight we have a spade and a diamond loser, but surely those clubs can come to the rescue.

One simple plan is draw trumps and run the JC. If the finesse works with either the suit 3-3 or West refusing to cover the J we could make 6 hearts, 5 clubs and 2 Aces, whilst a 4-2 break with the Q onside and covering the J leads to 12 tricks.

The trouble with finesses of course is that half the time they don't work.

What is our minimum requirement from the club suit? 3 tricks will do. On the third we discard a spade so there is no spade loser, and of the three diamonds in hand one goes under dummy's A, one is lost and the other is ruffed. Three club tricks gives us the contract for the loss of a diamond.

If clubs are no worse than 4-2, a good bet, then we can ruff out the Q to bring the 10 to the top for round 5 of the suit. That then is the plan. But there is one slight snag. To achieve this we need to enter dummy twice to ruff clubs, and then a third time to enjoy the fifth club. All whilst retaining a trump in each hand so that at the end we can ruff a spade in hand and a diamond on the table.

Drawing trumps in three rounds first does not allow us to do this - remember I said West is void in hearts. Try it. Three trumps, then AK C and a club ruff. That's four trumps gone from hand. Cross to AD and another club ruff on which QC tumbles. But that is your fifth trump gone. How now to you propose to get to table to discard your spade? You could do it via a trump, but then you will have none left for the final ruffs.

Rewind. Try drawing just 2 rounds of trumps from hand initially, retaining four. Now AK C and a club ruff. 3 trumps gone. A trump to table's K draws the last trump, and another club ruff fells the Q. Just one trump left in each hand. But we still have AD left on table, so cross to that, discard a spade on the last club, ruff a spade, concede a diamond, and dummy's last trump is the 12th trick. Success.

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