

Matters Arising 128

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 24 - 28 Apr 2023

Luck of the Lead

6 5 4 Thursday hand 18 and you are the proud
 J 6 5 3 2 owner of the hand left, and not at all
 10 4 2 surprised that the enemy bidding goes
 4 2 1C - 1H - 3C - aces? - 2 - 6NT.

Your lead.

Deciding to discount leading the bid suits you mentally toss a coin. As the cards lie if it comes down spades you beat the contract, but if it comes down diamonds you don't.

6 5 4		A 2
J 6 5 3 2		K 8
10 4 2		9 6
4 2		A K J 10 9 7 5
Q J 3	18	A K J 10 9 7 5
A Q 10 9 4		
K Q J 5		
Q		
K 10 9 8 7		
7		
A 8 7 3		
8 6 3		

Declarer has 11 top tricks, and even on a spade lead can make 13 if hearts are 3-3 or the JH is doubleton or singleton. This is a slightly better than 50%, so it is definitely a slam I would wish to be in.

One East rebid 3NT rather than 3C, with the slam then being bullet proof. Amusingly they received a heart lead which went small, J, K. Declarer didn't count to 13 (7 clubs, 5 hearts, AS), or wanted even more tricks, so knocked out the AD.

As ever there was some conservative bidding. One East rated their hand worthy only of a 2C rebid - unsurprisingly their partner settled for 3NT, whilst two Wests didn't deem their 17 points as being of slam interest opposite a jump rebid so also settled for 3NT.

Around The Club

This weeks winners were
 Monday (5½ tables): Russell White & Jeremy Harris
 Tuesday F2F (6 tables): Lesley & John Sellar
 Tuesday BBO (7 tables): Janet & David Owen
 Thursday (6 tables): Hilary Storey & Jacky Truelove

Total 24½ tables for the week.

Leave it

Q 3	1	10 9
10 3		A J 9 8 7 6 4 2
A 6 3		K 9
A K 9 5 3 2		6

Tuesday hand 1, and we're clearly not in boring 3NT territory. How would you handle a club lead against 4H?

Majority opinion was win, play Ace and another heart, making 10 tricks losing just a trump and two spades. But why the second round of trumps? North-South have a single boss trump left - just leave it. Instead play a diamond to A and jettison a spade on the second club honour. An easy 11 tricks.

K 6 4 2		10 9
K		A J 9 8 7 6 4 2
8 7 5		K 9
Q J 10 8 4		6
Q 3	1	A J 8 7 5
10 3		Q 5
A 6 3		Q J 10 4 2
A K 9 5 3 2		7

I confess I got it wrong in a different way, lazily taking the second club at trick 2, discarding a spade but suffering a ruff from South. Fortunately South didn't underlead their AS to put North in for a second club ruff and I was able to make 11 tricks anyway when the missing trumps both fell under the Ace. Phew!

I did have one advantage though. Unlike all the other declarers I was playing the hand from the West seat, so South couldn't see my AD. From their point of view it was either underlead the spade and look silly if I had the King, or try to find partner with AD. My South cashed AS for safety and then tried a diamond. Can you honestly say you would have done differently?

How come I declared from the West seat? That is down to the problem faced by East, Amanda in my case.

Two Easts chose to open 4H, presumably off the back of their 8 card suit. Not the world's worst bid, and I might try it myself if partner had already passed, but I'd prefer a better hand in first or second position. Indeed both the Wests at these tables went slamming, with one

having no chance in 6H and the other spurning the opportunity provided by a club lead in 5H.

Three Wests chose 3H, all raised to game though in one case North-South bid on to 5S.

One East judged their hand to be worth a weak 2 and was left there, whilst Amanda found pass with intent to catch up later. South also passed, a little surprisingly, and I was left to kick-off proceedings. 1C is obvious, but I felt it would make it too easy for everyone to pile in, so chose 1NT instead. Transfer and 4H from Amanda and my 1NT hand was hidden from sight.

Amazing how many different ways there are of viewing a hand when (nominally) playing the same system.

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.

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