

## Matters Arising 136

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 19 - 23 Jun 2023

### The Third Club (I)

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

It is not unusual for the play of a hand to revolve around a single trick, and that was the case on this deal from Thursday.



Q 8 5 4 3  
Q 3  
10 7 4  
A K 6

North is in 4H on a diamond lead, but clearly shouldn't be content with 10 tricks.

What should they play at trick 2, and why?

There are 11 easy tricks on top, and barring considerable good fortune such as a Kingleton spade or a doubleton QJ in clubs there appears to be a loser in both the black suits if they are simply played from the top. However dummy's Q and length in spades suggests there are two possibilities for arranging a club discard.

The simple one is to play for the KS outside ie in the East hand. This requires us to play A and another spade before all dummy's entries have been removed. East rises with the King on the second round, but declarer immediately regains the lead and can discard a club from hand on the QS at a later point.

The alternative is more demanding but copes with spades no worse than 4-2. And the good news is that this line also copes with the K outside.

Dummy has three entries: QH, AC, KC. Two of these could be used to ruff spades, leaving the third one as entry to the 5th spade to provide a discard for declarer's third club.

Declarer ignores trumps initially, playing AS at trick two, followed by a small spade towards table. Yes, spades might be 6-0, but that is a small risk to take to ensure 12 tricks if the spades are no worse than 4-2.

If East rises with the K declarer quickly regains the lead, draws trumps and crosses to a club for a discard on QS. Note that if after winning with the K East leads a third spade there is no need to play the Q which might be ruffed by West (though in truth on this particular hand it proves not to matter unless East started with 5 spades). Instead let it run to a ruff in hand, draw trumps and complete the plan.

Suppose though that East plays small at trick 3 and West wins with the K over the Q, and then returns a club. Not a problem. Win on table, ruff a spade in hand, making sure that East cannot over-ruff. Then trump to

the Q, ruff another spade which establishes the 5th spade on table. Draw trumps, cross to the second club honour and once more declarer's third club disappears.

The whole play is designed with the third club trick in mind. In particular the play is designed to make sure that declarer doesn't have a third club when a third club trick is played.

A club lead at trick one would remove one of the entries to dummy so that declarer can still cope with KS outside, but only with a 3-3 break if KS offside.

Early trump play, thereby removing the QH from table, also reduces declarer's chances.

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

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

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

Q 8 5 4 3  
Q 3  
10 7 4  
A K 6

On the night the KS was outside so drawing trumps before tackling spades would have worked. As we all know superior lines aren't always rewarded with superior scores. Despite this three declarers failed to make 12 tricks. Ouch.

## The Third Club (II)

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


This was Tuesday's version of the third club problem, with South leading a heart against East's 4S contract.

7 spade tricks, 2 hearts and 2 clubs comes to 11. If AD is onside the KD will be the 12th trick. This time declarer's third club disappears on AH - there is no setting up to do. Declarer simply needs to arrange to play diamonds from hand. As they don't need trumps as entry to table they can draw them first.

Can declarer successfully discard a diamond on AH to ensure just one diamond loser and then set up a diamond for a club discard?

If we try AS at trick 2, then AH discard a diamond we are down to one entry to table, KC. The only way to set up a diamond trick and reach it will be to lead towards the K hoping again for A onside, for we simply don't have the entries to ruff out the diamond suit. Might as well draw trumps and lead a diamond towards table.

Thus 12 tricks depend on AD onside, with the third club always disappearing on AH.

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

The AD was indeed onside, yet as on Thursday three declarers couldn't find 12 tricks.

## Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (7½ tables): Kathie & Jeremy Harris

Tuesday F2F (6½ tables): John & Lesley Sellar

Tuesday BBO (6½ tables):

Amanda Etherington & Martyn Harris

Thursday (6½ tables): Hilary Storey & Jacky Truelove

Total 27 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