

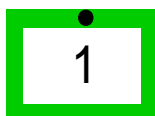
Matters Arising 138

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 2 - 7 Jul 2023

6 Cards

A select four tables assembled for play on Thursday evening, and the first thing they selected to do was avoid the best denomination in which to play the contract on board 1.

K 10	For me starting the auction
A 4	1D – 1H – 2D – 2H is automatic, yet
A 10 9 6 3 2	not one auction began that way on the
K 6 3	night.



Q 8 7 4
K 10 8 7 6 3
--
Q 10 7

Responder rebidding their suit shows 6 cards, and whilst there is a case for a pass second time on the *when in a hole stop digging* principle, I can't help feeling you would be unlucky to find hearts playing worse than diamonds. Not to mention the major suit bonus when both contracts make.

A more interesting question is can opener bid on?

There are 3 cases to consider:

- 1) 1D – 1H – 2C/D – 2H
Opener has not shown extra strength and responder is limited by their failure to make a strongly invitational jump rebid of 3H. This places responder in the range of approx 6 to 9 or 10 points. They have a weak two opener type hand. With an opening hand opposite a weak two it may or may not be right to investigate game. Here then it may or may not be right for opener to continue. Thus the 2H rebid is not a shut-out bid.
- 2) 1D – 1H – 1NT – 2H
Now opener's hand is defined within a narrow range and responder has still failed to make a strongly invitational jump rebid, which given they have a 6 card suit they would surely do with 8 points or even a nice looking 7. 2H is to play.
Partnerships using a wide range 1NT rebid will still wish to avoid rebidding 2H if there is any possibility of game.
- 3) 1H – 2C – 2D/H – 3C
Opener has not shown extra strength, but there is a floor under responder's hand in that they have at least the minimum required to introduce a new suit at the two level. If like me that floor is 10 points then you wouldn't be surprised to hear opener bidding on. Those with a lower point count requirement for a 2 level response may feel keener that opener should now pass.

If you feel the North hand is good enough to respond to an opening 2H, then you will raise 2H after the suggested start to this auction, else you will settle for the heart part-score.

On normal breaks declarer can expect to make 5 trumps, AD and at least one trick in each black suit, which is a minimum of 8 tricks. There may be a spade ruff too.

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

On a 4th best spade lead there are an easy 10 tricks - 2 spades, a spade ruff, 5 trumps and a trick in each minor, with declarer's third club disappearing on AD. A club lead (MUD presumably) presents declarer with a second club trick so they can now discard a spade on AD. Thus the spade suit play becomes lose one, win one, ruff one, discard one. We see that on a black suit lead declarer suffers the loss of just two Aces and a trump. The favourable lie of the black Knaves means that there are also 10 tricks available on a red suit lead, though there is a bit more work to do.

Even 9 tricks in 2/3H would have been a top as others laboured in NT or diamonds.

Ruff Justice

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



K Q 8 7
K 4 3
K 9 5 3
K Q

On this hand from Thursday South opened 1S or 1D, West overcalled in hearts and North-South ended in the spade game, played by North if South opened 1D.

South had an easy time as declarer, but North faced the 9H lead, won by West's Q.

Next came AH (East following with the 6) and then a third one. With the AC still to lose declarer cannot afford

to lose the third heart.

West's overcall marks them with at least 5 hearts and East's 9 then 6 is all but certainly a doubleton so that West in fact appears to have 6. There are four choices:

- 1) Disbelieve East and hope the K wins,
- 2) Ruff with the 4 hoping East has singleton 3 in trumps,
- 3) Ruff with the 9 hoping West has both J and 10 of trumps,
- 4) Ruff with the A hoping that trumps are 2-2 and can be cleared by dummy's honours (or that if West produces the 10 or J on the first round of trumps you correctly divine whether to finesse on the second round).

Those faced with the choice didn't pick the winning line 4).

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

Costly Obsession

On Tuesday three pairs played in a diamond game and one in a diamond part-score on board 9. Only the part-score declarer played the hand correctly, thereby getting a good score after their bidding had looked like giving them a bad one. The culprit as so often was the familiar obsession with drawing trumps.

North had opened diamonds, East had shown hearts and led the K of that suit against the diamond contract.

Life looks easy - 7 trumps, 4 clubs and 2 Aces. Pity we have to lose AC. But 12 tricks is still nice.

Declarer won T1 with the AH of course, and started on trumps, with East showing out on the first round. With master trumps to spare our obsessive drawers played off three rounds of the suit and then knocked out AC, drifting 1 off in their game when the defence were able to cash 2 hearts at this point.

Once the trumps don't break declarer should see that they need to knock-out AC whilst dummy has trumps to stop the defence taking heart tricks. Thus a switch to KC is called for once the 3-0 break is revealed, continuing the suit if necessary to remove the AC.

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

No doubt some will have bemoaned their bad luck of running into a 3-0 trump break, but negotiating such bad luck is part of declarer's responsibilities.

Accidental Top

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

10

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

Self-alerting on BBO means that sometimes the opposition will know you have misbid, with partner unaware.

On Tuesday's board 10 East passed and South has a weak NT opening. Having dutifully typed in 12-14 to the alert box one South then clicked Pass. North opened 1C, South decided the best way to catch up was by responding 2S, which is where they played. An easy 10 tricks ensued,

there being just one loser in each suit bar clubs.

The mis-click seems to have cost North-South a bottom, but in practice was a top as no other pair played in spades.

Stayman, or in some cases the lack thereof, was the problem at other tables.

One of the most common Stayman sequences is

1NT – 2C – 2D/H/S – 2NT

showing a raise to 2NT, no fit with any major shown but with at least one 4 card major not shown by opener.

On this hand after 1NT – 2C – 2H – 2NT South knows North has 4 spades and an 11 or bad 12 count so can simply rebid 4S holding 14 points themselves.

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

For unknown reasons some Norths ignored Stayman and essayed 2S, their way of showing 11 points. A diamond lead put paid to the resulting 3NT contract.

Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (8½ tables): Russell White & Jeremy Harris

Tuesday F2F (2½ tables): Debbie & Roger Wilkinson

Tuesday BBO (5½ tables):

Richard Brazier & Martyn Harris

Thursday (4 tables): Mike & Sally-Ann Rothwell

Total 20½ tables for the week.

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