

Matters Arising 139

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

Use The Length

Q South found themselves in 4H on the
8 2 lead of the AS on this hand from
A K 8 3 Monday. How many tricks should they
A K J 8 7 5 hope to make on normal breaks?



Suppose West switches to a trump at trick 2. Take it from there.


7 2
A K Q 6 5 4
J 9 7 4
9

If both red suits are 3-2 then we can discard our second spade on a top club and just lose a diamond for 11 tricks. Indeed on a good day the QD will be doubleton and we make 12 tricks.

A normal club break would be 4-2, so if we ruff 2 clubs the suit will run. Then additionally we will be able to discard two diamonds on the 5th and 6th club. Thus no more losers from here for 12 tricks overall.

Draw trumps in 3 rounds, then AK C, discard your second spade. Ruff a club, which would be enough to establish the suit if 3-3. It's not. Return to dummy with AD and ruff another club. Back to dummy again with KD to cash the now established long clubs, discarding diamonds from hand.

Declarer can of course ruff their second spade at T3. They will then have to return to hand to draw the remaining trumps. This is best done by cashing one top club and then ruffing one, being safer than cashing both top clubs and trying to ruff the 3rd. However even if trumps are 4-1 the spade can be discarded on a club unless the clubs are 6-0, so there seems no gain from ruffing the spade.

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

On the night only two of six declarers made 12 tricks. I doubt that all the others faced a diamond switch at trick 2, removing what turns out to be an important entry to table.

Cover

A 4 2
K 10 9 4 3
3
A 8 5 2

K 8 6 3
J 2
A K 9 6
K Q 10



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8 7 5
J 10 8 5 4 2
9 6 4 3

Q J 10 9 7 5
A Q 6
Q 7
J 7

You are West on Tuesday, defending either H by North or S by South.

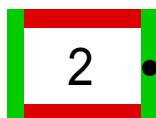
In hearts South is dummy. Declarer gains the lead early in the play, draws trumps ending on the table and leads the QS. Don't cover. You know declarer has at most three spades because you can see ten. Your K cannot be trapped and there is no question of promoting a trick in spades. By ducking you limit declarer to 3 spade tricks, by covering you allow them 6.

Played in spades you start with AD and switch to KC. Declarer wins, enters hand via a heart and leads QS. This time you can see Axx on table. Once again you know your K cannot be trapped. You don't know how many spades declarer holds, but can it be so few that you can promote 2 tricks to make up for giving up your winning K? No. This time playing the K only costs one trick, but as with the heart contract on the night there was a lucky declarer benefitting from an unthinking covering of an honour with an honour.

Here cover perhaps refers to the your need to take cover when partner discovers what you have done if you cover.

Ruff Or Discard?

A K 8 7 5
K 10 9 6 2
K 5
3



3
A 7 5 4 3
J 9 6
A 7 5 2

On Thursday South reached 4H on board 2 after East had opened 1C. West led QC. Even if trumps are 3-0 it looks like the most declarer could lose is 1 trump and 2 diamonds, so the contract should be safe.


You win the opening lead, and cash AH. Both defenders follow. Over to you to play hunt the overtrick(s).

Two natural trump tricks, three black suit winners and the remaining six trumps made separately as ruffs comes to 11 tricks, with a 12th available should AD be onside when we lead towards it. Sounds good. The AD is offside, yet there is a superior line to look for twelve tricks.

If spades are 4-3 we can set up an extra spade trick.

Draw the last trump and cash AK S, discarding a diamond. We can ruff all our small clubs, so there is no need to discard any. Spade ruff, club ruff, spade ruff. If spades were 4-3 we now have another spade winner, so club ruff, spade winner discard a diamond, concede a diamond and claim the last two tricks on a cross-ruff.

How do we know this line is better? Because if the spades are 5-2 or worse you will know soon enough to be able to test for the AD onside. Thus you have given yourself the chance of a 4-3 spade break as well as the possibility of AD onside.

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

Only 3 of 6 declarers made 12 tricks. In every case where 11 tricks were made declarer discarded a club on the second spade honour and so were dependent on the position of AD. Preferring to discard rather than ruff the club was costly.

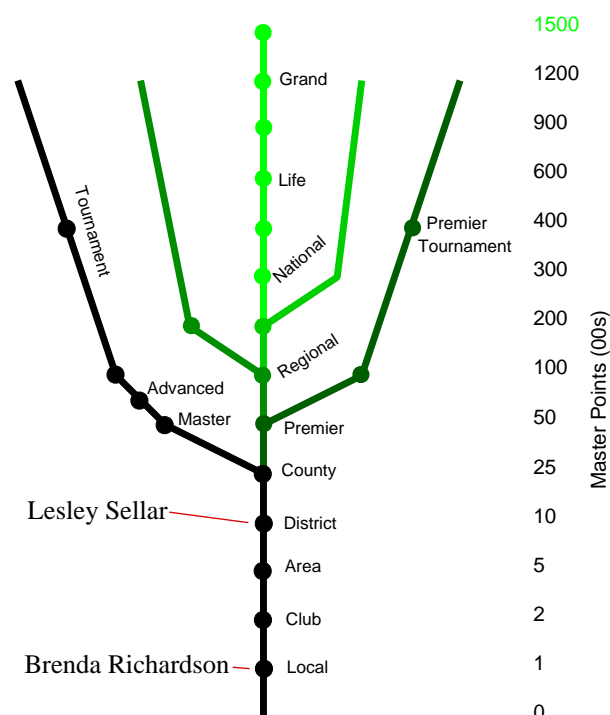
Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (6 tables): Ken Orford & Steve Douglas
Tuesday F2F (5 tables): David Crowe & Jane Curzon
Tuesday BBO (6 tables): John & Wendy Ellwood
Thursday (6 tables): Michael Cox & Gillian Whyte

Total 23 tables for the week.

Lesley Sellar was promoted to District Master and Brenda Richardson to Local Master during June.



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