


Matters Arising

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC Aug 28 - Sep 1 2023

Know Your Auctions

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

Monday board 1 and only half the field reached the obvious 4S contract, unless you count the pair who reached 5S.

If West is silent then the auction

1NT – 2H – 2S – 3D – 4S


looks normal, with a new suit at the three level after the transfer being game-forcing.

Should West bid 3C over 2H North can pass and await developments, which turn out to be 3D from South, putting their side back on course. South could also have rebid 3H if that was their second suit, or 3NT with game values and 5 spades in an otherwise flat hand.

Being Monday we don't know how two pairs reached 3NT, but we can be fairly sure they didn't enjoy the experience for they made just 7 tricks. Not each, but between them.


Was the 5S freely bid at the table where the 5 level was reached? If so I presume there was an optimistic try for slam. If not and West pushed them to it through a good 5C sac, how come after East started with the AH and saw the singleton on table did the defence not now take 2 club tricks?

Clubbed

K 10 5 3 2 10 K 5 2 10 9 8 6		Tuesday board 9 and North is in 3NT after the auction 1H – 2D – 2NT – 3NT. You are West, and partner leads the 3C to table's 5, your 8 and declarer's Q. Any thoughts?
	J 8 K 8 6 3 A J 10 9 7 J 5	

Partner's 3 looks like 4th from strength so presumably they have a club honour (or two) amongst their maximum of 9 points. The 8 played at T1 is a better choice than the 10, for at least it makes partner think you may have the 9 and 10 too for declarer might have won more cheaply had they held one of those cards. The 10 doesn't carry the same sort of hint.

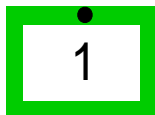
If partner started with 4 clubs we can take just two tricks in the suit unless partner has underled AK. However if partner has 5 clubs then there will be at least three tricks in the suit. But there is a danger ... the suit can easily be blocked. Consequently if North starts by taking the losing diamond finesse West shouldn't lazily return the 6C, but instead lead the 10.

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

The 10 loses to the Ace, but when partner gets in with the AH the 9C is played under their K and the 6 under the 7 so that East remains on lead to win the 4, the 2 having disappeared under the A. Without this play the suit will be blocked unless either West gets a chance to discard a club on a heart before East wins their A or East leads small on the third round of clubs.

Trumps Rule

A K Q 8 5
K 6 5 4
Q 3 2
9



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


Tuesday board 1, with North in 4S on the lead of either 3S or 7D. I won't offer a penny for your thoughts, but have some anyway Thoughts that is, not pennies.

Five spades, three diamonds and one heart by force, with a tenth trick to come if AC onside, a heart is ruffed or if someone panics on the first heart lead and rises with the A in front of an honour.

Sounds good. Perhaps with so many chances for ten we should be looking for eleven, which means losing just the 2 missing Aces. If the AC is offside this means ruffing two hearts on table.

On a trump lead win hand win and immediately lead a heart towards the Q. In practice the Q wins and another heart puts East on lead, with another trump then being thrown at you. Win, KH, heart ruff, diamond to Q, heart ruff (given the size of dummy's trumps they won't be over-ruffing. Stuck on table you lose a club so that you can follow up with a club ruff to reach hand and draw trumps.

It could be that the QH loses to the A West, who leads another trump, but once again you are in control and can arrange 2 heart ruffs.

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

On a diamond lead win in hand and play a heart to Q and one back. Another diamond comes, perhaps with East trying to scare you into thinking they have a doubleton by playing the 6 rather than the 9. Win, KH, heart ruff, trump to hand, heart ruff, trump to hand and draw trumps. Again just two Aces lost.

Most declarer's though were in an inordinate hurry to draw trumps, taking three rounds, so only made 10 tricks as they had no parking space for their last heart.

The basic rule for drawing trumps is you do so only if

their is nothing more pressing and nothing else you need the trumps for. Which roughly translates to draw trumps unless you shouldn't. Not very helpful, but then there are no "rules" for cardplay, just useful ideas from which you select the right one(s) for the hand concerned.

As for the play of the heart suit you want to play from hand to give you an outside chance of 2 tricks should you have drawn 3 rounds of trumps - leading from table should never achieve this.

There are two ways in which you can make 2 tricks. One involves help from the defence, with East rising with the A in front of the Q. Yet either West has the K and can beat the Q, or declarer has the K and East has a trick later anyway.

The other requires East to have started with Axx (or even Ax). After the Q holds return the suit from dummy and duck. On the third round of the suit underlead the K hoping for the A to tumble. If the Q holds playing the K on the second round is effectively asking for West not only to have ducked the Q, but to have ducked the return too. Doesn't work on the actual layout, but ...

Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (8½ tables)

Andrew Peill & Amanda Etherington

Tuesday F2F (9 tables): Roger & Debbie Wilkinson

Tuesday BBO (6½ tables): Sandra Bell & Michael Cox

Thursday (6½ tables): Ray & Irene Gregory

Total: 30½ 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