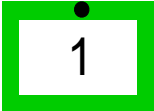


Matters Arising 149

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 18 - 22 Sept 2023


View From The West

Rather than considering all 26 cards at their disposal, declarer sometimes finds it useful to consider just those in one hand, with a suit by suit analysis of how they can be handled. Using that approach on Tuesday's hand 1 where West was in 4S on 6C lead would make life easy.

J 10 8 6 3 K 6 A J 4 A Q 9		A 9 7 5 Q 10 9 5 3 Q K 10 7
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There is at least one trump loser, maybe even two. West has only one heart loser to worry about, as the view from their hand disregards East's 3rd and further cards in that suit. No club losers, or indeed any in diamonds if two are ruffed.

The plan then is to ruff two diamonds, which will need to be done before drawing trumps. Win the first club in hand, and follow with AD and a diamond ruff. Return to hand via clubs and ruff the last diamond. Now A and another spade to discover how many trumps will be lost. The AH can then soon be dislodged.

J 10 8 6 3 K 6 A J 4 A Q 9		Q A 7 2 K 7 6 5 3 8 6 5 3 A 9 7 5 Q 10 9 5 3 Q K 10 7
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It turns out there is just one trump loser, so declarer makes 11 tricks for the loss of AH and KS. Note that the diamond finesse is simply a distraction - it's not needed if it works and costs if it doesn't. I think of it as a dead finesse.

Drawing trumps isn't necessarily fatal as hearts can be set up to discard one diamond, but playing to ruff two diamonds looks easier.

Safest Return

Still Tuesday and 4S, but this time by East on 10H lead.


10 A K 7 4 3 K 9 5 A J 9 2		A K J 5 4 3 2 Q 6 Q 10 3 10
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Looked at from East's point of view, by parking 3D on the third round of hearts there is just one side suit loser (AD) to worry about, so it comes down to playing trumps for no loser if that is possible in order to secure 12 tricks.

If spades are 3-2 the Q is more likely to be in the long hand, and if that is South the Q won't drop. This suggests finessing in spades, an idea strengthened by the consideration that if spades are 4-1 overtaking the 10 will lead to 2 losers most of the time.


Suppose we run the 10 and it holds. How will we get back to hand to continue trumps? The obvious possibilities are by leading a heart to the Q and by ruffing a club. Which is safer? With only 5 clubs between our hands there seems less likelihood of meeting a club ruff on the second round than a second round heart ruff where we have 7 cards.

Run the lead around to the Q. Enter dummy with AC and run 10C. When this holds ruff a club to hand and continue trumps.

10 A K 7 4 3 K 9 5 A J 9 2		Q 9 8 J 9 8 5 2 A J 7 6 3 A K J 5 4 3 2 Q 6 Q 10 3 10
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The trumps are 3-2 and soon drawn. Now across to AK H, discarding a diamond. Knock-out AD. Plus 2.

Points Aren't Everthing

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

I've lost count of the number of times I see partnerships miss a major fit because responder insists on bidding 1NT to show their point count rather than their major to show their suit.

This variation turned up on Monday with North opening 1D. Those Souths choosing to respond 1NT found themselves outscored by those who supported diamonds. 1NT may not deny a diamond fit, but with doubletons in both majors there is surely a good chance that the enemy can do damage in at least one of them if partner can't bid again.

In practice, even with the spades behaving declarer makes just 8 tricks for 120. A 5-3 spade break would have seen a score of just 90. In diamonds however there are just 3 losers. 130.

It is a close decision as to whether South is better to raise to 2D or 3D. 3D is more pre-emptive, though West has already passed so there may be little need for that, and fits in with the loser count. However it is the sort of bid often made with a bit in reserve so as not to by-pass 3NT if partner is more than a minimum.

Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (6½ tables): Babs Matthews & John Farmer

Tuesday F2F (5½ tables):

Russell White & Carolyn Rayner

Tuesday BBO (5½ tables):

Ray & Irene Gregory

Thursday am (4 tables) NS: Jill & Chris Yates

EW: Alison Jones & Patricia White

Thursday (Teams, 2 tables):

Robin Rose & Martyn Harris

Russell White & Jeremy Harris

Total 23½ 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