

Matters Arising 154

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 23-27 Oct 2023


Play of the Blacks

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

2NT – 3H – 3S – 3NT – 4S was the normal auction leading to West declaring in 4S against a heart lead on this hand from Thursday. With no losers in the red suits, how should declarer handle the black ones?

Missing K 10 x x in spades it would clearly be wrong to play for the drop of the K, so a finesse is called for. If South holds just Kx then any spade from East would do to start the first round. However if South held the K singleton leading the J would lead later to the loss of a spade to North's 10, so perhaps we should start with a small spade in order to sidestep that possible bad luck. Alternatively we could lead the J knowing that it would pin a singleton 10 in the North hand and so pick up Kxx South. With the possible singletons equally likely there is nothing to choose between the plays.

Missing just 2 high clubs, K and J, calls for us to play for split honours. Rather than cashing A and then leading towards the Q hoping to guess whether or not to rise with it when South plays low, we try running the Q, and if that loses to the K South we then try a finesse of the 10. Only if South has both K and J would we lose two club tricks. However we would prefer to have trumps drawn before playing a second round of clubs so that the defence can't get a ruff if clubs are 4-2.

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

Declarer wins T1 on table so as to tackle trumps in their chosen manner. With Kx South declarer will clear trumps in two rounds with the help of the finesse. The QC is covered by K and A, leaving declarer with just a club to lose to the J. 12 tricks.


Bad Break

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

On Monday East declares in 4S on the lead of 2H. After winning the KH declarer calls for a trump, and North shows out. Now what?

Initial thoughts that you have missed a slam (5 trumps, 5 hearts, AC and a diamond ruff) now turn to ensuring 11 tricks, losing just to AD and JS.

At some tables declarer decided to lose their trump early in order to retain control, so allowed South to win their JS immediately. A diamond switch is all that South has, and when North is able to produce the Ace, a heart ruff holds declarer to ten tricks.

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

The trump duck is unnecessary. Instead play off three rounds of trumps leaving South with their winner. Then run hearts. It doesn't matter when, if ever, South ruffs in. Denied a heart ruff the defence will come to just 2 tricks, for declarer plans to discard dummy's diamond on a heart, ruff a diamond with dummy's last trump and discard a diamond from hand on AC leaving just one diamond to lose plus the JS whenever South chooses to take it. 11 tricks.

Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (7½ tables): Russell White & Jeremy Harris

Tuesday F2F (5 tables): Jill & Chris Yates

Tuesday BBO (6½ tables): Ray & Irene Gregory

Thursday am (5 tables): Jill & Chris Yates

Thursday (6½ tables): Michael Cox & Gillian Whyte

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