

Matters Arising 159

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 27 Nov - 1 Dec 2023


Find Two

East-West should have no difficulty reaching 4S on this hand from Monday, though the declarer will depend on West's choice of response to East's 1C opening. The play apparently is a little harder. Imagine playing 4S from the West hand on the lead of 10C.

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

A quick tally of likely tricks stops at 8 - 4 trumps, AH and 3 diamonds. Two more will be needed from somewhere, with ruffs looking the best candidate. However the two ruffs will need to be in the same hand, for one in each added to what would be 3 remaining trump tricks only increases the trick count by one. With an even trump fit the first ruff is extra, but a second one needs to be in the now short hand to increase the trick count further.

We might prefer to ruff 2 red cards on table, but when South overtakes the 10C with the J and continues with the A North shows out. A small club now has to be ruffed. We could send the 7 into battle, effectively finessing against the 9 in the South hand, but if trumps are 3-2 then ruffing high is safe. Then a diamond to the A, ruff another club high and use table's spades to draw trumps. The two ruffs in hand have been made and this secures the contract for the loss of the initial 2 clubs and whichever of the last club and small heart on table that are not discarded on the third diamond.

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

If East declares they may face the lead of two top clubs. A similar line now makes 11 tricks, for the QC can be taken at the end after the high ruffs and trump extraction, with East's small heart going on the third diamond.


Spades Again

Reaching 4S by West on this hand from Tuesday was easy, as was making the contract. However at pairs we should always be on the lookout for overtricks. The JC was a common lead.

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

There appear to be 2 sure side-suit winners in the form of table's Aces, beyond that it is trumps. We have 10 between the two hands, and with the ability to ruff 4 diamonds on the table we can dream of making all the trumps separately, and allowing the defence to win trick 13, with a trump themselves.

The size of our trumps clearly matters - those on the table are high - the defence can't beat them - but the four lowest ones in hand will have to be used whilst hoping that North can't over-ruff. With the most likely breaks being 4-3 in hearts and 5-3 in clubs (as even as possible when missing an odd number of cards, nearly as evenly as possible missing an even number, exception: missing 2 a 1-1 break is a smidgeon more likely than a 2-0 one), it looks like ruffing 2 clubs and 2 hearts in hand, though be on the lookout for any early signs the suits are distributed differently.

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

AC, club ruff, AH, heart ruff, diamond ruff, club ruff, diamond ruff, heart ruff and all is well.

Suppose East was enthused with their first round controls and trump support, and put partner in 6S, and North unsportingly led a spade, putting paid to the idea of 10 trump tricks. Declarer will now need to establish tricks in one of the side suits, which will also require them to draw the last trump, assuming a 2-1 break, in

order to enjoy the established tricks..

A 4-3 heart break would allow one extra trick to be established there, with a further one in the suit if the finesse is taken with the K onside, or if the K is in the shorter hand without the finesse being taken. In the former case QH, AH and two ruffs set up the last heart with the QH having also scored; in the latter the K will tumble on the second ruff allowing the Q to win the 4th trick and clear the suit ready for the last heart to score too.

On the given distribution both work, though the finesse is presumably slightly more likely than finding the K in the short hand. Declarer makes 2 natural trumps, 2 diamond ruffs and the 4 remaining trumps in hand, 3 hearts and AC.

Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (5½ tables): Mike Ollerton & John Ellwood

Tuesday F2F (7½ tables):

Robert Boyd & Dorothy Bayliss

Tuesday BBO (5½ tables):

Amanda Etherington & Martyn Harris

Thursday am (6 tables):

NS: Philip Russell & John Oldroyd

EW: David Crowe & Jane Curzon

Thursday (7 tables): Sue Chapman & Vanessa Cordwell

Total 31½ 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