


Matters Arising 163

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC Dec 25 - 29 2023

Hold-Up

Most Souths on this hand from Thursday didn't insist on playing in spades, so North had to contend with a heart lead in 3NT instead.

	10 9	E S W N	
	K 9 6	P 1S 2H 3NT	
	A Q J 5	all pass	
	A J 3 2		
K 7 3		J 5	
A Q 10 8 3		J 7 2	
8 6 3		10 9 7 2	
Q 7		9 8 6 5	
	A Q 8 6 4 2		
	5 4		
	K 4		
	K 10 4		

Declarer can count 4 diamonds, at least 2 clubs, KH and AS with the ninth trick to come either from correctly guessing the 2 way finesse in clubs or taking a successful finesse against KS.

Suppose West rises with A at T1 and continues hearts. North holds off with the K until T3, after which they know East must be out of the suit. Consequently East is a safe hand and declarer takes the club finesse through West knowing that even if it loses East can't hurt them and a third club trick will have been established.

In practice the doubleton QC West means that declarer can score 4 club tricks along with 4 in diamonds, KH, AS for an overtrick. Provided of course that they held off playing diamonds until after they tackled clubs so that the red suit can be used for communications.

Suppose though that it is West who holds off at T1, preferring to use their minor honours instead. North can hold off once, but must take the K at T2 if West continues with the suit other than with the A. Now both defenders have at least one heart left and declarer will need to get the club finesse right to avoid losing 4 hearts and a club. There is a reward though for declarer if they do get the clubs right, for after 2 hearts tricks and 4 in each minor West is likely to come down to Kx S, AH. Now declarer can throw West in with a heart to lead around to dummy's spades to make 11 tricks in total.

Clear As MUD

A J 8 3 2		North declared this hand from Thursday in 3H having opened and jump rebid the suit.
5		
7 5 2		
K 10 9 4		


10 9 6 5	East started with a top diamond and then switched to 7C. The 3 is played from dummy.
J 9	
Q 9 4 3	
Q 5 3	

Over to you West.

That 7C could be many things

- 4th best from A J 8 7
- 2nd from rubbish 8 7 6 2
- MUD from 8 7 x
- top of a doubleton 7 x

In every case West wishes to retain their K over dummy's Q, so inserts the 9 in case partner has switched to a doubleton. Even if this loses to the J West retains K 10 over dummy so that declarer has only one more quick trick in the suit. Rise with the K and declarer scores all of A, Q and J, unless of course partner has made the 4th best lead mentioned above.

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

As long as West holds off with the K the defence should come to AS, AK D and a club to hold declarer to 9 tricks. Rising with the KC unless dummy plays the Q leaves an easy 10 tricks for declarer.

Some players seem determined to play random leads so that their partner cannot read what is going on. Here say the 3C looks more than anything like 4th best, and West is left guessing whether partner has underled the A or the J. Such random leads will have their successes, but using standard leads so that partner has a better idea of what is going on will pay dividends in the long run.

Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Thursday am (3 tables): Bernard & Sabina Houssin

Thursday BBO (4½ tables):

Tim Harrison & Martyn Harris

Total 7½ 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