

## Matters Arising 164

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 1 - 5 Jan 2024

### Dead Finesse

What is your attitude to finesses? If you are a glass half-empty person then you probably avoid them like the plague, whereas a glass half-full one takes every finesse in sight ever hopeful of the extra trick possibly on offer.


The best attitude is not so much a compromise but a willingness to allow the overall features of a hand to dictate which finesses are attempted.

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

This is Tuesday's hand 15. You are West and partner has used a transfer sequence to put you in 4H. North leads 8D. South rises with the A and returns one to your K, with North contributing the 2. Over to you.

If the trump finesse loses you could run into a diamond ruff, but if it works and you fail to take it you've given up a trick unnecessarily. A typical fear against greed finesse situation which I suspect most will resolve in favour of taking the finesse.


You run the JH and it holds. A second heart clears the enemy trumps as the suit was 2-2. East's red cards are all winners - there is even a spare trump West to take care of the 4th diamond should one of East's diamonds be small. The rest seem to be KC, spade to A, AC throw a spade. Yet the lure of the spade finesse was strong. Many took it, found it lost, and made just 11 tricks.

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

The QS was never the chance of an extra trick as the rest were already winners. It is an example of what I think of as a dead finesse - can't gain, can lose. Had QS been the 2 then everyone would happily have discarded a spade on AC to make 12 tricks. Strange world.

### What Needs To Be

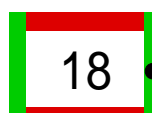
Sat West I nearly had an accident on this hand from Tuesday when after the auction started 1H - 1S - 2C I rebid 4S rather than 3S.

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

North started with the top two clubs before leading a third to their partner's Q. A diamond followed. I needed the rest, so naturally won with AD. Over to you.

Unless you're prepared to play for a singleton KS, the spade finesse needs to work. Indeed missing 5 spades the finesse may need to be taken twice. Meanwhile the two diamond losers will need to disappear on dummy's winners.

The solution is quite straightforward. Finesse against the KS, then overtake KH with A, discard the diamonds on QJ H and finesse again in spades. The line needs K, Kx or Kxx of trumps onside with hearts 4-3, but there seems to be nothing better.

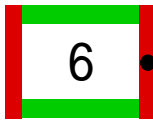
A Q J 10 5 3		7 4
K		A Q J 10 7
9 5 4		A 8
J 10 8		7 6 5 3
		6 2
		9 6 5 3
		Q 7 6 3
		A K 2
		K 9 8
		8 4 2
		K J 10 2
		Q 9 4

Had the contract been 3S then you can afford to lose to KS. Hence after AD play AQJ H crashing the K and providing two diamond discards. Then finesse the spade. No point risking losing the lead whilst possessing diamond losers. You end up making 9 tricks as the KS refuses to tumble after a single finesse.

It seems then that in 4S you are forced to make the contract, but in a part-score 9 tricks is favourite.

## Switch?

A J 6 3  
Q 2  
10 7 4  
Q J 6 3



2

J 10 9 3

A K 9 3

9 8 5 4

A simple auction of spades, spades and more spades saw East declare in 4S on this hand from Thursday.

South started with a top diamond, with their partner contributing the 5 and declarer the 2. Partner's 5 is certainly not high encouraging, so it looks as if declarer has the Q. A switch is called for, possibly after taking the other top diamond. Not only do black suit switches not appeal, but South's heart holding seems ideal for trapping dummy's Q unless declarer has AK. The JH should come next, promising the 10. No point risking partner playing the A or K on the 2H from table.

8 7

K 8 7 6 4

J 6 5

A 7 2

A J 6 3

Q 2

10 7 4

Q J 6 3



2

J 10 9 3

A K 9 3

9 8 5 4

K Q 10 9 5 4

A 5

Q 8 2

K 10

The heart trick goes J, Q, K, A and the defence have a heart trick to go with AK D and AC.

Where South continued with a third diamond declarer could draw trumps and set up clubs for the discard of a heart to make 10 tricks. Unfortunately one such declarer used their 4 and 5 of spades under dummy's AJ to draw trumps, and then led a small club from table retaining their K when North rose with the A. The net result was that another club put declarer in hand and they had no way of reaching the winning clubs.

Ouch.

## Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Tuesday F2F (6½ tables):

Helen Adams & Patricia White

Tuesday BBO (6½ tables):

Amanda Etherington & Martyn Harris

Thursday am (6 tables):

NS: Shirley Harris & Patricia White

EW: Denise Williamson & Jean Bentham

Thursday (6½ tables): Mike & Sally-Ann Rothwell

Total 25½ tables for the week.

I welcome any comments or queries sent me at [martyn@orpheusmail.co.uk](mailto: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