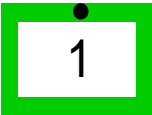


## Matters Arising 165

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 8 - 12 Jan 2024

### Unblock & Signal

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

Four EW pairs played this hand from Tuesday in 3NT. The view of all four hands shows that the defence can take 5 heart and 2 club tricks for 3 off. None did.


One East led 6H won by North with the K. The JH went to Q and K and South led next 10H. What was that 6H lead? Initially there were several possibilities including MUD, which would give declarer Q8xx, but The AH at T2 surely screams that the 6 was 4th best. Consequently East started with at most 3 hearts and North can afford to throw the 9 to unblock the suit. Unfortunately they didn't and the defence came to only 4 of their 5 heart tricks when North was forced to win the 4th round with the 9. They then cashed AC for one off.

A second South made the slightly curious lead of 7H. North rose with the K and made the normal return of the original fourth best, the 5, to Q and A. Next came small to J and South was alert to overtake the 9 to cash the 5th heart. Unfortunately their system of discards didn't tell South to lead a club, so they only took one rather than two more tricks as declarer was able to run 7 tricks. Two off. There are various systems of discards that would work here. One of the best known and simple to use is McKenney in which a small card asks for the lower of the remaining suits (not the suit discarded or the suit discarded on), and a high card asks for the higher remaining suit. Thus the discard of 2S on the fifth heart would be a signal for a club.

When played by West one North led 5H to Q and A, and when the 6 came back North happily won with the 9, blocking the suit. Reading the situation here is harder, but if declarer holds the 10 they are likely to play low at T1 from table hoping that North has led from the J rather than calling for the Q which seems to be playing North for AK ie playing for North to have one specified card rather than two. With the heart suit blocked declarer was allowed to take 7 tricks for 2 off.

The final defensive attempt saw North start by cashing AC, which put paid to one defensive trick straight off. This cashing of an Ace seems to be fuelled by a desire to look at dummy, but is often an aid to declarer. The 5H switch came to Q and A with South returning the 10 left North no way of unblocking the suit. One off.

### Third Suit at One Level

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

Barring a cheeky 1NT from North the EW auction on Monday's hand 8 seems destined to start 1C – 1D – 1H. The idea has taken hold in some quarters that bidding a third suit at the one level shows a weak hand, but there is no reason why they should be any more limited than for their opening bid. Certainly there is space between East's hand here and what they would need to make a game forcing jump, so East could be stronger and still wish to rebid 1H. Life for partner of the bidder of the third suit is easy - mostly they make the same response now as they would have had the third bid been the first, though they can give simple preference and need to be wary of bidding the fourth suit on a hand not suitable for fourth suit forcing. With a heart fit West consults the losing trick count and rebids 2H, with East then bouncing to 4H on their 5 loser hand. A heart contract can be played for the loss of AS and one trump.

Passing 1H did not score well. Nor does an initial response of 1NT to the 1C opening, pretty much guaranteeing the heart fit will remain forever hidden. A 1NT response may show 6–9 points, but that is not all it says. It also contains the message that the hand has no major that can be bid at the one level.

Sometimes one might hide a diamond suit in response to 1C but on the actual hand 1D looks all but automatic, with 1H perhaps an alternative and 1NT nowhere.

## Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (8 tables): Mike & Sally-Ann Rothwell

Tuesday F2F (8 tables): Roger & Debbie Wilkinson

Tuesday BBO (6 tables): Janet & David Owen

Thursday am (7 tables):

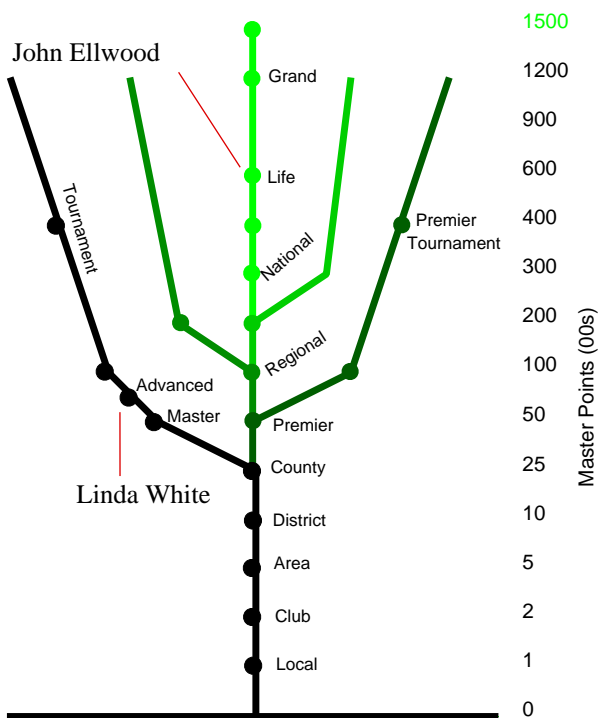
NS: Lynn Percival & Helen Adams

EW: Jill & Chris Yates

Thursday BBO (6 tables): Mike & Sally-Ann Rothwell

Total 35 tables for the week.

Two members achieved masterpoint promotions during December - John Ellwood to Life Master and Linda White to Advanced Master. Well done to both.



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