

Matters Arising 166

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 15 - 19 Jan 2024

An Easy Life

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

11

Q 10 5
Q J 8 6 4 3
--
A 10 6 4

The KC was led against North's 4S contract on this hand from Monday.

Two voids beg for a cross-ruff, and it is only necessary to ruff one diamond on the table and two hearts in hand before the cross-ruff becomes a high one - ie uses trumps that the defence can't beat.

It often pays to cash side suit winners before embarking on a cross-ruff, so play goes AC, heart ruff, AD.

Then diamond ruff, heart ruff, diamond ruff, heart ruff. diamond ruff, heart ruff. That's 4 heart ruffs and 3 diamond ruffs and 2 aces so far. AK spades makes 11, and if the trumps are 2-2 and the KD has tumbled the QD becomes a 12th trick.

	A K J 9 3 2	
	--	
	A Q 9 7 4	
	8 3	
8 6 4		7
7 5 2		A K 10 9
J 8 6 5	11	K 10 3 2
J 9 5		K Q 7 2
	Q 10 5	
	Q J 8 6 4 3	
	--	
	A 10 6 4	

The 12th trick doesn't materialise, but 450 scores 11/16 match points or just shy of 70%

The AH proved to be a friendly lead. Ruff, AD, diamond ruff, QH discarding a club leads to this position:

	A K J 9 3	
	--	
	Q 9 7	
	8	
8 6 4		7
7		10 9
J 8	11	K 10
J 9 5		K Q 7 2
	Q 10	
	J 8 6 4	
	--	
	A 10 6	

If East leads their trump declarer wins on table, ruffs a small heart, draws trumps and crosses to AC to discard their remaining diamonds on table's hearts. If East doesn't lead their trump then declarer will dispose of their diamonds one on JH and two ruffed. Either way declarer makes 12 tricks.

Double or Call?

6 5		9 3
A K 5 2	13	Q J 8 4 3
Q 9 6 3		K 5
A K Q		10 6 3 2

Where South opened 1C on this hand from Monday West had to choose between double and a 1NT overcall, with double followed by a NT bid showing a balanced hand too strong for a 1NT overcall.

Either action could be right.

	J 8 7 4 2	
	10 9 7	
	A 10 7 4	
	8	
6 5		9 3
A K 5 2	13	Q J 8 4 3
Q 9 6 3		K 5
A K Q		10 6 3 2
	A K Q 10	
	6	
	J 8 2	
	J 9 7 5 3	

On the day 1NT by West was greeted by a 2D transfer bid from East. With a double maximum - good trumps and top or even slightly over the top point count - West breaks the transfer to bid 3H, and with 8 losers East has an easy raise to game.

If West doubles North bids 1S and East 2H. This last is a free bid - they could have passed and partner still gets another bid. Hence it shows that East bid because they wanted to rather than because they were forced to by partner's double. Armed with such knowledge West should be happy to go straight to game.

4H makes easily via 3 trumps, 3 clubs, 1 diamond and 3 ruffs and on the night scored 11/16.

4S by NS also makes though the play is not quite as straightforward and it is harder to see them feeling justified in going that high.

Double Your Score

8 7 6
A Q 6 5 4 2
Q 2
10 8



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

The JD was frequently led against North's heart part-score on this hand from Tuesday.

There is the potential for 2 club losers and one in each other suit, though if the heart finesse works that should take care of the possible trump one.

There is a double finesse position in the spade suit which allows that suit to be picked up without loss if East

holds QJ S, but on the lead a better bet might be to look to discard a spade on a diamond should either East have underled the A or West have started with at most three, both of which being realistic possibilities on the lead.

The diamond is allowed to run to hand where the Q wins, and the 2 is returned immediately. Play small from table regardless of East's play - they are unlikely to hold up the A at this point so you are looking to ruff the A out from West if it doesn't appear from East.

East wins and switches to a club and the defence take their two club tricks before switching to a spade. Rise with A and run the JH. East wins and leads another spade. Take and ruff the little diamond in hand hoping to fell the A. Draw trumps ending on table, and park North's losing spade on KD if it has come to the top.

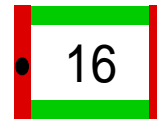
	8 7 6	
	A Q 6 5 4 2	
	Q 2	
	10 8	
Q 9 5 3		J 2
9 7		K 8
A 4		J 10 9 8 3
A 7 4 3 2		K J 9 6
	A K 10 4	
	J 10 3	
	K 7 6 5	
	Q 5	

That's the plan, but in practice West has to win the second diamond with the A, so the K is quickly established. Do be careful though. If after taking the losing trump finesse East leads a third diamond don't be tempted to rise with the K as West might ruff. Yes you can overruff, but you want the KD as a winner on which to discard the third spade. Playing the K should be delayed until the enemy teeth have been drawn.

By disposing of their potential spade loser on KD declarer makes 9 tricks instead of 8, more than doubling their match point score on the night from 7 to 15 out of 18. Well worth trying.

Look After Your Losers

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



K
A K 8 7 6 3
K J 2
8 7 5

Your assignment on this hand from Tuesday is to make 4H by East on a small club lead.

It is easy to discard a club from hand on AS so as to avoid any black suit losers. The most likely trump break is 3-1, so we must count a loser there. (In general when missing an odd number of cards the most likely break is as even as possible, when missing an even number the most likely break is not quite as even as possible. The exception is when missing 2 - a 1-1 break is slightly more likely than a 2-0 one). That leaves diamonds, and the best way to avoid 3 losers there is to ruff one on the table.

Win AC, spade to K, club to K and discard your last club on AS. Now lead a diamond. If you guess wrong or can't guess right South will win. They can switch to a trump, you win and play a second diamond. The defence wins and leads another trump. But there is still a trump left on table to ruff your third diamond and the contract is made.

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

In practice you can guess the diamond right by rising with the K on the first round, unless of course North helpfully rises with the A in front of you. Now you only lose one diamond, plus the heart trick consequent on the expected 3-1 trump break.

11 tricks scored 14 out of the available 18 match points available.

Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (9 tables): Robert Boyd & Steven Barron

Tuesday BBO (10 tables): Janet & David Owen

Thursday am (7 tables):

NS: Brenda Richardson & Rita Davies

EW: David Airey & Jennifer Whalley

Thursday Teams (2 tables):

Mike & Sally-Ann Rothwell

Robin Rose & Martyn Harris

Total 28 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