


## Matters Arising 168

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 29 Jan - 2 Feb 2024

### Same Start, Different Ends

There were just 4½ tables for Thursday evening's BBO session, and on board 6 the bidding all four full tables started P – 1NT – X. However each table found a different suit contract.

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

At one table West bid 2H as a transfer to spades. West had a different understanding of 2H and passed. Five off for 500 gave NS a top.

At another table East passed and South bid 2C, showing the majors. North had a different understanding of 2C and passed. One off was the only plus score for EW, so a top to them.

There really is no substitute for knowing your system.

At the other two tables East bid 2S. This was passed out at one table for 300 to NS, but drew 3D from the other North for 150 to NS.

Other than *know your system* what other matters arise? Firstly playing in NT on modest values can be an unforgiving experience, so it pays to get out of 1NTX on limited values. Consequently most pairs adopt a defence to 1NTX. There are several possibilities to choose from, all of which of course also cater for situations in which responder is happy to play in 1NTX.

Exit transfers are popular: bid the suit below the one you wish to play in. XX with clubs, whilst pass is forcing, requiring opener to redouble. Responder then passes if content to play in NT or starts a scramble to find a vaguely playable contract when weak with no 5 card suit.

Transfers here though do have several drawbacks. It will be useful to the defence to see just how weak responder is in order to defend accurately. With a strong hand the doubler may well not be embarrassed by

having the opening lead, whilst the fourth hand gets two bites at doubling to start a penalty hunt, once over the transfer bid and later when the real suit reaches them. It can be that the ability to double the transfer bid is all that partner needs to put the boot into the genuine suit.

An alternative approach is for any suit bid to be to play, XX is content, and pass is a weak forcing bid asking partner either to bid a 5 card suit or to XX to start a scramble.

It is possible to reverse the scramble and immediate exit: an immediate suit bid starts a scramble when holding no 5 card suit, with pass and XX between them catering for hands that you are content to play in 1NT or are weak with a 5 card suit.

What should be clear though is that you need to know your choice. System malfunctions over 1NTX tend to lead to bottoms.

Next up, how should the 4th hand bid?

If 3rd hand has run into a suit then the 4th will double if they can, confirming that the partnership should now hunt together for a significant penalty.

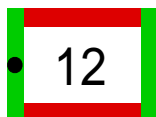
If 3rd hand has passed my view is that 4th hand should only bid if weak and distributional, otherwise pass. If partner is minimum for their double you may have nowhere to run to, whilst they may not need much extra to defeat 1NT anyway. Other opinions are available.

Suppose though that a suit bid by either opener or responder reaches the original doubler with 4th hand having been silent. In most situations it is best to play that after a penalty double all subsequent doubles are penalties too. Here, although the original double is often referred to as a penalty double, in practice it is simply showing a strong hand. However they may well not be strong enough both in points and an enemy suit to be able to double for penalties at the two level opposite a silent partner. Better then that a second double in this situation is for take-out, which given partner has been silent also suggests non-minimum values. Thus on this hand, after 1NT – X – 2S – P – P North can double for take-out and South may well pass to convert to penalties.

Those who play online will know we use robots to fill a half-table, though their results are removed before the final scores are calculated. Fitting in nicely with the rest of the story, the contract at that table was NT, with NS scoring 210.

## Simple Positional Squeeze

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



J 9 6 4  
K 5  
10 8  
K J 6 4 2

A weak 2D opening is rarely a weapon of mass destruction, but on Monday's board 12 West's 2D bid was enough to stop most NSs reaching game.

Overcalling 2H with something in reserve may be sound but certainly won't elicit action from South. A red jump overcall of 3H is more likely to draw support from South on their aceless 8 loser hand, but still may not. Double with intent to rebid hearts could run into trouble if

partner gets excited in spades.

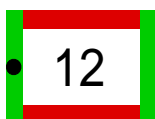
Those who end in a part-score will on sight of dummy be even keener than usual to make as many tricks as possible so as to be the best of the rest as it were.

East starts with the KD, followed by the 2. I spy a doubleton. West wins and switches to spades. Over to you.

AS, AK C, 6 trumps and a diamond ruff look easy, which is 10 tricks. Having already lost 2 there is only one trick up for grabs, and letting the spade run won't win it, so rise with the A, and ruff the last diamond. If East ruffed to force the KH from table you can now lead the 5 to draw trumps, else cash KH, return to hand via AC and complete the removal of the enemy teeth.

With trumps breaking 3-2 you are now 7  
down to the holdings right. West is J 10 6  
known to have started with AQJ in --  
diamonds, so presumably has room for 3

at most one of the outstanding black honours. The club finesse may well work, but declarer will be loath to try it for fear of losing 2 tricks from here if it fails. From this sort of position it is not unusual to see the play continue KC, club ruff, run the trumps hoping that the defence throw their spades. They really shouldn't of course, for West

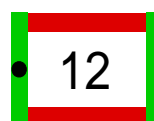


knows you have no diamonds and East has none to hold on to, and both will see you ruff the club in hand proclaiming you to be out in that suit too.

Try running the hearts instead. You have two easy spade discards to begin with, yet if East started with all the black honours the second heart will force them to discard from a hand of KQ S and Kx C. The QS has to go. On the third heart they have to hold on to the KS else dummy's J comes to the top, so xC goes. Knowing JS isn't boss you can discard that. Now when you lead the club the Q appears and you pick up 2 club tricks without any fear of losing one.

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

8 5  
9 4  
A Q J 9 6 4  
10 8 5



J 9 6 4  
K 5  
10 8  
K J 6 4 2

K Q 10 3 2  
8 7 2  
K 2  
Q 9 7

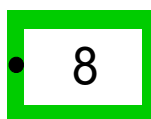
East has to decide on their black suit discards before dummy does, making this a positional squeeze. The play may also work as a pseudo squeeze if West has one of the spade honours. However if West has QC an 11th trick will only come if West's Q is doubleton, but as you will be committed to playing the KC at the end you will then drop the Q anyway.

(The difference between a real squeeze and a pseudo one is that there is no right discard at the critical point in a real squeeze, whereas in a pseudo squeeze you are relying on a wrong discard being made. Some pseudo squeezes are harder to combat than others.)

## Courtesy NT

A Q 9 7 6  
A Q 9  
K  
Q 9 3 2

1S - 1NT - 2C - 2H - 4H or maybe  
1S - 1NT - 2C - 2H - 3H - 4H  
looks like the choice of auctions on  
this hand from Monday.



5  
K 8 7 5 4 2  
7 6 4  
A J 4

Six natural trump tricks, 2 clubs AS  
and a diamond ruff look likely, with  
various chances of an eleventh trick.

South's hand is a typical courtesy NT response to a 1S opening, a dustbin bid to some, being too strong to pass, not strong enough to respond in a new suit at the 2 level and having no suit biddable at the one level. The 2H rebid then reveals the nature of the original response. It may seem strange not to bid hearts immediately, but as a change of suit response is forcing there is no chance of ending in 2H if taking that route.

What of North's 2C rebid? 3C would be game-forcing and hence an overbid. 2NT is right for the point count but not for the shape. 2C may occasionally miss something better, but with partner striving to give false preference if pass is the only alternative the 2C rebid is not as risky as it might seem at first sight.


Does responder's new suit rebid after their 1NT response promise a 6 card suit? All but. Consider the variations below where the 2H is moved into each other suit in turn, with JC also moved into diamonds in the

last case.

5 2	5	5	5
K 8 7 5 4	K 8 7 5 4	K 8 7 5 4	K 8 7 5 4
7 6 4	7 6 4	7 6 4 2	J 7 6 4 2
A J 4	A J 4 2	A J 4	A 4
(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)

Then after 1S – 1NT – 2C with

- i) give false preference to 2S
- ii) raise to 3C
- iii) pass looks best
- iv) maybe the temptation to bid a red suit can't be resisted.

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

## Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (9 tables): Phillip Burley & Sarah Bullock

Tuesday BBO (6½ tables):

Amanda Etherington & Martyn Harris

Tues F2F ( 9 Tables):

NS: Jean Dale & Ralph Rogerson

EW: Debbies & Roger Wilkinson

Thursday am (7 tables):

NS: Philip Russell & DianaSmethurst

EW: Jill & Chris Yates

Thursday (4½ tables):

Andrew Smith & Dudley Hargreaves

Total 36 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