

Matters Arising 171

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 19 - 23 Feb 2024


From One Side

2 K Q J 9 8 6 3 A 7 4 2 A		10 8 7 A 7 5 K 5 K J 8 3 2
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On this hand from Monday South bid spades vigorously but it didn't stop 5 of the 7 Wests playing in hearts. The defence started with two rounds of spades. Declarer ruffed the second on these, and laid down KH on which South shows out. Over to you.


With most tricks destined to be won in declarer's hand it is convenient to consider the play from that hand, just looking to dummy to take care of any potential losers. The spade has been lost already. Dummy's AH means there are no trump losers, nor indeed are there any in clubs. Declarer does have 3 losing diamonds in hand, though one will be taken care of by dummy's King. Another goes on KC, the last can be ruffed. Retaining a trump on table to do this means that only 2 rounds can be drawn.

Play continues with 9H before AC, KD, KC discard a diamond, AD, ruff diamond, ruff something black in hand to draw last trump. Given that South is known to be stuffed with spades a club back looks best. The suggested 9H on the second round of trumps is designed to minimise the possibility of North's 10H causing problems.

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

In practice QC falls under the K so the JC becomes an unplanned resting spot for the last diamond.

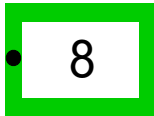
Even More Hearts

9 A K Q J 8 6 5 4 A 3 J 6		A 4 3 10 7 Q 8 6 5 A 10 9 5
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Two hands later West had even more hearts. How would you attempt to make 12 tricks on a trump lead?

There are 11 tricks on top with a 12th trick to come either from clubs or diamonds.

After winning AS and drawing trumps - it takes 3 rounds - run JC expecting to lose to an honour South. Win the spade continuation on table, cross to hand with a spade ruff, and finesse the 10C so that the 3D can be discarded on AC. This double finesse line works provided North has at least one of the club honours.

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

North indeed has a club honour and 12 tricks are made.

Can you see why declarer might not wish to play on clubs on a spade lead?

On the given line North could cover the JC and declarer is beaten. With AS still on table declarer would simply overtake and use the 10C to force out the other high honour safe in the knowledge that AS will be an entry to the resulting club winner.

However with AS already removed declarer cannot afford to cover North's honour as there will be no entry to table. Consequently they are forced to duck and play North for both KQ C. Perhaps it is better now to ignore clubs and simply play A and another diamond, playing North for the K so that QD is a resting place for JC.

Whether North would cover JC is a moot point since from their side declarer could have KJx C and be fishing for the right way to take a 2-way club finesse.

Cue-Bid

K Q J 6 There were 6 tables on Thursday when
 K 9 8 6 3 this hand appeared for North. One East
 A J passed, one opened 2D and the others 3D.
 A 10 Where East opened South doubled at all
 bar one of the tables, but then paths
 diverged.

After the 2D opener was doubled North only mustered a 2H response. Luckily their partner bid again even though North has promised no values, and game was reached.

Another North bid 3H after 3D – X. South passed, probably crossing their fingers that it wouldn't be more than one off red.

I confess I've never understood the practice of making a minimum response to a take-out double regardless of strength.

A third North jumped to 4H, ensuring game was reached.

The final North bid 4D over 3D – X, which surely anyone can read as forcing. South presumably has at least opening values and at least one 4 card major. North has a 5 loser hand in support of either major, so is thinking slam.

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

Lack of the JH gave a few moments of concern, though both players would have bid the same way with that card instead of a J elsewhere. In practice declarer plays a trump towards the Q first to give them an option of finessing back should East produce J or 10 on the first round and West the 7 on the second, as the finesse looks better odds when East is known to have length in diamonds. However when West produces the 10 on the second round having won the first with the A declarer has no choice other than to cover with the K and hope the J drops too. It does.

Stayman v Transfer

9 7 5 4 3 South opens 1NT. Would you use
 K Q 10 4 Stayman with this North hand from
 - - Thursday, or transfer into spades?
 K 6 5 4

Using Stayman allows responder to avoid playing in a 5–2 fit when there is a 4–4 one available. Should opener rebid 2D then responder now bids their 5 card major to play. This seems more flexible than simply transferring into spades and passing.

Those who so frequently open 1NT with a 5 card major that they employ Puppet Stayman or similar to uncover it won't have the Stayman option on this hand, since for them if opener has no major the rebid will be 2NT, and there is then considerable danger of getting too high.

	9 7 5 4 3	
	K Q 10 4	
	- -	
	K 6 5 4	
10 6	21	Q 8
A J 3		9 8 6 5
K Q 8 5		A 9 7 4 2
Q 10 9 7		8 3
	A K J 2	
	7 2	
	J 10 6 3	
	A J 2	

When South responds 2S to the Stayman enquiry North is entitled to bid 4S. Everyone on the night made 11 tricks whether in 2S or 4.

South could of course break a transfer if that is North's chosen route, but I'm not convinced that with an 8 loser hand they would be justified in so doing.

Around The Club

This weeks winners were
 Monday (7½ tables): Mike Howse & Martyn Harris
 Tuesday BBO (6½ tables): Ray & Irene Gregory
 Tues F2F (8½ tables):
 NS: Andrew Peill & Steve Barron
 EW: Mary Simm & Alison Jones
 Thursday am (10 tables):
 NS: Bob Churchward & Tutor
 EW: Helen Finch & Moira Williams
 Thursday (6 tables): Alan Wearmouth & Martyn Harris
 Total 38½ tables for the week.

Martyn Harris
 spadeilike on BBO