



Matters Arising 173

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal B C 4 - 8 Mar 2024

Fatal Attraction

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

Tuesday, and East found themselves in 2S on a club lead. There are 9 top tricks available simply by laying down KS at T2 so as to preserve a finesse either way should trumps be 4-0. Any duplicate player should know that if +1 is easy they should look for +2 (or more), and potential extra tricks are available through ruffing hearts on the table. Unfortunately Tuesday's Easts had a fatal attraction to drawing trumps, and when they didn't split 2-2 the chance of ruffing hearts went.

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

After winning AK play A and another heart. North wins and continues clubs. A third heart is ruffed, and over-ruffed by North's J. Now a third club is ruffed with the 8. The last heart is ruffed with the A so that 10S can be overtaken to draw trumps. 10 tricks. It would take an unlucky distribution for declarer to end up with fewer tricks on this line than by drawing trumps, so why not play it?


Cake And Eat It

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

One lucky East received a heart lead against their spade contract - game or slam - but how would you have coped with the more popular club lead?

There are 9 top tricks, with a second trick in hearts available whether the finesse works or not. A club ruff is in the offing, and there may be some long diamond tricks too. For once I won't argue if you start by tackling trumps, and they split 2-2. What next?

Putting your faith in the heart finesse proves unrewarding for this fails and the defence cash a club to hold you to 11 tricks.

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

Chasing the apparently inferior hope of a 3-3 diamond split (35%) works. After drawing trumps play AK D and ruff a third. When the suit behaves a club is lost to establish an entry to table via a club ruff, and J 7 hearts disappear on the long diamonds. 12 tricks, for the only loser is the club.

Is this another example of the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune that we have to contend with? No. Playing diamonds is correct. If a defender shows out on the third diamond you still duck a club to create the entry, which you then use to try the heart finesse. By tackling diamonds first you are able to try hearts later if the diamonds refuse to co-operate, but an unsuccessful heart finesse proves fatal before you have the chance to try the diamonds. The order in which you test the possibilities can be important if only one works.

1H – X

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

I imagine South will have opened 1H at all tables on this hand from Monday. Where West overcalled in diamonds an argument ensued between South and West, won by West at varying levels. Many people though like to limit their overcalls to a maximum of about 15 points, with the first action on stronger hands being double unless the hand is suitable for a 1NT overcall. What would you do with the East hand if partner did double 1H for take-out?

Pass because you cannot think of anything to bid should not be an option, but two Easts chose it. Two doubled vulnerable overtricks later NS were the proud owners of a score of +560 and a joint top.

There are two schools of thought on picking a suit with the East hand. One is to bid spades as it is the suit partner is most likely to hold and has the bonus of being biddable at the one level. The other says don't bid spades because that is the suit partner is most likely to get excited about, and you don't want partner getting excited. Your choice.

If East bids 1S West goes to game - with a 4 loser hand one can hardly blame them. 4-3 fits, also known as Moysian fits are often at best delicate to handle. How does East cope here?

South leads KH, overtaken by North's Ace. A heart is returned with intent to shorten dummy's trumps - certainly no switch looks attractive given dummy.

Declarer would like to take lots of diamond tricks, which means getting rid of trumps. KS is led and South wins with the A. QH follows, ruffed with the J. North shows out, which is not unexpected given the earlier play in the suit.

Now comes dummy's last trump, a diamond to the Q, and declarer's last trump. When South shows out North is left with an outstanding trump. An avalanche of diamonds follows. North can ruff in when they want but will have to return a club and table is good. 10 tricks made for the loss of AH, AS and a diamond ruff.

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

With KC outside 5D is an easy make, but reaching this game with no help from East seems improbable.

An imaginative East might regard their 10 9 x x as (almost) a stop and reply 1NT. Can't help feeling that this is a *do not try this at home* action. West is likely to bounce straight to 3NT, which makes on the lead of a heart honour. For once it is the 4th best from KQJxxx that beats the contract, but South looks very silly if East holds A 10 (x).

Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (7 tables): Martyn Harris & Mike Howse

Tuesday BBO (5 tables):

Hilary Storey & Jacky Truelove

Tues F2F (8½ tables):

NS: Debbie & Roger Wilkinson

EW: David Airey & Jennifer Whalley

Thursday am (6 tables):

NS: Bernard & Sabina Houssin

EW: Jane Morgan & Brenda Richardson

Thursday (5½ tables):

Alan Wearmouth & Martyn Harris

Total 32 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