

# Matters Arising 174

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 11 - 15 Mar 2024

## Which Major?

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

On this hand from Monday the auction may be a simple 1H – 4H, or North may choose to respond 1S to gauge South's strength from their rebid. In this case South rebids 3S. Should North now bid game in spades or return to hearts?

There is a temptation to play in spades as they have more, but a 4–4 fit sometimes plays better than a 5–4 one. On this deal it makes no difference as there are 11 tricks available in either suit. Imagine though swapping South's KC and 5H with West's QH and 5C:

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

Now there is an inescapable club loser when played in spades, but in hearts the club can be discarded on the long spade allowing a club ruff to be the 12th trick.

## Rebid

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

What should East rebid on this hand from Monday after the bidding starts 1H – 2C?

The point count suggests 2H, but this is feeble. After all, if West has something unexciting such as

xx xxx xxxx xxxx

then 4H requires spades 3–3 and not 2 trump losers. Not the best of games perhaps, but not impossible. However partners 2C response suggests they are significantly better than the hand given, and with only 4 losers themselves and a good 6 card suit East must be prepared to underwrite game. As such even a jump rebid of 3H understates the strength of the hand.

2S seems right. This reverse (barrier bid) is game-forcing after a 2 level response, and promises longer hearts than spades. With their excellent collection of controls if West doesn't get excited about slam prospects at this point East should find themselves a different partner.

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

Had West held only 2 hearts they can simply rebid NT and await developments, for they are in a game-forcing auction. East would then bid 3S to show their 5th spade and hence by inference 6 hearts, and West is once again aware of any 8 card major fits.

## Overcall

	K 8	
	J 10 5	
	A Q 9 5 2	
	9 6 2	
J 6 3 2	<div style="border: 2px solid green; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">8</div>	Q 7
9 6 3		K Q 7 4 2
8 7		K 6 4 3
10 8 7 3		Q 4
	A 10 9 5 4	
	A 8	
	J 10	
	A K J 5	

When East opened 1H on this board from Monday South had 3 choices.

- a) Overcall 1S. Most partnerships rarely make a simple suit overcall with as many as 17 points, so the auction may die before reaching game with North failing to appreciate South's strength.
- b) Double with intent to rebid spades to show a hand too strong for an overcall. Then the auction might be 1H – X – P – 3D – P – 3S – P – 4S. 4S can make, but many natural lines seem to be beaten by a trump promotion
- c) Overcall 1NT as the hand roughly satisfies the requirement of 15–17 balanced with a stop in enemy suit. North is likely to raise directly to 3NT, with their J10x H proving pivotal in the success of the contract.

3NT by South is an easy make. West's heart lead is covered by 10, Q and A, and the JD run even though East's opening bid marks them with (almost) all the outstanding points. East can win, but can't continue hearts without setting up JH on table. Moreover with 4 diamonds and 4 top black tricks declarer doesn't need the second heart trick for the contract anyway.

If East ducks the JD the 10 follows overtaken by the Q on table so that East cannot duck to restrict declarer to 3 diamond tricks.

Note that in the unlikely circumstance that East leads a spade after winning the first round of diamonds declarer wins in hand. Then they can cash 10D and use KS as entry to dummy's diamonds.

The one thing declarer mustn't do is let West in to lead a second heart through table's Jx. Whilst the diamond finesse looks destined to fail it is also a case of finessing into the safe hand - as mentioned earlier East cannot continue hearts to their benefit.

## Beware Of The Rebid

Q 10 3	<div style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">20</div>	A K 9 8 6 5 4
A J		6 3
A K 2		9 8
K 9 6 4 2		A 5

West opened 1C on this board from Tuesday's play. With a 6 loser hand East will immediately recognise that there should be game on, using the formula opener opposite opener = game. How might East reply.

With game certain and the hint of a slam possible East chooses between 1S and 2S.

1S has the advantage that responder will learn something about opener's strength from their rebid, but the disadvantage that responder will struggle to find a subsequent forcing rebid themselves, and so be committed to either rebidding 4S or going slamming despite clear worries about red suit losers.

A 2S response will presumably elicit the support 3S. A 4C cue-bid would now be music to West's ears, but even if East feels unable to do more than bid 4S over 3S West is so rich in controls that they will take over and propel their side to slam.

I am a fan of keeping the bidding low on strong hands so as to learn more about partner, but on one suiters that would have slam interest if partner is more than minimum the immediate jump can save responder from rebid problems

	7	
	K Q 10 4	
	Q J 10 4	
	J 10 7 3	
Q 10 3	<div style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">20</div>	A K 9 8 6 5 4
A J		6 3
A K 2		9 8
K 9 6 4 2		A 5
	J 2	
	9 8 7 5 2	
	7 6 5 3	
	Q 8	

On sight of dummy declarer can see an easy 12 tricks, for the only possible loser is a heart. In practice the entries to table exist to set up the 5th club on which to discard declarer's second small heart.

For example, on a heart lead rise with the A and draw trumps in 2 rounds. Now AC, KC, club ruff. AD and ruff another club. Back to KD (or the third trump) to cash the last club for 13 tricks.

## Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (7½ tables): John Nicholls & Brian Smith

Tuesday BBO (7 tables): Ray & Irene Gregory

Tues F2F (7 tables):

NS: David Crowe & Jane Curzon

EW: Ken Orford & Sarah Bullock

Thursday am (8 tables):

NS: Alison Jones & Angela Davenport

Dennis & Margaret Pook

EW: Jill & Chris Yates

Bob Churchward & Bernard Houssin

Thursday (5½ tables):

Alan Wearmouth & Martyn Harris

Total 35 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