

Matters Arising 179

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

On The Run

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

On this hand from Thursday West opened 1NT and at two tables North doubled. This is often regarded as a penalty double, though perhaps a values showing double would be a better description, as the normal interpretation is 15+ points, together with a decent lead when minimum. The diamonds fulfil the role of the decent lead here as North can anticipate getting in several times to continue the assault with their long suit.

South has 11 points opposite a known 15+, with the location of most if not all the missing points known to be West. South might consider bidding 3NT, though if their side can make 9 tricks that leaves 4 for EW and a penalty of 800. Pass is surely called for, yet at both of the tables in which North judged their hand worth a double South simply bid 2H. This should show a weak hand with length in hearts. Not surprisingly all passed and the contract though successful could not generate a score that would compete either with defending 1NT (even if undoubled) or bidding game.

Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (Teams 7 tables):

Russell White & Jeremy Harris
Robert Harvey & David Harris

Tuesday BBO (4½ tables): John & Wendy Ellwood

Tues F2F (7½ tables): Robert Boyd & Helen Finch

Thursday am (8 tables):

NS: Bob Churchward & Rita Davies
EW: Neil Adams & Josephine St John

Thursday (6 tables): John & Wendy Ellwood and
Amanda Etherington & Martyn Harris

Total 34 tables for the week.

Duck For A Reason

A Q 4	Also on Thursday North found
8 3	themselves as declarer in 1NT on
10 9 6 4	board 13.
A K 9 7	

	13
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A common defence saw a heart led to West's K and the KD returned. This was allowed to hold, as was the QD continuation on which East showed out, before a small diamond forced out the A.

5 2
Q 10 9 2
A 7 2
J 10 5 4

Declarer tried the club finesse which failed, with East continuing a heart to West's A. West promptly cashed

two diamond tricks for one off (4 diamonds, two hearts and QC to the defence).

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

Ducking is a useful technique amongst other reasons for breaking defensive communications, but here it was suicidal for it reduced the number of diamond stops from 2 to 1 for declarer. The lead of the K immediately turned the declarer's own holding into a second stop. The first duck is understandable as it encourages the continuation of the suit and hence brings a second trick in the suit closer. The second duck though seems to be blind adherence to a technique without consideration of whether it applies.

A Curious Lack of Overtricks

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

On Monday's board 15 all Wests played in 3NT on the lead of the JC and made 9 tricks. Monday was teams, and in teams the contract is King - you do not risk the contract in search of overtricks and a better score.

Here though West has 9 tricks on top and after winning the first club will still have two stops in every suit. Looking for an overtrick or two is now acceptable, as each such additional trick would secure an IMP. Just be ready to run for home should the layout not co-operate.

Each suit has the potential for increasing the trick count: spades might be 3-3, the 2-way heart finesse could be successfully negotiated, diamonds might be 3-3 or clubs 4-4.

The heart finesse can be tried anytime that you retain at least one stop in each suit, so which break to try for first? A 3-3 diamond break would produce two extra tricks so presumably would be tried in preference to the spade one, and indeed such a break is slightly more likely than a 4-4 one.

Thus T2 is AD, and T3 a diamond duck. Later dummy can be entered via a heart and the KD laid down to test the suit.

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

The diamonds are indeed 3-3 so two extra tricks accrue. A further trick comes if the hearts are correctly guessed. Thus 11 or 12 tricks dependent on the heart guess, with the contract never put in danger.

Two Bites

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

How do you fancy your chances in 6D by West on the lead of two rounds of hearts on this hand from Monday?

Three pairs played in diamonds but only one made 12 tricks. It appears that they ruffed the second heart, drew trumps, overtook a club to reach table and took the spade finesse. When North produced the K they were one off.

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

It is frustrating that the KS is singleton, but making the contract doesn't rely on playing the AS to drop the K.

Holding 9 trumps there is a 40% chance that the defence's holdings are split 2-2. In that case declarer's spades can disappear on dummy's clubs, provided declarer unblocks the suit before tackling trumps. Thus T3 and T4 are AQ C, T5 and T6 are A and then KD. When diamonds do indeed behave the spades are discarded on KJ C and there is no need for a finesse. Admittedly the diamonds might not split evenly, in which case declarer will then need to fall back on the spade finesse. Even allowing for the possibility of a black suit ruff this line is surely better than putting all your money on the spade finesse.

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