

Matters Arising 203

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 30 Sept - 4 Oct 2024

Natural Breaks

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



J 6
Q 10 5 2
K Q 9 2
K 10 7

Nobody reached 6C on this hand from Tuesday, and this probably comes as no surprise. No reason though why you dear reader shouldn't consider how you might play the slam from the North hand on a heart lead.

Think away, then read on.

The obvious trick to lose is AD, so the small spades have to be taken care of. This requires the spade suit to be established by ruffing one, or more likely two small spades - more likely because a 4-2 break is more common than a 3-3 one. Talking of breaks, the most likely trump break is 3-2, and if that pertains then declarer can afford to ruff their small spades high. However the need to ruff the spades means that trumps cannot be tested first.

Play goes: Win T1 with AH and play off the top two spades. Assuming these hold a third spade comes, leading to 3 possibilities.

If East shows out declarer can ruff low (or overruff if East ruffs). Now a heart ruff, a second spade ruff, and overtake dummy's last trump to draw the enemy teeth. Concede a diamond and North's hand is good.

The second possibility is that East follows to the third spade, dummy ruffs high and West follows too. Spades have broken 3-3, so the suit is established. Draw trumps and concede a diamond. Slam made.

Lastly East follows, dummy ruffs high and West shows out. Yet this is only really a variation on the first possibility, with West being out of spades rather than East. Ruff a heart, ruff another spade high and lead the low trump from table. By now you know the rest of the routine.

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

With trumps 3-2, the 4-2 spade break is not a barrier to

making 12 tricks in clubs, which at pairs should be gathered in greedily regardless of whether you bid slam or not.

Look After Your Losers

6 3
K
K Q 10 9 7 6
A K 7 6



A 9 5 2
A J 4 3
8 5 4
J 3

North's challenge on Thursday's board 10 was to make 5D on a spade lead. Ideas?

Potential losers in the North hand are a spade, the two small clubs, AD and possibly JD too. One of the black suit losers can be taken care of by the AH, but at least one of the others will need to be erased to make game. Fortunately below the J our run of trumps is solid down to the 4, so the defence could only overruff with

honours should we operate in ruffing mode.


Win T1 with AS, cross to KH, then AK C and a club ruff. Next comes AH, discard the losing spade. If you still have the lead you are home and dry, for you can ruff the last club, and regardless of what the defence does can now lose at most AJ D.

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

You do indeed lose both A and J of trumps, but with 11 tricks under your belt this is but a small disappointment. Premature tackling of trumps leaves you with nowhere to dispose of your losing clubs.

Two hands in one week on the same theme.

Forcing The Issue

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

West hardly holds the most attractive 1NT opening on this hand from Tuesday's play, but the bid was wheeled out at every table, and that completed the bidding.

A spade lead saw the defence wrap up 3 quick tricks, with a fourth spade being a cost free way for North to get off lead at this point.

It doesn't take long for West to count their winners and come to the answer "Not enough". Indeed it looks like clubs will need to produce several tricks for declarer to get close to the contract. The defence should also be aware of this, and look to stymie declarer's attempts to find multiple winners in clubs.

Would you be up to the task as North?

Suppose West leads 10C.

Playing small as North is greedy.

Where is the Q?

If West has it presumably North's K is dead anyway.

If South has it, a duck by North will lead to declarer running the trick around to South's Q. When West regains the lead they can finesse JC and make 4 club tricks. Moreover North can see this coming.

Now try covering the 10C with the K. Declarer is stuck. If they win with the A that is the only trick they take in the suit, if they duck then South's Q prevents West enjoying the suit. Instead of 4 club tricks declarer scores just one.

This sort of play is quite common when dummy lacks side entries to a broken suit, with the early play of the onside honour allowing the offside one to become a serious problem.

Here West might try to avoid the problem by leading the 7 and making the deep finesse play of small from table if North ducks. That will be 4 tricks again, though either the 9 or K from North again breaks up declarer's plans.

Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (7½ tables): Mile & Sally-Ann Rothwell

Tuesday F2F (7½ tables):

Bob Churchward & Ralph Rogerson

Tuesday BBO (5½ tables): Ray & Irene Gregory

Thursday am (4 tables):

NS: Sam Rayner & Phillip Russell

EW: = Jane Morgan & Patricia White

= Hilary Claxton & Val Cawood

Thursday BBO (5 tables):

Martyn Harris & Amanda Etherington

Total 29½ tables for the week.

Kendal's Individual event the Betty Limb Cup was played on Sunday. There was a pleasing turnout of 9 tables linking together those who normally play at different club sessions. Ken's appeal for suitable fare for mid-afternoon refreshments saw an excellent spread assembled, with home made lemon drizzle cake and home made fudge vying for the most compliments.

The play was far too civilised to be described as fast and furious, and when the software finally agreed to calculate results on all the boards played - it seemed to get stuck 7 results short for a while - it was discovered that I was left holding the trophy.

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