

## Matters Arising 208

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 4 - 8 Nov 2024

### The King Can Wait

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

17

East-West reached a heart game on this hand from Tuesday's play.

10 9 5 4 3 2  
A  
8 5 4 3  
8 6

South led 10S to partner's K - spot where the A is - with North returning 10D. East won with the J and played a trump, necessarily won by South. Where next for the defence?

Perhaps North has KC, so a club through will set it up for when North gains the lead.

But what is that 10D? If partner has no interest in the suit they will surely just get off lead with a trump and await developments as neither black suit looks good for a continuation from the North hand around to this dummy. Nor surely have they underled the A or K of diamonds. The 10 looks favourite to be doubleton or singleton. If singleton we can give an immediate ruff, whilst if doubleton then either declarer has a doubleton club and one always goes on dummy's fourth diamond, or declarer has 3 clubs and will always lose a trick to partner's K should they hold it. Trying for partner's KC can wait, a potential ruff can't.

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

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

17

Q J 6  
10 8 4 2  
A K J 6  
K J

10 9 5 4 3 2  
A  
8 5 4 3  
8 6

A diamond continuation indeed secures a ruff, whilst the club doesn't even find partner with the K. 10 tricks for declarer on a diamond continuation, 11 on a club one.

### Diamond Play

A 8 3  
Q 10 3  
A J 7  
A J 3 2

22

K Q  
K 9 7 2  
Q 9 6 5 4  
10 7

It is easy to concentrate on what we want to happen, paying less attention to what might happen. Thursday's board 22 was a case in point, with West declaring 3NT on a spade lead. Prospects are rosy. 3 tricks in spades, at least one each in clubs and hearts, and with chances of several diamond tricks.

Naturally declarer tackled diamonds at T2, and wanting to repeat the finesse against the K if it works some declarers started with QD. When South showed out declarer had only 2 quick tricks in the suit and struggled to make their contract.

A small diamond at T2 would not only provide some protection against the given distribution but would also pick the suit up for no losers if South has singleton K (when the lead of J results in losing a trick to North's 10) as there is a marked finesse against the 10 on the third round of the suit, and also allows the suit to be picked up for one rather than 2 losers if North started with K 10 x x.

J 7 6 2  
8 6 5  
K 10 8 3 2  
5

A 8 3  
Q 10 3  
A J 7  
A J 3 2

22

K Q  
K 9 7 2  
Q 9 6 5 4  
10 7

10 9 5 4  
A J 4  
--  
K Q 9 8 6 4

## Covering an Honour

K 8 4 3  
 6 4 3  
 K 8 4  
 10 4 3

15

You are West on this hand from Monday, defending North's contract of 3NT. Partner's club lead is won on table, with declarer calling next for QD.  
 Q 10 7  
 A J 10 7 2  
 Q J 10 5      Do you cover?  
 A

For some this question is a matter of rule - yes, *cover an honour with an honour*. For others it is a matter of being awkward - no, *don't let declarer know where the K is*. Best is to take each case on its merits, looking to see what you are trying to achieve.

Covering an honour with an honour is usually based on the idea that if you can use one of your side's big cards to take down two of the enemy's then a lower card will be promoted into being a winner.

K 6 4		K 6 4
Q 7 5		Q J 3

In the diagram above left covering the Q is all but automatic. Declarer can win with the A, but the unknown holder of the J will win the next trick. It might be partner. And even if declarer holds the J then the 10 is destined to win the third trick, which again might be partner. Holding off with the K allows the Q to win an extra trick for declarer.

The position above right is trickier. It looks like covering will enable the 10 to win the third trick in the suit, which might be partner, so cover. However the full distribution of the suit could be say

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

Now covering the Q with the K allows declarer to win with their A and run the 9 back, finessing against partner's 10, and so picking up the suit without loss. Here it pays to hold off the first time, intending to cover the second honour. Careful consideration of possibilities shows that if West holds off on the first honour declarer cannot continue the suit without losing a trick in it.

With our given dummy, the only realistic chance for a defensive trick in diamonds is that declarer started with just Ax or even singleton A, in which case your K comes to the top if retained.

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

15

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

The full layout shows that declarer has 4 diamond tricks whether you cover or not. However there is a different reward lurking for those who refuse to cover. Covering creates a diamond entry to table which can be used to enjoy the hearts once set up.

Cover the diamond and declarer makes 4 tricks in each red suit, 3 clubs and AS. Twelve in total.

Refuse to cover and declarer should be restricted to 2 tricks in hearts, though they can still find an 11th trick if they finesse against the JS. Should they prefer to play small to the Q in spades hoping that East has the K then 10 tricks ought to be the limit.

Thus by declining to cover, the AD eventually blocks the suit for declarer, and suit blockages are known to be a potential aid to the opponents.

Finally, what happens if partner leads the suit?

That depends on where we think the A is. If partner has led small then it looks like fourth from strength, which presumably must be the A, so playing the K in anticipation of returning the suit to help partner is reasonable. However if partner has led a middling card, looking like second from rubbish, then holding off with our K is right. Partners who insist on leading small from any holding are not as helpful as they could be.

## Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (10½ tables): Ray Gregory & Carl Penson

Tuesday F2F (7 tables teams):

Bob Churchward & Ralph Rogerson

Bernard & Sabina Houssin

Tuesday BBO (5½ tables): = Ray & Irene Gregory

= Amanda Etherington & Martyn Harris

Thursday am (6½ tables):

NS: Sam Rayner & Philip Russell

EW: Sarah Bullock & Diana Smethurst

Thursday BBO (5 tables): Roger & Catherine Preston

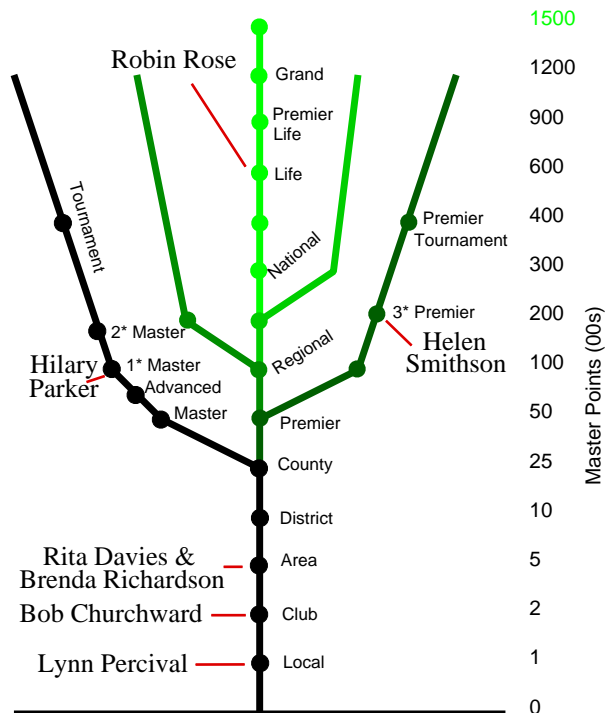
Total 34½ tables for the week.

October was another bumper month for Master Point promotions for Kendal Bridge Club members.

Robin Rose is now a Life Master, Helen Smithson a 3\* Premier Master and Hilary Parker a 1\* Master.

Rita Davies and Brenda Richardson have been promoted to be Area Masters, Bob Churchward to Club Master and Lynn Percival to Local Master.

Well done all.



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