

Matters Arising 210

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 18 - 22 Nov 2024

About A 9

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

There was plenty of action on Tuesday's hand 18, normally involving West opening 1C and NS competing vigorously in hearts.

Suppose you are West in 5C. North leads the AH and switches to KS. Naturally you win with the A and lead a trump towards hand, on which South shows out.

Plan the play.

The bad trump break won't prevent you picking up the suit without loss, and there are no spade losers. One heart has already been lost, but he other can be ruffed. You need to pick up the diamond suit for one loser, and this can be achieved with the help of a deep finesse against the 9 if North holds either K9 or Q9 amongst other diamonds.

Play goes:

Win the club you led at T3 in hand and ruff your second heart. Then lead dummy's last trump and draw North's remaining clubs. Now a diamond to the 8 unless North plays something larger. Hopefully South can only win with an honour, and that when you regain the lead a finesse against North for the other honour works.

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

Diamonds are as hoped for, which is a better bet than the double finesse play of small towards J which requires North to have KQ to work. Of course if North does have KQ they may help you by splitting their honours on the first round anyway.

That KS switch at T2 can be read as a likely singleton,

so all trumps must be drawn before allowing South on lead, else a spade from them will promote North's JC into a winner. Just make sure you get that heart ruff in too.

Slam Trigger

What makes you think "Slam!"?

For some that feeling only comes when they hold a powerhouse themselves, and they go slamming regardless of partner's lack of enthusiasm. For others slams seem to be things that other people bid. Yet succesful slam bidding can be a fruitful source of good scores at pairs and big swings at teams.

I use 3 distinct triggers for looking into slam possibilities. A combined 31+ count with an 8+ card fit, and a combined 33+ points regardless of fit are based largely on high card points, though a 5 card suit and/or some good intermediates don't go amiss.

The third trigger is an 8+ card fit together with a combines at most 12 losers on the losing trick count.

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

This is Tuesday's hand 19. Amanda opened 1D, I replied 1H leading her to jump straight to 4H to show her 5 losers. Those playing splinters might prefer 4C to show game going values and a club shortage.

As East I hold 7 losers and Amanda has promised (at most) 5. Knowing of at least a 9 card fit must be a bonus, and it is always good to have at least one Ace when contemplating using the losing trick count to justify anything beyond a minimum raise.

4NT – 5H (2 aces) – 6H completes the auction.

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

Looking at the contract from the point of view of the East hand the majors are good and there is just one diamond loser. Thus a line is needed to ruff 3 clubs.

eg on AD lead and spade switch, win on table, AC, C ruff, KS, C ruff, trump to hand ruff last club. Ruff D, draw trumps.

A trump lead at trick one undermines this plan, but the hand can also be looked at from West's point of view, from which the requirement is to ruff diamonds. If the suit is 4-3 (over 60% chance) then diamonds can be played lose one, ruff 3, win one.

Play is win trump lead in West hand and duck diamond. Win the trump continuation West, ruff diamond. Spade to A, ruff diamond. Spade to Q ruff diamond. AC, ruff club and enjoy the last diamond. Notice that at the end there is the possibility of the need to draw the last trump should they have been 3-1 rather than 2-2, and this line allows for that.

Thus we see that 6H is a perfectly decent contract to be in, yet with just a combined 26 count you will need some non- point count dependent trigger to reach it.

Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (Teams, 4 tables):

Phillip Burley & Sarah Bullock
Bernard Houssin & Ralph Rogerson

Monday (Ellis Finals, 4 tables):

Mike & Sally-Ann Rothwell
Robin Rose & John MacLachlan

Tuesday F2F (7½ tables, Wraight Cup):

Ken Orford & Shaffin Jaffer

Tuesday BBO (5 tables):

Martyn Harris & Amanda Etherington

Thursday am (5½ tables): David Crowe & Jane Curzon

Thursday BBO (6½ tables):

Alan Wearmouth & Martyn Harris

Total 32½ 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