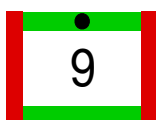


Matters Arising 212

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 2 - 6 Dec 2024

Another Trick

A K 7 4 3 2
A 7 4
A 10
7 4



J 8 5
Q 10 5
9 8 4 2
A J 5

Monday's hand 9 was played by North in a spade contract at all tables, with more pairs in 2S after a circumspect 2S rebid by North than in 3 or even 4S after an arguably pushy rebid of 3S to South's 1NT response to North's initial 1S.


Whether in 2, 3 or 4S declarer will want to make as many tricks as possible. On a likely 3-1 trump break declarer can count 5 spade tricks and three Aces as winners, and this total

increases by a further trick if QS is singleton or the suit is 2-2. How would you play the hand on the most common lead of KC?

A further trick is available in hearts by playing small to the Q if East has the K, or small to the 10 if East holds the J. However, before worrying about that guess, what do you make of the KC lead?

It could be singleton or doubleton I suppose, but the most likely holding is surely KQ and some xs. You could rise with the A, draw trumps if this can be done without losing the lead, and then play a club towards the J with intent to discard the 10D on the JC later. This line does though beg the question as to how you intend to reach the JC if trumps are 3-1.

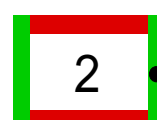
Better to duck the opening lead in the expectation that a successful finesse can be taken later against QC.

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

With trumps 2-2 winning the first club and drawing trumps does in fact work as JS provides the vital entry to table. However winning AC, drawing trumps and then trying to guess the hearts gives the defence time to knock-out AD before you discard the 10D on the JC, and this would be true regardless of the heart layout.

Run

K Q J 2
Q 2
A K 9 5
9 8 3



6 5
A K 10
Q J 8 7 5
K J 5

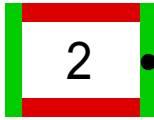
An auction of 1NT - 2C - 2D - 3NT was normal for NS on this hand from Tuesday, with South declaring in 3 of the usual on the lead of 4C.

The first trick can be won on the table with 8C, or on hand with the J.

Over to you.

Dummy's spades are nice, and there is a strong temptation to tackle them immediately on the principle of *first set up your tricks, then cash them*.

This temptation should be resisted though, for if East has AS, and West five clubs you would be in danger of losing 5 tricks quickly. With 8 red tricks off the top to go with the club won at T1, it is safer to run for home.

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

Running indeed proves the winning strategy against any East who would immediately take their AS and faithfully switch back to their partner's suit.

Had the hand been one where sight of dummy reveals a bidding misunderstanding, with more than 600 available in an obvious alternative contract, then it might be worth the risk of going off in order to better the scores available at those tables where the bidding was sounder, but that is not the case here.

Order, Order!

Q 7
A K 5 4
K 3 2
K 9 8 2




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

North faced the task of making 3NT on a diamond lead on this hand from Thursday. Unfortunately some tried to play the hand by formula, and fell short. You, of course, would succeed.

Starting with your best suit in NT can seem as logical as drawing trumps in a trump contract, but those who rigidly follow either suggestion as a hard rule will repeatedly come a cropper when confronted with hands on which these are not the best approach.

The diamond lead runs around to the North hand, and declarer has 1 truck under their belt. Barring a 5-1 or 6-0 spade break there are 5 tricks to come in that suit, with three top hearts to be added. However playing even one round of declarer's best suit (spades) leads to disaster, for there will then be no way of taking their 8 major suit tricks without losing the lead.

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

Here losing the lead means losing AC and 4 diamond tricks, thereby falling short in 3NT. Winners have to be cashed starting at T2 in the order QH, QS, AK H and then the rest of the spades.

It shouldn't take long to check the truth of that assertion. More to the point, thinking about the hand beyond a formulaic *start with my best suit* should reveal the correct line at the table.

Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (8½ tables): Russell White & Jeremy Harris

Tuesday F2F (8 tables):

Bernard Houssin & Sarah Bullock

Tuesday BBO (5½ tables): John & Wendy Ellwood

Thursday am (6½ tables):

NS: David Airey & Jennifer Whalley

EW: Helen Finch & Moira Williams

Thursday BBO (5½ tables):

Alan Wearmouth & Martyn Harris

Total 34 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