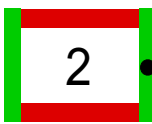


## Matters Arising 214

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 16 - 20 Dec 2024

### Double Dummy

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

This is Monday's board 2. Your task is to make 3D as North on a defence that starts AC, KC, 2C.

For those unfamiliar with the term double dummy it refers to being able to see all 4 hands, and in solving a double dummy problem you are allowed, even expected to use the full layout to decide on your play. Whilst you cannot do this in real life, it does enable you to see ideas that may be useful at other times.

If you have made your plans, read on.

Two club tricks have already been lost, and given the K Q 10 spades are over your J it would take generous defence to allow you to get away with one spade loser. We cannot assume generous defence. Hearts present no problems, so our task is to pick up the trump suit for no loser. Clearly the normal play of playing off the top two trumps doesn't work here. Nor does laying down a top honour prior to taking a finesse.

After ruffing the third club cross to AH and run JD, covering of course if West plays their Q. If the J is allowed to hold, life is now easy. If the Q is produced, then you are in hand with K say. Back to table with a second heart and lead another diamond, finessing if West doesn't play their 10. You end up with the club ruff, 4 natural trump tricks, 3 hearts and AS for 9 tricks.

Would one ever find the play at the table? Auctions at the party were not recorded, but how did North get to play in 3D? Presumably the bidding started

1S – P – P – 2D. It is possible that with a 12 count South would then raise to 3D, but it seems more likely that East bid again. Certainly if they re-opened 3C they could be placed with at least 9 black cards, so expecting normal splits might be optimistic. On an auction of say 1S – P – P – 2D – 3C – 3D all pass the double dummy line looks at least worth considering.

### Options

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



K 6 4  
K Q  
A 4 3  
10 8 6 3 2

Thursday board 19, and the field were better able to bid 6S than to find 12 tricks. South opens 1NT, and depending on style North either transfers or bids 3S as a game forcing bid with at least mild slam interest. Thus the contract could get to be played from either hand.

A trump lead favours neither declarer. What are your options for generating 12 tricks on such a lead, assuming the third hand follows suit?

The trump lead relieves any potential trump difficulty, though as it turns out the Q is singleton so you should never be losing a trick to it anyway. A quick count of winners reveals 6 trumps, 3 hearts and two minor suit Aces. Potential losers are one in each minor suit. Thus the need is not so much to generate 12 tricks as to find a twelfth one.

The simplest plan relies on a finesse, namely the one in the club suit. If it works you have 12 tricks, so the slam is 50-50.


The next option is to make use of the idea of leading towards your high cards by leading towards the QD. The A may be higher, but leading a diamond towards it achieves nothing other than picking up an unlikely singleton K. Leading towards the Q allows 2 diamond tricks if West holds the K regardless of whether they play it or not (I suspect they would if they could). Thus draw trumps ending South and lead a diamond. If West rises with the K declarer later wins the Q and crosses to a heart to discard QC on AD. This too is a 50-50 play, this time depending on the location of the KD.

Is it possible to combine these options?

Yes, provided diamonds are tried first. If the club finesse fails it is too late to try diamonds as this necessarily involves losing a trick. However if KD turns up East it is still possible to try the club finesse afterwards. Thus the combination works if West holds either of the minor suit Kings (or both of course), so is about a 75% play.

Options have not yet been exhausted. The defence have 6 clubs and South 5. There is an excellent chance that the missing clubs are divided either 3–3 or 4–2 (excellent here is about 84%). If this transpires then it is possible to establish the last club for a diamond discard. For example draw trumps and play off A and then QC.

The defence will surely win their K else you have your twelfth trick. Win the red suit continuation South, ruff a club, cross to another red winner and ruff another club. Then to the final red winner in the South hand to cash the established club and discard the diamond. (KH, QH and AD are South's 3 red winners).

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

East has both minor suit Ks, so the early options don't work. However the club can be established as described.

Why not take the club finesse rather than playing A and then Q? After all if it works you are on course for an overtrick by then establishing the suit.

However if for example all trumps are removed and the club finesse taken and fails, then a red suit continuation hurts if clubs are 4-2, for the AC would block the suit and there are then not enough entries left in the South hand to enjoy the long club after establishing it.

As it happens clubs are 3-3 and you'd live to tell the tale.

## Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (Party, 18 tables):

John MacLachlan & Chris Needham

Tuesday F2F (7½ tables): John & Lesley Sellar

Tuesday BBO (4 tables): Ray & Irene Gregory

Thursday am (4½ tables):

Sheila Wilson & Moira Williams

Thursday BBO (6 tables): Mike & Sally-Ann Rothwell

Total 40 tables for the week.

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