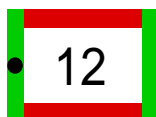


## Matters Arising

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 30 Dec 2024 - 3 Jan 2025

### Simple Grand

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



K Q 5  
K J  
A K Q J 7 5 3  
Q

"Count your winners" is oft given advice, normally applied to declarer at the beginning of play. It can also apply during the bidding though, as on this simple to bid Grand from Monday that somehow was missed at all tables.

Playing ordinary Blackwood the bidding could be

1C 4NT  
5S 7NT

Can it really be that simple?

The answering question is "As South, how pessimistic are you?". If those 7 diamonds run and partner has all three missing Aces you can count 13 tricks - 3 spades, 2 hearts, 7 diamonds and AC. Even if partner has a void diamond the suit will run if it breaks no worse than 4-2, giving over 80% chance of success. In fact chances would be even better since North might have enough honours to take care of your small diamonds eg AKJx in C would do. And remember that is assuming the worst case scenario that partner is void in diamonds. This is surely a Grand you wish to bid.

Hang on a moment though. Partner might not have all 3 missing Aces. Can we cope with other responses to 4NT?

5H would show 2 Aces. Not knowing which two they are then signing off in 6D seems safest in case you are missing AK C..

5D, showing 1 Ace could be passed.

5C. Might partner misinterpret a subsequent 5D? Possibly, but since they are never bidding 5C that doesn't matter. A 5C response would mean 3 Aces missing, which given South's 21 count would mean that North had opened on at most 7 points. Partners don't do that. Apart from anything else it is against EBU regulations for your system to allow you to open 1 of a suit with less than 8 points.

The answer is yes, we can cope with all possible responses to 4NT.

Those using the more sophisticated Roman Key Card Blackwood are for once at a relative disadvantage, for an immediate 4NT would be taken to agree clubs, and a response showing 3 key cards might mean 3 Aces (bid the Grand) or 2 Aces and KC, (stop in 6).

For such partnerships South has to choose between a 1D and a 2D response.

1D has the advantage of keeping the bidding low, and if partner is able to rebid 2NT say to show 17+ points then South won't need to ask for Aces to know partner has them all as with a combined 38+ missing as much as a King would be difficult.

The bidding would simply be 1C - 1D - 2NT - 7NT.

On the other hand an auction starting 1C - 1D - 2C would leave South struggling for a continuation.

Consequently South might do best to choose a game-forcing 2D to begin with. Now we might be looking at

1C	2D
3C	3D
3NT	4D

Demanding to play in diamonds

Cue-bid 4H 4NT RKCB  
0/3 key cards 5C 7NT got there, though not playing in diamonds!

Some would argue that North should cue-bid after 3D; they may well be right.

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

10 8 7 6 4  
7 6 3  
6 4  
7 4 2

9 3  
Q 10 8 4 2  
9 8 2  
J 10 6

K Q 5  
K J  
A K Q J 7 5 3  
Q

As it happens North has KC as well as the three missing Aces, so would give a 4 key card response to Roman Key Card Blackwood. Hence the Grand would be found using an immediate 4NT to the 1C opening, but it cannot be recommended when using Roman Key Card rather than simple Blackwood.

### Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (6½ tables): Martyn Harris & Muke Howse

Thursday am (5½ tables): = Jill & Chris Yates

= Suzanne Graham & Jill Green

Thursday BBO (4 tables): Jackie Stabler & Linda White

Total 16 tables for the week.

*Martyn Harris*

spadeilike on BBO