

Matters Arising 221

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 3 - 7 Feb 2025

Negative Gains

A J 10 7 This your hand as East on Monday's board
K J 4 7. South deals and passes, partner opens 1H.
J 4 2 What do you bid if North makes an overcall
A 10 3 of a) 2C, b) 3C?

Holding a 14 count (and two 10s) you definitely want to be in game opposite an opener. 3NT seems a distinct possibility, though perhaps you might then regret missing a 5-3 heart fit should partner hold 5 hearts. You could bid spades, though you might be concerned that partner will assume you have more than 4 spades, particularly in case b).

The solution in both cases is a negative double, promising spades. You might or might not have diamonds too - on this hand you haven't. West makes a minimum rebid in spades and you bounce to game. If West doesn't have 4 spades they will rebid hearts to show 5, and you can bounce to game there, or diamonds as a second suit, in which case you can again bid 4 hearts as it is a fair assumption that opener has 5 hearts for this auction, or bid NT in which case you can raise to 3NT if necessary.

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

A club lead destroys 3NT, but there are 11 tricks available in both majors.

Indeed played by West there are 12 tricks in spades. A club lead is ruffed, followed by a trump to table and the ruff of dummy's second losing club. KS, overtake a heart to table to draw the remaining trumps, discarding 2 diamonds at the same time. Then knock out AH, assuming North didn't take it on the first round of the suit, and North is powerless, for although you have no trumps left in either hand, the retained AC prevents North from continuing that suit to effect. This play is a good example of holding back a winner (AC) until later, preferring to ruff the losers in the suit first.

Preference Signal

A 8 7 5 4 3 You are West on this hand
Q 10 from Tuesday. South
10 7 opened 1D, you overcalled
A K 4 1S or 2S according to style,
and North repeatedly bid
K Q 9 hearts to reach 4H.
3
A K Q J 9 2
Q 9 8 Partner leads 6S and you
win with A. Now what?

Dummy's diamonds are intimidating, and North clearly has long hearts. Thus one option is to take your AK C whilst you still can.

Alternatively you can hope that partner's 6S is singleton and return one for a ruff. In this case you need to let partner know that you have a club entry for another ruff, and you can do this by giving a preference signal by leading a small spade - low card for a low suit. Had you wanted a diamond - perhaps you were void - you would lead back a high card.

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

Cashing AK C defeats the contract by 1 trick, as declarer always has a trump to lose. The 3S should take 4H three off - AS, spade ruff, club to K, spade ruff, club to A and another spade effecting a trump promotion.

Too often though the defence weren't playing signals, and after a spade and spade ruff East switched to a diamond. Whether this was in the hope that partner was void or intended as a safe exit we don't know, but declarer was able to win, draw all the trumps (East had ruffed once remember) and cross to dummy's last spade to enjoy the diamonds. +1.

Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (9 tables): Bernard Houssin & Ralph Rogerson

Tuesday F2F (8 tables): Debbie & Roger Wilkinson

Tuesday BBO (5½ tables): John & Wendy Ellwood

Thursday am (4 tables):

Brenda Richardson & Diana Smethurst

Thursday BBO (4 tables):

Alan Wearmouth & Martyn Harris

Total 30½ 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