

Matters Arising 222

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 10 - 14 Feb 2025

Values

It is often claimed that a double of an opening 1NT is for penalties, but if you think about the sort of hands on which you would make such a double it is clear that a better description would be one of showing values - the values in this case being 15+, or maybe 16+ if you are on the conservative side.

Whilst the double definitely isn't for take-out you can hardly be instructing partner to pass at such a low level when the opponents could have the balance of the points. Rather the hope is that they will feel able to pass for penalties, but when very weak they should run.

Yes, from partner's point of view the weaker they are the more likely the double is to be based on more than the minimum, but there comes a point where trusting in that becomes foolhardy.

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

Here is Monday's board 13. After the bidding starts

1N - X - P

North's feeble holding should scream "run!". The standard treatment is that all bids are natural - Exit Transfers require special agreement. All 5 who chose to declare 2H obtained a positive score whereas a couple of Easts left in 1NTX chalked up 380 and 580 as the contract made with an overtrick or two. It is possible though not easy to hold 1NTX to 7 tricks, but that is still 180. Running works.

Ruff First, Win Later

K 2
J 7 6
10 6
A 10 8 7 6 3

14

A Q 7 6 3
A 8 2
A K Q 7
Q

Imagine that an excess of enthusiasm landed you in 6S on this hand from Tuesday's play. West leads KH. Over to you.

The lead is probably good news, suggesting West also holds QH so that you can lead through them later towards the J to secure a second trick in the suit. Nevertheless you have a heart loser, so will need spades 3-3 for any chance to make.

On that assumption the only other loser outside of hearts you have in your hand is 7D. You win AH at T1 after which three lines exist:

a) Play for clubs 3-3 (or something nice happening with the missing honours so that the 7D can be discarded on a club. AC, ruff a club, spade to K, ruff a club, draw trumps and lead a heart to force entry to the clubs.

b) Ruff the 7D. Clearly this will need to be done before drawing trumps. Equally clearly if you cash AKQ first and then try to ruff an opponent will also be out of diamonds for the fourth round and the plan will fail. Thus play goes AK D, ruff diamond, AC, ruff club, draw trumps, QD, heart. The line succeeds provided diamonds are 4-3 (as well as the aforementioned requisites of trumps 3-3 and QH onside).

c) Draw trumps as its what people do, and play a heart. Leave diamonds until last hoping that either the long diamond defender discards down to at most 3 cards in the suit or that one defender started with J 9 8 in diamonds so that the 7 rises to the top anyway.

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

Diamonds are 4-3, as they are favourite to be, so that as long as declarer isn't fixated on cashing all their diamond winners before taking the ruff in the suit, line b) works.

Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (11 tables Pro-Am):

Phillip Burley & Robert Boyd

Tuesday F2F (8 tables):

Bernard Houssin & Ralph Rogerson

Tuesday BBO (5½ tables): Ray & Irene Gregory

Thursday am (5½ tables):

Brenda Richardson & Rita Davies

Thursday BBO (6 tables):

Alan Wearmouth & Martyn Harris

Total 36 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