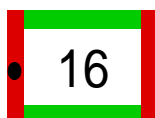


Matters Arising 225

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

9

K 9 4
A J 7
A J 9
J 10 9 3



A Q 10 7 5 2
5 3 2
4
A 4 2

Spades was the obvious destination for NS on this hand from Monday, with 1NT – 4S, 1NT – 2H – 2S – 4S and 1NT – 2H – 2S – 3S – 4S all credible auctions.

The 3S bid in the last of these is invitational to game based on a 6 card suit - with only 5 spades South would transfer and rebid 2NT to invite.

If determined to go to game South would choose between the first two according to which side of the table they believe the hand would play best. There seems little point in hoping for a lead around to their AQ S, for this would only help if West was leading from the K - a highly unlikely choice in 4S. Hiding the singleton diamond from view might be helpful as then the defence could waste time attacking the suit that could be better used elsewhere. However it does seem best to protect partner's potentially vulnerable holdings and arrange for the hand to be played from the North seat.

It may seem strange that with 7 losers South might be prepared only to invite rather than insist on game, but 1NT openers often have 8 losers, and this one even has 9. Nevertheless with a maximum 1NT of 14 points and 3 card support there is little chance that North will elect to decline the invitation.

On to the play. Declarer has 9 top tricks via 6 trumps and 3 side suit Aces. Note that the trumps are proof against a 4–0 split provided declarer starts with A or Q to leave a 2-way finesse against the J should the break be the worst possible. As far as losers are concerned there are potentially 2 in each of hearts and clubs.

Options.

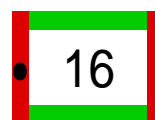
Ruffing diamonds doesn't generate any extra tricks as the ruffing is in the long trump hand - it makes no difference whether those diamonds are ruffed or discarded on unused trumps at the end. Removing the diamonds though may usefully remove an option from the defence when they later get the lead.

Taking the double finesse against the KQ in hearts is an obvious possibility. If West has both these cards then 2 heart tricks can be made, limiting losers to one in the suit. Wanting two cards to sit right is not a high percentage option.

There is also a double running finesse against East in clubs, which would restrict losers there to one trick unless both the K and Q are wrong. Note the importance of possessing the 9 for this play - consider the possibilities for how the play might go if that 9 was only say the 6. Moreover the 3 might be useful, for if the suit is 3–3 then there is a discard available on which to dispose of one of the hearts.

K 9 4
A J 7
A J 9
J 10 9 3

J 3
K 9 8 6
K 10 6 2
Q 6 5



A Q 10 7 5 2
5 3 2
4
A 4 2

8 6
Q 10 4
Q 8 7 5 3
K 8 7

Club honours are split, with the suit 3–3. Thus provided the first club finesse is taken before hearts are touched declarer makes 11 tricks - six spades, three clubs and two red Aces. Put another way, a heart lead is the only one sure to hold declarer to 10 tricks. With trumps 2–2 declarer should always have an entry to the last club.

Transfer I

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



A Q 4 3
K Q 3
7 6 5
J 7 4

K J 10
10 8 4
10 9 8
K 9 8 6

South opened 1NT at every table on this hand from Tuesday's play. I can report that two Norths elected to use Stayman, but cannot say why.

One pair bid 1NT – 2D – 2H – 3NT – P.

It is usual to convert the 3NT to 4H in this sequence whenever opener has 3+ hearts. Presumably the flat nature of the hand persuaded opener to stick to NT, but

with partner known to have 5 hearts and being wide open in two of the other suits themselves, this is surely risky. A club lead duly appeared and did considerable damage.

Whilst responder's 3NT rebid in the above sequence promises 5 hearts, so would any other rebid, and my preference would be for 3D, which I regard as natural and game-forcing. Warned that partner has a red hand opener would surely now give preference to hearts.

With KS and KD both onside 13 tricks are easy. Bidding a slam isn't.

Transfer II

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

Also on Tuesday North found themselves with two 5 card majors opposite a 2NT opening. Once again North cannot expect Stayman to be up to the task, so looks to transfers.

2NT – 3D – 3H – 3S suggests 5 hearts and 4 spades, game-forcing.

2NT – 3H – 3S – 4H is presumably 5–5, for if 5 spades and only 4 hearts what is opener to do with 2 spades and 3 hearts? A reluctant 4S presumably.

How would North have handled 5 spades and 4 hearts and a game-forcing hand? This is usually the meaning attached to an immediate 3S so that game in both majors and in NT are all still possible.

Once North has shown 5–5 South knows there will be no minor suit losers in the play. Whether that is enough for them to start looking for a slam is debateable, but 12 tricks are indeed available in both majors, but only 10 in NT on a club lead.

Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (9 tables): Tim Harrison & Richard Brazier

Tuesday F2F (8 tables, teams):

Robert Boyd & Bob MacKeith

Dorothy Bayliss & Alison Jones

Tuesday BBO (5 tables): Ken Orford & Steve Douglas

Thursday am (6½ tables):

NS: Sue Van Eijkern & Cath Williams

EW: Denise Williamson & Jean Bentham

Thursday BBO (4½ tables):

Mike & Sally-Ann Rothwell

Total 33 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