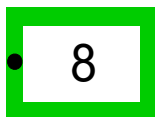


Matters Arising 231

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 14 - 18 Apr 2025

Too Easy

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

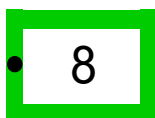


When you have lots of top tricks reeling them off can seem very easy. Here is Monday's board 8 with West in 3NT on the lead of 5S. Declarer "naturally" lets it run to hand with South's 10 forcing out the A. Now come clubs - what else? - with A, K and J winning in short order, though of course declarer can afford to overtake the J if they wish. Next a major card to table, and North can immediately claim the last two tricks for their AQ D as there is no way off table for declarer to enjoy QH.

In truth this line ending in 11 tricks is all too predictable, and any declarer who counted their top tricks at the outset - 3 in each major, 6 in clubs will hopefully have made plans to avoid this fate.

The heart suit is blocked, so AK H must be played before all entries to hand are used. This could be done by crossing to AK H at T2 and T3, followed by a club to hand for QH, before reverting to the previous line.

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

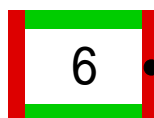


10 6
J 9 4
K 10 9 2
8 7 3 2

Greedy declarers however will want to give themselves a chance of 13 tricks. Win T1 on the table and reel off the clubs. Then AK H and 2 spades ending in hand for QH and lastly 8H. This shouldn't be a winner, for presumably West opened 1H so North knows they have a heart left when finding discards on the clubs, but we've all met plenty of defenders who miss this and prefer to hold on to their big cards.

Trumps Again

J
K 10 6 2
K Q J 7
Q 10 7 2

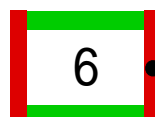


A Q 10 8 4 3
A J 8 7
10 5
A

Tuesday, and South is in 4S on the lead of the 4H.

The heart lead solves the problem of locating the Q, which appears when declarer ducks in dummy. Thus AH wins T1, and the only side-suit loser is AD. Consequently declarer is interested in minimizing the chances of ruffs, so attacks trumps vigorously, leading A and then Q.

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



K 9 7 5
Q 9 5 3
2
K 8 5 4

A Q 10 8 4 3
A J 8 7
10 5
A

The Q loses to the K. East can switch to 2D to partner's A, and ruff the return, but then declarer gets in and lays down 10S to prevent anymore nonsense.

Those declarers who attempted to reach dummy to take the trump finesse suffered ruffs in both red suits alongside AD and KS.

It seems ironic that when there are so many hands where declarers go wrong by drawing trumps, one on which the sole danger is enemy ruffs and which therefore calls for the drawing of trumps, several declarers instead delayed their trump play and suffered the consequences.

Connoisseur's Corner

With thanks to Phillip Burley for drawing Monday's board 9 to my attention.

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

You are East playing in NT on the lead of the 3S. I've blurred the diamond holdings down to their core value.

Reading the lead as 4th from an honour you call for the 9S from dummy, which is covered by the J and K. On the assumption that South indeed started with Qxxx S, and that the club suit produces five tricks, it is now possible to make the lot. You may or may not wish to think your own thoughts before reading on.


5 clubs, 3 hearts, 3 spades on the finesse of the 10 and AD comes to 12 tricks. One more needed is often squeeze territory, and we can get to the business part of the hand whilst maintaining communications by cashing 5 clubs, discarding 2 diamonds, and 3 hearts ending in hand:

A 10 5		7
--		5
x		A x
--		--


From here declarer still has AD and two spades on the finesse as winners, and if hearts were originally 3-3 the 5H will score too.

Suppose though that South started with at least 4 hearts. Then then they now retain Qxx S and the boss heart, for they need all their spades to prevent dummy's last spade being a winner. They are squeezed by the play of the AD, for discarding a spade indeed allows three further spade tricks on the finesse, whilst discarding the boss heart leaves declarer's 5 as winner.

If on the other hand it is North who started with long hearts we are in classic double squeeze territory - if South holds the spades, and North the hearts, who will hold the diamonds? Indeed at this stage South will already have been squeezed out of protecting diamonds, for the necessity of retaining Qxx S means they will be down to a singleton diamond.

4		B is the boss heart.
B		East takes the spade finesse
x x		and cashes the A. The
--		finesse doesn't hurt North,
A 10 5		7
--		5
x		A x
--		--
		heart they discard a
		diamond, and declarer's second diamond becomes the
		13th trick no matter how small it is.

Lots of squeeze possibilities then, but the whole approach is based firmly on reading the opening lead and appreciating that it sets up a finesse opportunity in the spade suit.

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

The full deal is even more brutal to South, for not only do they have 4 cards in both majors, but also the KD with East holding the Q. After the spade at T1 and 5 rounds of clubs South has 7 cards left but needs to retain 3 spades, 4 hearts and Kx in diamonds. No chance.

Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (9 tables): Mike & Sally-Ann Rothwell

Tuesday F2F (8 tables): John & Lesley Sellar

Tuesday BBO (5 tables): Hilary Parker & Gay Talbot

Thursday am (5½ tables):

Sarah Bullock & Diana Smethurst

Thursday BBO (4 tables): Mike & Sally-Ann Rothwell

Total 31½ 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.

Martyn Harris

spadeilike on BBO