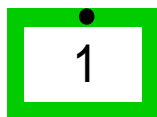


## Matters Arising 235

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 12-16 May 2025

### Courting Bad Luck

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



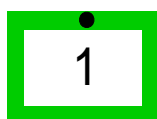
Tuesday board 1, and you are East playing in Hearts or NT on a club lead. Looks like you have 5 tricks in each red suit and two black Aces. Any thoughts on the play?

If not, would it help if I told you that the 9D is potentially a very important card?

The five hearts and the black Aces are nailed on winners (no, North is not going to ruff the club lead in hearts). Diamonds *might* be a problem. If the suit is 2-2 or 3-1 then the top honours will clear the suit ready for the spot cards to come into play. What if diamonds are 4-0 though? If South is void then you can finesse against North's J by leading small to 10. If South is void then you can finesse against South's J by running the 10 - having the 9 as back-up means that South cannot escape by covering the 10 with their J.

Our diamond holding is such that we can cater for both possibilities by starting with AD (or the K). If both defenders follow the suit runs easily. If one defender shows out then there is a marked finesse against their partner, and we have the wherewithal to execute it with the help of the high honour sat over the Jack. If however you start with QD and North shows out we now can't pick up South's J.

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

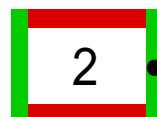


10 6 4 3 2  
3 2  
J 7 4  
K 7 6

In practice the suit behaved and declarer makes 12 tricks whichever diamond honour they play first. However if declarer started with QD and North showed out then declarer can hardly claim bad luck, for although this 4-0 split is unlikely declarer can guard against it.

### Use Your Length

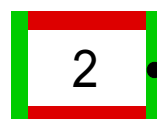
9		A J 3
K 9 7 2		Q J 10 6 3
--		A J 9 7 4
A Q 9 8 7 6 3 2		--



East was also in the hot seat for Monday's board 2, playing in 4H, or even slam. Three Aces and 7 ruffs looks like a route to 10 tricks, though South can derail that by leading A and another heart, leaving declarer with with 3 Aces, 1 natural trump trick (T2) and just 5 ruffs.

Dummy has 8 clubs though, with 3-2 being the most likely split of the remainder of the suit. In that case the suit can be set up with 2 ruffs, or even just one if the K is in the doubleton. That would give you tricks to burn.

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



K 8 7 6  
A 5  
10 8 5 2  
K 10 4

The second heart is won on table. Then AC, club ruff, diamond ruff, club ruff, AS and dummy is good. Winning T2 on table is vital if the KC is not in the doubleton. Moreover in case trumps are 3-1 declarer will want to be able to play AC, ruff club, and then a trump to table to draw last trump. Consequently they should not lazily play the 3 and 6 on the first two trumps unless they choose to win the second round with the 9.

## Timing

A Q J  
A K J 4  
Q J 4 2  
A 9



10 7 4 3  
2  
A K 7  
K 10 8 5 2

On Monday North played in 3NT after West opened a weak 2H. I suspect that in most cases North simply overcalled 3NT.

Where East led their partner's suit declarer easily made all 13 tricks. Those Easts that decided a different approach was required essayed 10D at T1, and were in many cases rewarded by declarer not making the lot.

NS have a combined 32 points, leaving EW with just 8. There must be a good chance that West holds both QH and KS, in which case there are 3 tricks in both majors, 4 in diamonds and 2 in clubs. Moreover if the KS comes down in 2 or 3, which is likely if West has KS in their weak 2H opening, then the 10S comes to the top for a thirteenth trick.

Declarer wishes to take 3 finesses, one against QH and two against KS, so needs three entries to table. AK D and KC will do nicely. However if the 10S is to score a trick then it will have to have been established before the third entry is used. Thus the first two entries are used for the spade finesse, the last for the heart one.

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

Play after 10D lead goes win on table, spade finesse. Diamond to K and second spade finesse followed by declarer's last spade. In practice the K turns up at T2, but even had West a third spade the K still tumbles on the third round. Now club to K, 10S discard 4H, heart finesse and North's hand is good.

## Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (9 tables): Andrew Peill & Michael Howse

Tuesday F2F (8½ tables):

Helen Finch & Moira Williams

Tuesday BBO (5½ tables):

John MacLachlan & Robin Rose

Thursday am (6½ tables):

NS: Brenda Richardson & Rita Davies

EW: Sarah Bullock & Diana Smethurst

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

Total 33½ tables for the week.

I welcome any comments or queries sent me at [martyn@orpheusmail.co.uk](mailto: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