


Matters Arising 237

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 26-30 May 2025


Wrong Discard

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

Mondays board 6, and East declares in 4H on the lead of 5C. North wins with the A over dummy's Q and returns a club. What would you discard as declarer?

You can definitely pick up the diamonds for no loser if you correctly divine the location of the QD as there is a 2-way finesse in the suit. On the assumption that your powers of divination are up to the task perhaps you should discard a small spade.

However regardless of whether you discard a spade or not you will still be looking to take a running finesse there in order to escape a spade loser. The 4th spade can if necessary be ruffed, barring a 4-0 trump break. Consequently it seems better to discard a diamond.

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


Win T2 on table discarding a diamond and continue diamond to K and run QH. This falls to the K, but with QS onside declarer easily wraps up the rest for an overtrick. Those who discarded a spade were on the diamond guess to equal the score.

There is of course no hurry to choose a discard unless you believe North started with 7 clubs. You can ruff T2, run QH, discovering that trumps aren't 4-0 so that the fourth round spade ruff is always on, and then discard a diamond on the club that North continues with at this point or at a later time of your choosing if North leads a different suit now.

Intermediate Jump Overcall

There is no easy answer as to whether you should play weak or intermediate jump overcalls. Given that the opponents will have opened before you can deploy either it seems reasonable to suppose you will get more chance to use the weak version, and this will certainly appeal to those who like to disrupt the opposition as much as possible.

On Thursday's board 2 it was the constructive merits of the intermediate jump overcall that came to the fore.

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

West opened 1S and North comes in with an intermediate JO of 3H. Typically this shows a 6 card suit with 11 to 15 points, usually translating to 6, maybe 7 losers. Here in fact North has only 5 losers, but move a diamond to a black suit and indeed North would have held 6 losers.

Given the prevailing colour South can reasonably expect North not to be at the poor end of their range. Further South knows that North must have 6+ hearts, so that there is an 8 card fit. With 8 losers themselves raising to 4H is South's natural bid, and that contract makes for the loss of KD and 2 trumps.

Playing weak JOs North can only overcall 2H, and whether or not East bids 2S, it is difficult to find a convincing route to 4H for NS.

Subtlety Pays

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

Left is South's hand from Thursday's board 20. Game all, West deals and opens 1D. South hears partner overcall 1H and East either double (negative) or bid 1S if not playing negative doubles.

Suggestions?

Do you think you can beat 4S? The defence will have at most 1 heart trick, and you can reasonably count AD. Will partner have two other defensive tricks? And you might need them to have 3 other defensive tricks to defeat 4S as there must be a good chance that an opponent is void in hearts. There seems little cause for optimism that you can beat 4S. So what to bid?

Pass gives the enemy a free run, and in truth 2H puts up no barriers either. 4H certainly appeals, until you realise that this is likely to act as a red rag to a bull and encourage the enemy to bid 4S regardless. 3H is my weapon of choice, begging West to bid 3S with East then perhaps deciding that discretion is the better part of valour.

	A 10 5	
	A Q 7 4 3	
	5 4	
	10 9 3	
K Q J 6		9 8 4 2
--		J 8
Q J 10 6 2	● 20	K 9 7
K 8 5 4		A Q 7 2
	7 3	
	K 10 9 6 5 2	
	A 8 3	
	J 6	

1D – 1H – 1S – 3H – 3S was the full auction at the two tables at which South found 3H, with East then passing as they were uncertain as to whether West had a full raise to 3S or had been pushed into it by South's action. In all other variations East-West went on to 4S.

In 4S the defence have two Aces and can promote the 10S to a winner by forcing dummy twice in hearts, but that is all. Persuading EW to stop short of game was key to a good NS score, and this was achieved by using up bidding spade to stop enemy discussion whilst still giving them room to stop short of game.

Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (6½ tables): Robert Harvey & Russell White

Tuesday F2F (8 tables):

Bernard Houssin & Ralph Rogerson

Tuesday BBO (3½ tables):

Amanda Etherington & Martyn Harris

Thursday am (5 tables): David Crowe & Jane Curzon

Thursday BBO (5½ tables): Irene & Ray Gregory

Total 28½ 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