

Matters Arising 240

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 16 - 20 Jun 2025

Maximum Pressure

A K 6
Q J 6
Q 9 7 6
K 6 2



You are North in 3NT on this hand from Monday's teams. Typically the auction will have been 1D – 1H – 1NT – 3NT.

East leads the JC, which runs around to you. Thoughts?

Q 7 5 2
A 10 8 5
K J 8
7 4

Are your thoughts any different if West covers the J with the Q?

Given time there are at least 3 tricks in each major, and 2 in diamonds, plus the KC. You might be able to run for home if spades are 3–3 and the KH onside with that suit also 3–3 or the 9 doubleton, but you'd rather not rely on all that. Better perhaps to go for a classical hold-up play in clubs and hope for defensive communications to become broken.

If West covers with the Q though holding off risks East having the AC and you ending up with no club trick.

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

If JC wins, East continues the suit. West rises with the A, but the defence will now only additionally score AD. West rising with AC at T1 would reduce the pressure on declarer, for the hold-up play on the next round would be natural and provide declarer the protection they need. West covering with the Q at T1 though puts enormous pressure on North to win T1 in the face of the risk of East holding AC, and is likely to see North win T1 with the contract failing.

Can playing the Q cost? Not if East started with JTxxx or indeed with JTxx with the 9 or 6 as the third card.

Long Suit

9 8 3
10 9 7 4 3
A 8 5
Q 6



K
A K
J 4 2
A K J 10 5 4 2

Tuesday, and you are South playing in 5C after East opened a weak 2S. West leads AS and either continues the suit or switches to QH on seeing your KS. Over to you.

There are 10 tricks on top - 7 clubs, AK H and AD, with a clear danger of losing 2 diamond tricks. Your task is to conjure up another trick whilst arranging a disappearing act for one of the diamond losers.

Realistically the only hope is to establish dummy's long suit, hearts. With only 2 entries to table this will require hearts 3–3 so that one entry can be used to ruff the third round of hearts and one to enjoy them.

A sample line would be to win T2 in hand either with a heart honour or ruffing a spade, according to whichever continuation confronted you.

AC, cash heart honour(s), QC, ruff heart (high if trumps aren't 2–2), draw any remaining trumps, AD, enjoy two further hearts, 12 tricks.

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

Hearts are indeed 3–3 and the line works. On the more likely 4–2 heart break declarer can still fall back on hoping something unexpectedly nice happens in diamonds, this fallback position being effectively what you are playing for if QC is played before the hearts are unblocked preparatory to a ruff.

Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (9 tables teams):

Mike & Sally-Ann Rothwell

Robin Rose & John MacLachlan

Tuesday F2F (5 tables): Robrt Harvey & Russell White

Tuesday BBO (5 tables):

Amanda Etherington & Martyn Harris

Thursday am (4½ tables):

Jennifer Whalley & Sarah Bullock

Thursday BBO (5 tables): Mike & Sally-Ann Rothwell

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