


Matters Arising 241

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 23 - 27 Jun 2025

10, 11, 12

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


Monday, and North leads 7C against West's 4S contract. Thoughts?

It is possible that a heart lead would result in the loss of the first 3 tricks if South wins and switches to a diamond should North hold AD. Having avoided that fate declarer is surely now on the hunt for overtricks.

However some declarers still only made 10 tricks. Presumably they won T1 in hand, drew trumps, which took 3 rounds, cashed the other top club and then looked for an entry to table. Having already played the 2 and 3 of trumps under the AK there is no trump entry, so a heart was ducked to set up a heart ruff. South won and shoved a diamond through. North did have AD.

This line can easily be turned into 11 tricks simply by playing the 2 and 8 trumps under dummy's AK. Now dummy can be entered later by overtaking the 3S with the 7, yielding 5 trump and 6 club tricks.

For 12 tricks declarer has to run the gauntlet of a 4-1 club break by cashing the second top club in hand before drawing trumps (they could try playing off AQ trumps first to protect against a 2-2 trump break). Now dummy can be entered with the third trump and all declarer's diamonds and one heart go on dummy's clubs. Lose a heart and cross-ruff.

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

Nice 9

A K 10 7 3	Tuesday, and North is in 3S. East
6 3 2	leads QD, which holds, and continues
10 7 4	with the 5. West wins with A and
A 4	continues with the K on which East

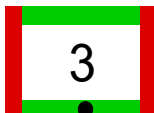


Q 9 8 5
K 7
9 6 3
K Q J 3

Four tricks lost already, what does declarer do next?

Draw trumps is the obvious answer, to make 5 trumps and 4 clubs for the contract, and count themselves lucky that East didn't start with a heart.

There is a sting though. If declarer starts by cashing QS then if West shows out there is an inescapable trump loser to East. The 9S on table creates a 2-way finesse against the missing J should it be necessary. Consequently cashing the A (or K) first warns declarer of a trump void in either defender's hand and enables a finesse to be taken against the J to pick it up.

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

The defence can always defeat the contract if East leads QH at T1, or indeed if East ruffs the third diamond to put a heart through.

Looking back at Monday's hand 12 there is not quite a 2-way finesse against the JS there, and declarer can't protect against both possible 4-0 splits. They can though protect against South having all 4 missing trumps by playing off the A (or K) first in order to be ready to finesse against South's J. Alternatively they can protect against all the trumps being North by cashing QS first. If South shows out run the 10 next. North must cover. Win, return to hand with QC and finesse against North's 9S. Declarer can choose to protect against one of the possible 4-0 breaks, but not both.

Predictable

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

24

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

Thursday's last board, and West leads a club against South's 4H contract. Over to you.

Obvious losers are AH and one or two diamonds, and it seems that this was the extent of some declarer's analysis, for they went straight into drawing trumps mode. However with all dummy's trumps used up in the process declarer has 2 spade losers. Drawing trumps proved not to be a great success.

Try again. Counting winners paints a different picture. Four natural trump tricks and two black AKs represent 8 winners. There may or may not be a diamond winner, so it might be necessary to ruff two spades to secure the contract. Fortunately apart from the missing A and dummy's 3 the trump suit is solid.

AS, KS, spade ruff is easy to see. How then to return to hand for a second ruff? KC. Thus T1 must be won on table.

Try win T1 on table. AS, KS, spade ruff with 9. KC, spade ruff with Q. That is 6 tricks under the belt, with declarer's trumps guaranteeing 4 more. With no further entry to table now is a good time to try a diamond to see whether an overtrick can be made.

	A 3	
	Q 9 3	
	9 8 7 6 5 4	
	A 7	
J 8 7		Q 5 4 2
5 4		A 6 2
A Q 10 3 2	24	--
9 8 2		Q J 10 6 5 4
	K 10 9 6	
	K J 10 8 7	
	K J	
	K 3	

With AQ D both wrong the hope of a diamond trick is a vain one, but the contract makes. Note that declarer isn't fussed should the defence be able to over-ruff a spade with AH as declarer now has a fifth natural trump trick to make up for the loss of a ruff.

The defence can defeat 4H by starting with a heart to East's A and another back, thereby reducing the ruffing opportunities. Declarer drawing trumps does the defence's job for them.

Sit and Wait

10 6
Q 10 7
Q J 10 3 2
10 8 6

13

Q J 7 5 3
8 3
K 8 6
A J 2

Thursday board 13. South leads the QS against East's 4H contract, with declarer having shown a good heart hand in the bidding.

The lead runs around to declarer, who immediately tackles trumps. North wins with the A and plays a small club which South wins with the J. Now what?

A and another club, and wait for a diamond perhaps. But there is no hurry. South's KD surely means that whatever losers declarer has they can't discard them on dummy. Time for a safe defence. Return the second trump.

	9 4 2	
	A 6	
	9 7 5 4	
	Q 9 4 3	
10 6		A K 8
Q 10 7		K J 9 5 4 2
Q J 10 3 2	13	A
10 8 6		K 7 5
	Q J 7 5 3	
	8 3	
	K 8 6	
	A J 2	

On the trump continuation declarer can win, cash the second top spade and ruff their third spade on table. But however they play from then they must have two further club losers for one off.

The active defence of cashing AC allows declarer to win their King. Sometimes rather than trying to find tricks (active defence) it can be better to sit back and defend passively, effectively saying to declarer 'I don't think you can find enough tricks'. With no reason to suppose that club tricks could disappear once the J has been secured, South should be content to play a waiting game.

Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (8 tables):

= Julie & Adrian Thomas

Mike Howse & Andrew Peill

Tuesday F2F (6½ tables):

Andrew Peill & Steven Barron

Tuesday BBO (4 tables):

Amanda Etherington & Martyn Harris

Thursday am (5 tables): Roger & Debbie Wilkinson

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