

Matters Arising 243

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 7 - 11 Jul 2025

Weak Two LTC

How strong is a weak 2? Try writing out some hands worthy of such an opening, such as

Kxxxxx Jx Qxx xx


or

AQxxxx Kxx xxx x


Most such hands have 7 or 8 losers, which can be a useful guide for helping partner decide whether to bid on.

A K 8 7 2 Here is West's hand from Monday's board
J 10 2. When East opens a weak 2H West
Q 3 knows of an 8 card fit, so is happy to use
A Q 6 5 the losing trick count to assess their hand.

Six losers opposite at most 8 suggests game, so West simply replies 4H.

A K 8 7 2		J 5 3 K Q 8 7 6 3 K 9 8 2 --
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Nine points and a void is an absolute maximum for a weak 2, and indeed East has only 6 losers, though being aceless they are entitled to add a loser, calling it a 7 loser hand. 4H was reached at only two of the seven tables, with a further two in 4S. The rest languished in a heart part-score. Both games can make, but in practice 4H is the easier contract.

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

Useless Trump


A Q 10 6		J 8 7 2 A J 9 2 Q 7 A 9 5
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Tuesday board 7, and you are West in 4S on the lead of the 2D. You win on table with the Q and play a spade to the 10 which holds. Next you try the deep finesse of 9H hoping that if South has to win with K or Q you have a natural finesse left against the other to create a discard for your last diamond. South wins with the 10 though and continues with 10D. You win, cross to AC and lead a second small trump. South rises with the K, which naturally you clobber with the A. The position you can see is

Q 6		J 8 A J 2 -- 9 5
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What now?

Many will naturally gravitate towards drawing the last trump, but with three outside winners and 4 trumps left, cashing the winners and cross-ruffing the rest is a better option - even if the defence get to ruff or over-ruff you will make 6 of the last 7, which is what you would make if you drew the last trump.

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

In practice the defence would have to follow suit as you cashed AH and ruffed one, cashed KD throwing a club, cashed KC and ruffed one. The JS and QS are left to win the last two tricks, and North is left under-ruffing one of them with their 9. 12 tricks, which is more than anyone made on Tuesday.

Ladder Finesse

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



4H by East was an attractive contract on Tuesday's board 14. Suppose you face an opening lead of JC.

Five natural trump tricks unless the suit is 4–0, 3 clubs, AD, comes to 9 tricks. The 10th could come from leading towards KS with A onside, or a successful diamond finesse.

T1 is won by the AC in hand, and a heart played to the A. Both defenders follow, so you complete the drawing of trumps which takes three rounds. Having arranged to be on table at this point you now lead a diamond. North plays low. A, Q or 10?

Ten. Playing the Ace may guard against a singleton honour in the South hand, but that possibility is not high on our list of concerns. The Q is the natural finesse, giving us two tricks in the suit if the K is onside. However it surrenders any chance of three tricks in the suit, for even if Q holds the defence will have KJ against our A 10. If the 10 holds though we might pick up three tricks in the suit, for we can cross back to table via a club and now try a finesse against the KD.

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



Q 6 4
J 10 5
8 7
J 10 9 6 4

The double finesse of the 10D (against both K and J) works, and the play allows diamonds to be picked up without loss. The AS is offside, so the result is 11 tricks and an above average score. I refer to this sort of double finesse as a ladder finesse to distinguish it from the double finesse where the two cards finessed against are adjacent, and for which I have no separate name.

A J x	A Q 10
x x x	x x x
Double Finesse small to J	Ladder Finesse small to 10

Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (7½ tables): Tim Harrison & Richard Brazier

Tuesday F2F (5 teams):

Russell White & Robert Harvey

Patricia White & Helen Adams

Tuesday BBO (5½ tables): John & Wendy Ellwood

Thursday am (5 tables):

Sarah Bullock & Diana Smethurst

Thursday BBO (5½ tables): Hilary Parker & Gay Talbot

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