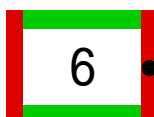


being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 4 - 8 Aug 2025

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

Imagine you are South playing in hearts on a spade lead. How do you set about your task on the assumption that neither defender has a void?

Five hearts, at least 4 clubs plus AD comes to 10 tricks, so game would be safe, but as mentioned, like Oliver, you want more.

Would a cross-ruff work? AD, 3 diamond ruffs in hand, 3 spade ruffs on table, 2 natural trumps comes to 9, with clubs yet to be tackled. If trumps are 2-1 and KC onside you you could be on course for all 13, but a 3-1 trump break would allow a defender to ruff in sooner or later on clubs to take more spades/diamonds.

Looked at from eliminating losers from declarer's hand, there is nothing to be done about the possible club loser, but we could ruff the three spades.

Play goes ruff T1, trump to hand, ruff a spade, trump to hand which will also reveal whether trumps are 3-1 or 2-2. Ruff your last spade with dummy's last trump.

If trumps were 2-2, or 3-1 with West having the 3 you can now afford to try the club finesse. However if 3-1 with East having the 3 you will want to play AC to draw last trump as you don't wish the finesse to lose to Kxx and West immediately give partner a ruff.

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

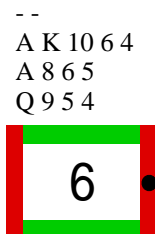
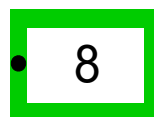


Diagram of a 6-sided die showing faces 6, 1, and 2.

Declarer gets their 12 tricks as planned.

If North declares they are more likely to face the lead of KD. Now there are not enough entries to arrange to ruff 3 spades, so declarer concentrates on ruffing diamonds instead. AD, ruff diamond, trump to hand, ruff diamond. When West shows out on this diamond declarer just draws trumps and takes the club finesse. West has no diamond to lead, so in due course North's last diamond will disappear on the last club. The line works for similar reasons if West has 3 diamonds.

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

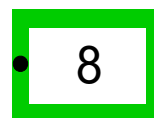


A Q 9 8 2
A 3 2
4 2
9 4 3

North-South bid their way to the spade game on this hand from Thursday's play, brushing aside East's club interference. With South declaring West's club lead, the 5 as it turned out, came as no surprise. Thoughts?

Five spades and three Aces comes to 8 tricks. There are no further sure red suit tricks, so the contract is not guaranteed, but you can at least nudge yourself closer to the finishing line with a club ruff. Given the bidding East won't be over-ruffing. However instead of returning a club at trick 2 to set up the club ruff too many decalrrs acted on autopilot and started by drawing trumps, thereby ensuring a second and entirely unnecessary club loser.

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



A Q 9 8 2
A 3 2
4 2
9 4 3

10
K Q
10 9 7
K O J 10 8 6 2

On the lie of the cards there are 11 tricks. On lead after T2 East may feel they have no attractive lead, so may either lead their singleton trump, which pleases declarer as the 9 and 8 become good, or play a third club. Either way declarer soon gets their club ruff. When declarer plays a heart from table East's play of an honour, particularly if its the Q, suggests finessing against the 10 later, and with the diamond finesse working too, losers are limited to a club and a heart.

Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (8½ tables): John Ellwood & Mike Ollerton

Tuesday F2F (8 tables): Chris & Jill Yates

Tuesday BBO (4 tables): John & Wendy Ellwood

Thursday am (4½ tables): Bernard & Sabina Houssin

Thursday BBO (4½ tables):

Amanda Etherington & Martyn Harris

Total 29½ 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