

Matters Arising 248

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 11 - 15 Aug 2024

Another Myth


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

You are East on this hand from Monday, declaring 3NT after an auction such as 1D – 1S – 2C – 3NT. The opening lead of JH comes as no surprise.

Regular readers of *Matters Arising* will hopefully have come to appreciate that drawing trumps is not always the best way to tackle a suit contract. Treating advice to run long suits as a hard rule is equally dangerous.

Here declarer can count 5 clubs to go with the 2 hearts presented by the lead. The additional 2 tricks needed for success can be set up in diamonds, and indeed if that suit is 3–3 then a couple of overtricks will come declarer's way too.


Suppose though that declarer wins T1 as cheaply as possible and then runs their club winners. The defenders are unlikely to be too put out by having to find discards; holding on to hearts will be the order of the day. Now comes KD. The defence win and continue hearts. Declarer is back on lead, even if they duck one heart, and can cash QD. Now for the JD, which means reaching it. A spade towards K is obvious, but the defence win their Ace and cash hearts. They come to at least 3 hearts and 2 Aces.

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

If declarer sets up their two diamond tricks first, then the clubs can be used as entry to the JD and the contract makes.

Should North play their KH at T1? If they don't they won't be happy if South has led from AJTx(x).

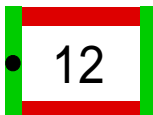
Moan Variation

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

Majority opinion on Monday was that this hand would be played by East in 4S, with East-West's progress there being interrupted/encouraged by South bidding hearts.

The defence starts with two top hearts, the second of which declarer naturally ruffs. Imagine yourself East. Over to you.

Playing by numbers - number 1 draw trumps - fails again. Trumps are 3–1, and playing three rounds leaves table without trumps. This doesn't appear to matter until ...

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

... clubs break 5–1. Suddenly declarer has 2 club losers as well as the trump and AH.

Simply play off two top trumps, leave the defence with their winner, and tackle clubs. One club ruff is enough for success, and even if this is over-ruffed, or a club honour gets ruffed declarer is still OK, for they now have 6 rather than 5 natural trump tricks.


Underused 2D

Landy whereby a bid of 2C promises at least 5–4 in the majors is a popular convention for use in defence to an opening 1NT. Cue South's hand 14 on Monday:

A Q 7 6 East opens 1NT and South calls 2C,
A J 9 7 3 2 Landy. Suppose they hear 2H from their
-- partner. What is partner's likely major
9 7 6 suit distribution?

I would suggest 3 hearts and 1 spade, though of course there is nothing to stop them having 4 hearts. Why not 3 hearts and 2 spades? Given the choice most people would I suspect elect to play in a 5–2 fit rather than a 4–3 one, preferring the safety apparently offered by the extra trump length in one hand. So why would they bid 2H on 2–3 in the majors when this could lead to a 4–3 heart fit rather than a 5–2 spade one? If you subscribe to the preference for a 5–2 fit over a 4–3 one, then for you 2D is the correct response when 3–2 in the majors. In reply to 2C you don't announce which suit your hand prefers, but which suit you think is best for the partnership.

Opposite a hand with a singleton spade and 3 hearts this is surely worth a raise on the expectation that even if there is a trump lead you get to ruff 2 spades on table.

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


The full deal shows 4H to be an easy make.

North has a 12 count. Could they have bid more strongly to help reach the game?

3H could land the pair in 4H on a 4–3 fit, which isn't necessarily the end of the world, but might easily be a delicate contract. Not a particularly attractive option then.

Why not 2D? As long as partner won't decide to pass on a 5–4–4–0 hand North has everything under control. If South rebids 2H North will surely regard 6 losers and an 8 card fit sufficient to bounce to game, whilst over 2S North can choose between an invitational 2NT and a pushy 3NT.

Alert

A		N	E	S	W
J 8 5 4		1C	1NT	X	P
9 5 4		2H	P	P	X
K Q J 6 5		all pass			
J 10 8 4		K Q 6			
Q		10 7 6 3			
K J 7 6 2		A Q 8			
10 8 7		A 9 3			
	9 7 5 3 2				
	A K 9 2				
	10 3				
	4 2				

The above hand turned up at the weekend's NBL session. Declarer made 9 tricks for 870, and East called the director asking for an adjusted score on the basis that NS hadn't alerted the South double of 1NT as being for take-out rather than penalties. Cue discussion between several senior directors.

With regards to this auction the only potentially relevant part of the alerting rules for doubles seems to be to alert *any double that has an unexpected specific message*. Of course to be able to do that NS have to know what the expected meaning of the bid is, and given the wide variety of allegedly straight Acol auctions on some hands, such knowledge is far from a given.

Are EW entitled to an adjusted score? The final ruling was no. To me though the wound is largely self-inflicted by the final double. How can West justify their double of 2H on the basis they think North has pulled a penalty double? Hence definitely no adjusted score.

Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (7½ tables): Tim Harrison & Richard Brazier

Tuesday F2F (7½ tables):

Angela Davenport & Jennifer Spencer

Tuesday BBO (4 tables): Ina Gray & Mary Anne Peden

Thursday am (7½ tables):

NS: Roger & Debbie Wilkinson

EW: = David Airey & Jennifer Whalley

= David Crowe & Jane Curzon

Thursday BBO (3½ K & 6 Wearside tables):

Graham Cox & Stephen Lovely

Best K: Mike & Sally-Ann Rothwell (3rd)

Total 30 tables for the week

Martyn Harris
spadeilike on BBO