

Matters Arising 253

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 15 - 19 Sept 2025

Plan To Make

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

Monday Teams, and you are North in 3NT after the uncontested auction 1C – 1D – 3NT. East leads the 3S, attacking your weakness. The good news though is that that 3S looks fourth best, meaning the suit is 4–4 so you won't be beaten on spades alone.

8 2
A 9 2
A Q 6 4 3
J 6 3

West wins T1 with AS and returns the J. With East holding the K whatever you try you will lose the first four tricks. How do you plan to make the contract?

Unless diamonds are 5–1 or worse, you have 5 diamond tricks, AK H and AC on top. The ninth trick will most likely have to come from a successful club finesse, though there is a chance of a third heart trick. However before you can start winning tricks you have to make discards on the spades. What to throw?

It is important to retain at least Ax H on table, for if you were to discard both the heart spot cards the defence could switch to a heart at T5. Then in order to bring home the diamonds you would be relying on the suit being 3–3. You need to be able to win the heart switch in hand, cash KJ D and then cross to table for the other diamonds. Thus at least one club needs to be discarded from table, and you may decide that to maximise your chances of an unlikely 3rd heart trick you should discard 2 clubs from table and one from hand. Since you are planning to play at most two club tricks retaining further length there is pointless.

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

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

19

K 7 5 3
8 7 5 4
10 8 7 2
8

8 2
A 9 2
A Q 6 4 3
J 6 3

The club finesse works, but diamonds are 4–2. As long as you discarded to allow yourself to unblock diamonds from hand before crossing to table whatever switch the defence make at T5, the contract makes.

Hammer & Tongs

A
A 10 8 7 4 3
K J 5
J 7 5

Playing 4 card majors inexperienced players may bid Tuesday's hand 20 1H – 1S – 2H – 2S – 3H – 3S, though this cannot be recommended. Who should pull out when?

20

K 10 9 7 6 4
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8 6 4 3
A 10 4

The start of the auction 1H – 1S – 2H is unremarkable.

South now knows that their partner has 5 hearts and not 4 spades with little if any more than minimum opening values. It is not unreasonable though for South to hope that spades will prove a better contract, so 2S also seems fair. To be arguing with a known 5 card suit though they must surely be showing a 6 card suit themselves, and no interest in going further.

3H though is the bid of someone who is keen to show there own hand - *I had to tell you I had 6 hearts partner* - without listening to what partner is telling them. Why assume that playing in your 6 card suit will be better than playing in partner's? Doubly so when to play in yours you have to push the bidding up a level. The auction should stop at 2S.

A
A 10 8 7 4 3
K J 5
J 7 5

Q 8 5 2
Q 9 2
A Q 9 7
9 6

20

J 3
K J 6 5
10 2
K Q 8 3 2

K 10 9 7 6 4
--
8 6 4 3
A 10 4

At some tables East called 2C over North's 1H. A negative double doesn't do justice to South's shape, so South may feel they have to bid 2S despite lacking the 10 count normally associated with responding at the two level. 3H from partner, and South has to decide whether to trust partner to pass 3S or to pass themselves.

In practice there are 3 more tricks available in spades than hearts.

Response

4 3 Thursday hand 6, and holding the cards
10 9 2 left as West, red against green, you hear
A J 8 6 4 2 partner open 1S.
9 5

Actions that each appealed to at least one player on the day were Pass, 1NT and 2D. What are your thoughts on each of these?

With just 5 points West is certainly entitled to pass, and partner's opening bid already stops the opposition getting into the auction with a 1 level suit bid, so neither 1NT nor 2D will have much if any pre-emptive effect. The colour also urges caution.

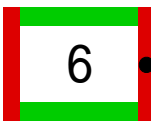
2D? This is a change of suit by a hand that has not previously passed. It is forcing, so the one place you know you won't end up by bidding 2D is in 2D. Suddenly bidding 2D is not so attractive. Most partnerships agree a minimum strength for responder to reply by introducing a new suit at the two level. I'm firmly in the camp that says responder needs at least 10 points for such action in an uncontested auction, though there are successful partnerships around who are happy for responder to have just 8 points. 5 really is a non-starter - you are at the 2 level, no known fit and it is possible that the enemy has the majority of points.

If you want a chance of declaring 2D try responding 1NT. Now if partner rebids 2C then 2D from you shows precisely this type of hand - long suit with limited values. Partner should pass. You might get passed out in 1NT though, the success of which contract will depend heavily on how the rest of the cards are distributed.

This is East's hand. If partner passes and North overcalls 2C, what action would you take? Would it be any different if North's 2C call was made over a 1NT response?

K J 8 7 6
Q 7 4
K 3
K J 10

In both cases pass. With an Aceless 7 loser hand you have nothing to add to your 1S opening.

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

The ideal diamond distribution (for EW) makes 1NT the best scoring contract, and 2D is successful too, but you need to find a way of stopping there to benefit. The lemming auction of 1S – 2D – 3C (North overcall) – 3S in which West and East in turn overbid their hands did not score well on the night.

Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (9 tables teams):

Babs Matthews & John Farmer
Tim Matthews & Ian Reeves

Tuesday F2F (8½ tables):

NS: Bob Churchward & Ralph Rogerson
EW: Bob Boyd & Dorothy Bayliss

Tuesday BBO (4 Kendal tables + 3 Barrow):

Sue Chapman & Vanessa Cordwell

Thursday am (4½ tables):

Gerald Garratty & Lynne Sidey

Thursday BBO (4½ Kendal tables + 6½ Wearside):

Peter Avery & Brenda Osborne
Best K: Estelle Savage & Sarah Bullock 4th

Total 30½ 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