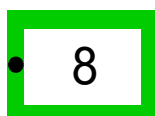


Matters Arising 254

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 22- 26 Sep 2025

Protect Your Entry

Q
J 7 3
A 9 6 4 3 2
A 9 8



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

West leads AS against your 3NT contract as South on this hand from Thursday, their partner having bid spades in the auction. The 8S comes next. Plan the play.

The early play ensures you have at least one spade trick, there are 2 hearts by force and one or two tricks in clubs depending on the location of the KC. That still leaves a lot of work for the diamonds to get you over the line, but there are potentially 6 tricks there provided the suit is 3-2.

First though you need to make a discard on T2. Not a diamond presumably. Does it matter whether it is a heart or a club?

Yes (because I asked?). What would you throw?

The AC is needed as entry to table after you have taken KQ D, so you need to protect it as much as possible from early removal. Discard a heart.

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

Suppose you discard a club at T2 and East switches to 10C at T3. You can try the Q, covered by the K, or duck in which case West covers with the J and then leads small to remove dummy's A. Either way the AC is removed early, so that after cashing KQ D your only potential entry to table is JH, which fails to do the job as the K is sat over it. Had you retained all dummy's clubs then the lead of the 10 would have enabled you to force a second entry in clubs.

It is worth pointing out in passing that had East been able to lead the KC as an attempt to remove the entry declarer ducks so that they can take any club continuation in hand to preserve the precious entry for after the play of declarer's diamonds.

Most Isn't Best

A Q 5
A Q
J 10 7 4 3
9 7 3



9 6 4 3 2
K 6
K Q
A K Q 6

Tuesday, and you are East (or West) in 3NT on a heart lead. Over to you.

You have two hearts, three clubs and AS on top, plus plenty of potential for further tricks from your 5-3 spade fit and 5-2 diamond one. On the downside though you can only afford to lose the lead once as a heart continuation by the defence would mean a second loss of lead would result in at least 3 heart losers plus the two you lost the lead to.

Trying to establish spades is fraught with danger, for if the finesse fails you would need doubleton J 10 onside to establish the suit for one loser. You have one fewer diamond, but as long as the suit is no worse than 4-2 it can be established for the loss of just the A. Play on diamonds then, with intent to score AS, 2 hearts, 4 diamonds and at least 3 clubs.

The defence don't have to take their AD immediately, so you may need two entries to the West hand - one to force out the AD after the defence duck both East's K and Q, and one to enjoy the remaining diamonds. The AS is one entry, and as we can't rely on QS being the other we need it to be a heart. Thus if you decide to win T1 with AH throw the K under it so that the Q is entry.

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

Playing on diamonds as described allows the suit to generate 4 tricks. Taking the losing spade finesse results in the defence establishing hearts before either diamonds or spades are ready to run.

Expensive Obsession

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




8 4
K Q J 9 8 4
10 8 5 3 2
--

You are South on this hand from Thursday, playing in 5H on the lead of the AS, having been pushed to that level by EW competing to 4S.

The defence continue with a spade at T2. Which of declarer's cards is of greatest concern, and how do you play the hand?

I am concerned about 4H. Why? Because it is the only trump our side possesses that he defence can beat. The minor suit holdings beg for a cross-ruff, with the only dangers being a void diamond or singleton/void club being held by a defender.

Play goes: win KS, AC, AD, ruff club with 4H. When this holds you have a high cross-ruff for the rest, making KS, AC, AD and 9 trumps.

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

Those obsessed with drawing trumps will start with 2 rounds and be pleased that the suit is 2-2. However they can now ruff only one diamond so that with one going under the A and another on AC South still has 2 diamond losers. With AS already lost that is one down for -100 rather than one up for +680. Ouch.

The clubs being 4-3 with the K in the short hand means that it is possible with care over entries to set the clubs up and enjoy them, making 12 tricks that way. But why choose that line with a simple high cross-ruff available?

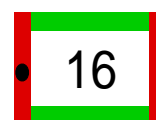
The play was not the first decision South had to make. As dealer they get to open if they wish. The minimum requirements for a legal of a suit opening bid are 8 points, with a further requirement that the hand obeys the rule of 18 if the bid is made in first or second position. South's hand is not strong enough to open 1H. Yet with just 6 losers opening 2H is likely to mislead

partner about the strength of the hand, for weak 2s typically contain 7 or 8 losers.

Thus pass looks right.

Pairs Play


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



J 8 5 4
A 8
A K 7 4 2
7 4

Monday, you are West in 4S on the lead of KH. You win on table and throw your other heart on a top diamond. Now what?

Drawing trumps would be a common thought, but the consequence unless the Q is singleton would be that you were then in hand. To avoid leading clubs away from the K then needs you to play a third round of trumps to reach table, where there will be just one left for ruffing clubs.

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

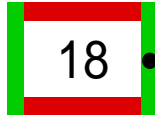
Drawing trumps leaves you 2 club losers, either because you lead away from the K or because you play a third trump to lead towards the KC and so can only ruff one club later.

Try the effect of leading a club towards the K before tackling trumps. Now you will get to ruff two clubs so just lose to AC. 12 tricks.

The line is not totally without risk, as if North has AC, South a doubleton club and QS you will now be held to 10 tricks instead of the 11 available by drawing trumps. However at pairs the formula AC right = 12 tricks, AC wrong, South doubleton and QS = 10 tricks suggests you are more likely to gain than lose by tackling clubs before trumps.

12 Again

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




9 6 5 4 3
A 4 3
Q 10 7
A 7

You are South on this hand from Monday, playing in 4S, West having pre-empted 3H and your partner raising your 3S response to their take-out double to game.

West leads the 2C, which looks suspiciously singleton. Over to you.

Assuming trumps are 3–2 you could draw them in 3 rounds for the loss of one trick, securing 4 trumps, 2 hearts and 4 clubs. There are 3 or 4 diamond tricks too depending on the location of the K, so 13 or 14 in total. It is the losers then, a spade and possibly a diamond depending on the result of the finesse that would determine the outcome.

There is another way, looking to ruff the third heart rather than using all dummy's trumps in a drawing campaign, and so having only 2 red cards to discard on clubs.

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

Play goes win T1 with AC, then AK S, KA H, ruff a heart, run clubs discarding diamonds. East only ever makes one trump even if they use it to ruff your AH.

Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (8 tables): Tim Harrison & Richard Brazier

Tuesday F2F (6 tables): John & Lesley Sellar

Tuesday BBO (4½ Kendal tables + 3½ Barrow):

Ken Orford & Steve Douglas

Thursday am (4 tables):

Brenda Richardson & Rita Davies

Thursday BBO (3 Kendal tables+ 7½ Wearside):

Linda White & Jackie Stabler

Total 25½ 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