

Matters Arising 261

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 1- 14 Nov 2025

Black Losers

J 9 7
K 6 2
K 10 7 6 2
J 6

17

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

This hand from Tuesday was played in a spade part-score by South at all 8 tables. With 4 top black suit losers it is just as well they were not in game. Any thoughts on how to play the hand?

In terms of tricks there seem to be 4 natural trump winners, two in each red suit, and a club by force. 9 for us, 4 for them looks the obvious outcome.

Yet obvious outcomes don't always come to pass. Winning AH at T1 and playing immediately on trumps produces only 8 tricks - the defence win the first trump and continue hearts, and there is now no way to stop the defence taking a heart trick.

Instead declarer needs to cash AD at T2 before tackling trumps. Then when the KH is knocked out declarer can discard their third heart on KD before continuing trumps, thereby restricting their losers to the four top black ones.

Winning T1 on table would have been equally damaging, for even if the AD is cashed next there will be no way to table to discard on KD until it is too late.

J 9 7
K 6 2
K 10 7 6 2
J 6

A K 3 2
4 3
J 8 3
K 9 8 2

17

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

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Q J 10 8 5
Q 9 5 4
A 7 4 3

Two declarers made just 8 tricks, and although they had both stopped in 2S and so achieved a positive score, they still ended up with joint bottoms.

The hand is a variation on the theme of don't always start by drawing trumps - sometimes there is something more important to do - in this case unblocking the AD.

Unexpected Spotlight

A 10 3 2
K 5
J 8 7 3 2
5 3

Monday, and West holding the hand left probably wasn't expecting to play a significant part in the auction once they heard North open 1NT, which I suspect was the case at most of the 12 tables.

Apparently several elected to play no part when their partner doubled the opening bid, though with two Easts playing in 1NT it appears that at least two Norths opened 1C with East overcalling 1NT.

Q J 8
J 7 4
K 5
K Q 9 8 4

A 10 3 2
K 5
J 8 7 3 2
5 3

3

K 9 7
A 10 6 3
A Q 6
A 7 6

6 5 4
Q 9 8 2
10 9 4
J 10 2

The scorecard shows that at five of the six tables at which NS were allowed to play undoubled EW scored below average:

4S+1	W	-650	0 22	2H-3	S	-150	12 10
1NX-3	N	-500	2 20	1NX-1	N	-100	6 16
2HX-2	N	-300	4 18	2C-2	N	-100	6 16
2S-5	N	-250	6 16	2C-2	N	-100	6 16
1N+4	E	-210	8 14	1N-1	N	-50	1 21
1N+3	E	-180	10 12	2H-1	N	-50	1 21

If East doubles 1NT West knows their side has at least a combined 23 count, and very likely a makeable contract at the 2 level, if not higher. Thus if NS can make a contract EW will get a bad score anyway. A policy of doubling whatever the opponents now bid seems called for, particularly as West's 8 points include an Ace and a King, the sort of cards that are useful in suit contracts.

Those undoubled NS contracts could have been better boards for EW with the application of a double. Better defence would have helped too.

Against 1NT for example East's natural lead is a fourth best 3H. West wins with K, but sees little future in the suit, for with AJT3 partner would have led the J, top of

an interior sequence.

Time for a switch. Both spades and diamonds look good prospects, but perhaps a diamond is chosen on the basis that AS might prove a useful entry later. Declarer feels obliged to play KD on the 3 as their only chance of winning a trick, and East wins with the A.

That West led a small diamond is strongly suggestive that they must have something of value there, which now must be the J, else a second from rubbish type lead would have been chosen. Hence East continues with Q and then 6D much to West's delight.

Suddenly 5 diamonds, 2 spades, 2 hearts and AC are the least the defence with take. 10 tricks against 1NT is 4 off. worth 800 if doubled.

Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (12 tables):

NS: Mike & Sally-Ann Rothwell

EW: Tim Harrison & Richard Brazier

Tuesday F2F (9 tables):

NS: Dorothy Bayliss & Robert Boyd

EW: Jean Dale & Jo Ainsworth

Tuesday BBO (5 Kendal tables + 3 Barrow):

Amanda Etherington & Martyn Harris

Thursday am (6 tables):

Sarah Bullock & Diana Smethurst

Thursday BBO (5½ K tables + 6½ Wearside):

Dick & Sue Davies

Best K: Ray Gregory & John Ellwood (5th)

Total 37½ 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