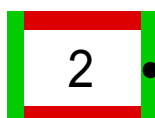


## Matters Arising 263

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 24 - 28 Nov 2025

### Probabilities

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



K J 10 9 7 6  
K 7 6  
K J  
Q 9

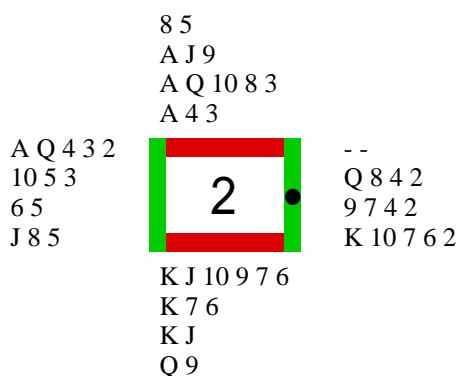
Bridge is a game of probabilities - if you take the actions that have the greater probability of success you will succeed more often than those who attempt the less likely routes.

Yet we often have to make a call about relative probabilities without being able to attach a value to at least one of them.

This is Monday's board 2, on which several Norths found themselves declaring 3NT on the lead of 6C, perhaps after an auction of 1S - 2D - 2S - 3NT. There are 8 tricks on top, with options in spades, hearts and clubs for a ninth. There is also a clear chance that the defence will take 4 clubs and a trick elsewhere before declarer can gather their 9.

What to do at T1? Play the Q hoping East has underled the K, or the 9 hoping that West will play the K? Looking at the diagram says that there is a 50-50 chance that East has the K, but the fact that East has led a club surely changes that, but how? Meanwhile will West play the K from K 10? They really shouldn't, but defenders don't always play as they should. If West has the KJ only the doziest player would put the K on the 9, whilst if West has underled J 10 playing the 9 will be the winning play.

The probabilities favour what? Don't know, but a decision has to be made.



On the day rising with the K is right in that it secures 9 tricks quickly. However playing the 9 also worked provided West's J and club continuation are ducked. This ducking play ensures that East has no entry to their clubs if West has AS, which was the case on the night,

giving declarer time to set a spade trick up. Thus it appears you cannot go wrong at T1 and the contract always make, except two Norths went down. Best not to ask what went wrong.

### From Both Sides

A K 10 9 7 4 3  
4 2  
7 5  
A J  
No one stopped short of 4S on this hand from Thursday, a typical auction being 1C - 1/2H overcall - 4S.

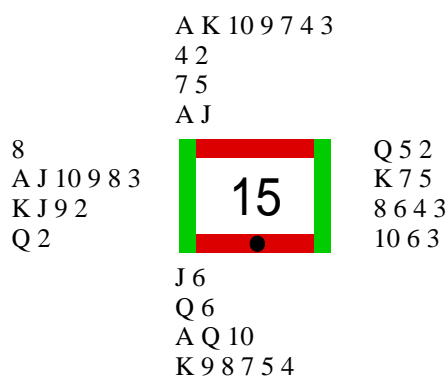


J 6  
Q 6  
A Q 10  
K 9 8 7 5 4  
No surprise then that East led a heart. Suppose the defence starts with two top heart tricks with West then switching to 8S. Clearly you have no need to ruff anything on table or require trumps for other purposes, so winning and playing the other top trump is natural, for if trumps are 2-2 there are an easy 10 tricks. Unfortunately West shows out on the second round. Now what?

Lead another trump was the answer at some tables, presumably content to rely on the diamond finesse for the 10th trick. This failed as the KD was offside.

After the spade switch this hand is a classic case of leaving the defence with their winning trump, and looking elsewhere.

Suppose clubs are 3-2. Then you can play AC, KC, ruff a club to set up clubs on table. Now give East their trump, and on a diamond switch rise with the A to discard your second diamond on a club.



On the actual layout this works a treat. It also works if East is able to over-ruff the third club as they will have no trump left to ruff the club on which you discard your

diamond. And if East can ruff the first or second club you can still fall back on the diamond finesse. Thus playing for a 3–2 club break is a risk free extra chance.

The insistence on the early removal of the last trump wasn't the only reason for the contract failing on the night for some East's switched to a diamond either after leading KH or winning with it at T2. They can see 2 heart tricks and QS, and presumably decided that if partner had AC the contract was off anyway, so needed to cater for the possibility that declarer held AC and partner KD. well done these Easts.

## **Around The Club**

This weeks winners were

Monday (8½ tables): Phillip Burley & Sarah Bullock

Tuesday F2F (9 tables):

NS: Bob Churchward & Ralph Rogerson

EW: Debbie & Roger Wilkinson

Tuesday BBO (3½ tables + 2½ Barrow):

Shaffin Jaffer & Bob Stow

Thursday am (6½ tables):

NS: Bernard & Sabina Houssin

EW: Sarah Bullock & Diana Smethurst

Thursday BBO (6 tables + 5½ Wearside):

George Jackson & Catherine Farrell

Best K: Mike & Sally-Ann Rothwell (2nd)

Total 33½ tables for the week.

I welcome any comments or queries sent me at [martyn@orpheusmail.co.uk](mailto: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