

Matters Arising 266

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

No Rush

A 8 3
9 3
A 8 6
A K Q 8 7



Q 7
A Q J 7 6 2
J 10
J 6 2

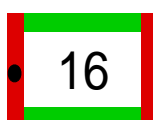
With all partnerships at the Christmas Party having been drawn at random and told to play the same simple system one might expect all roads to lead to game on this hand, with 1C – 1H – 2NT – 3NT/4H being the likely route, though 1C – 1H – 1NT – 3NT/4H a possible alternative.

A small number of pairs found unexpected by-ways that stopped short, but imagine you are North in

3NT on the lead of 4S. Hoping that that 4 is indeed fourth best from the K you call for the Q. It holds. Plan the rest of the play.

Those clubs look nice. What happens if you decide to bank them, assuming the suit is no worse than 4–2. Then you can continue with a heart finesse, and assuming that the Q holds after 7 tricks you will be on table looking at say the position right. Return to hand via an Ace to repeat the heart finesse looks possible, but what if West is being sneaky and held off with the KH? Then they will win with the K on a second finesse and you will have no way back to dummy's hearts. Thus from the position shown you will take just the AS and AD, making 9 tricks in total. Perhaps it is better to cash AH at this point in case East started with doubleton K. Even if they hadn't you get 10 tricks.

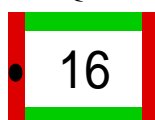
A 8
9
A 8 6
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7
A J 7 6
J
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A 8 3
9 3
A 8 6
A K Q 8 7

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



Q 7
A Q J 7 6 2
J 10
J 6 2

K 9 6 4
K 10 5
9 2
10 9 4 3

With East holding Kxx those who braved the second heart finesse could win the lot - in fact 2 spades, 6 hearts, AD, 5 clubs comes to 14 tricks!

Suppose instead you use the clubs initially just for communication, and tackle hearts. After winning QS at T1 cross to hand with a small club to the Q and immediately finesse in hearts. When this holds a second small club to the K allows a second heart finesse to be taken whilst retaining North's Aces as protection in spades and diamonds and JC South as an entry to table's hearts if West suddenly produces the KH. This does mean the club suit is temporarily blocked, but it should be easy to see that the blockage can be unravelled.

A surprisingly small majority of declarers in NT made all 13 tricks. We'll never know how many of those did it the brave way after cashing clubs and how many the safe way by tackling hearts early and using the clubs as (potential) entries.

Note the value in West holding off with the KH if they can, but to hesitate with West to try to give the impression that that is what is happening is sharp practice which might be penalised by the director.

Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (16½ tables Christmas Party):

Chris Banks & John MacLachlan

Tuesday F2F (8½ tables):

NS: Dudley Hargreaves & Robert Boyd

EW: Chris & Jill Yates

Tuesday BBO (3 K tables + 2 Barrow):

John & Wendy Ellwood

Thursday am (6 tables):

Thursday BBO (4 Kendal tables + 5½ Wearside):

George Jackson & Catherine Farrell

Best K: Mike & Sally-Ann Rothwell 4th

Total 38 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

