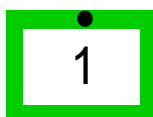


Matters Arising 267

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

Restricted Entry

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




A K Q 2
A Q 10 7 5
9 3
6 3

Monday board one saw South in hearts. West led AC and continued with a second club to their partner's King. East switched to a spade, leading declarer to win with whichever spade honour they felt most deceptive. Now what?

Two clubs lost, and a trick will go to the defence's AD too. However on a normal spade break there are 4 tricks in that suit, which with a possible 5 trump tricks plus one in diamonds

could see declarer making 10 tricks. Thus 10 has to be the target.

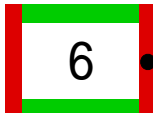
Declarer leads a diamond which is won on the table with the K. Although the 10S may well be an entry to table in the fullness of time trumps will need to be removed beforehand, and with no other easy entry declarer must make the best use of their time on table. That means leading JH to take a running finesse in the suit - ducking if East plays low. That way if the finesse works declarer is still on table to repeat it.

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

With Kxx H in the East hand the running finesse is essential to pick up the suit, for West will surely not permit a second diamond entry. Had there been two easy entries to table then it would have been right to take the natural finesse of small towards hand first in case East has the singleton K when leading the J would leave declarer with a loser to West, but with just one entry South cannot afford the luxury of taking this insurance against a small probability possibility.


The running finesse makes 10 tricks a simple task, yet of the five declarers in hearts only one made 10, and they faced a rather helpful trump lead at T1.

Plan

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

Every table saw a heart contract on Monday's board 6, but making 10 tricks was a minority sport. With West declaring after South opened a weak 1NT, the common lead was 3D. Naturally declarer called for the A from table, and took a heart finesse. This failed, but meant that there was little room for much else pointwise in the North hand. The diamond continuation was ruffed, and I imagine a top trump played, revealing a 2-2 break in the suit. Over to you.

A successful spade finesse and 3-3 break in the suit would permit a club discard from table and allow declarer to lose just KH and a club, but even without the NT opener South this hardly seems a good plan, unless you have found yourself in 5H of course. There is just enough room for North to have QS despite having produced the KH, but a losing finesse surely results in 9 tricks with the defence then taking AK C. There is though a certain line to 10 tricks - play on clubs. You will lose two, but will set up 10C for a spade discard so that no spade finesse is required. You will make AD, 1 natural trump trick, 2 spades, 10C, 3 diamond ruffs in hand and 2 spade ruffs on table.

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

Although spades are 3-3 the Q is offside so the finesse loses and leaves declarer with just 9 tricks. Playing on clubs makes 10 with no drama. Note that there is no hurry to ruff diamonds - that will occur naturally in due course.

Classic LoL

10 6 5
Q J
Q J 5 4
8 7 5 4

23

A K J 3 2
A K 10 7 2
7 2
Q

Monday board 23, and you are South in 4S. West, who overcalled your opening bid of 1S with 2C, leads AD and follows up with the 9D, clearly doubleton. East wins with the K and leads a third diamond. With what do you ruff?

Wrong question, for you shouldn't be ruffing at all. Instead discard QC - a classic loser on loser play. You know the QC is a loser if you retain it so you might as well discard it with West having to ruff to stop dummy winning the trick.

	10 6 5	
	Q J	
	Q J 5 4	
	8 7 5 4	
Q 7 4		9 8
8 6 4		9 5 3
A 9		K 10 8 5 3
A J 6 3 2	23	K 10 9
	A K J 3 2	
	A K 10 7 2	
	7 2	
	Q	

West ruffs, but this is effectively with their natural trump trick, for their QS will now fall under the AK. Had South ruffed with anything up to and including the J West would over ruff and cash AC for 1 down. Ruff with A or K and West still has AC and QS to come. The loser on loser play saves declarer a trick.

The defence can of course take a club before the diamond ruff, but it is far from clear that they should. West can legitimately feel that starting with AC could set up the K for declarer, whilst East won't want to try to cash the KC before leading the third diamond for fear that declarer has AC. As is so often the case, defending on this hand is harder than declaring.

Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (8 tables): Russell White & Jeremy Harris

Tuesday F2F (4½ tables): Margaret & Dennis Pook

Tuesday BBO (3½ Kendal + 2 Barrow tables)

Janet & David Owen

Total 16 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