

## Matters Arising 64

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 31 Jan - 4 Feb 2022

### How Did They Do That?


One of the difficulties of commenting on Monday hands is that as they are placed to face we have no record of the bidding and play.

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

So how did East go down in 4S on a diamond lead with obvious possible losers restricted to a trump, a heart and a club?

I fear it was our old friend drawing trumps. Ruff the opening lead on table and draw trumps. When the defence get in later with AH they can cash two diamonds and by continuing the suit force declarer to ruff and lead clubs from hand. That's 2 diamonds, a club and a heart loser even if KS is onside.

Instead try playing KH at trick 2. Say North wins and switches to a trump. Rise with A, ruff a second diamond with dummy's last trump, discard the third diamond on the QH and try the club finesse for an overtrick.

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

As it happens AH is with South so the defence can't even be that annoying. However the KC is offside and with dummy's trumps used to ruff diamonds you can't pick up North's KS. A straightforward 10 tricks though for the loss of the three original suspects.

### Ouch!

Several Norths had a painful experience playing in spades on the last hand on Tuesday. West had opened the bidding with diamonds and East dutifully led KD. West overtook and continued with QD (East following) and the JD. North ruffed with 9S and winced when East produced the 10. A club was quickly taken by the defence and declarer had 9 tricks on a hand where 10 looked easy.


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



J 8 7  
A 10 8  
10 9 4  
10 9 8 2

Should North have ruffed with an honour? No. This could lead to problems if East has 10xxx in trumps, for declarer is very unlikely to finesse against the 10 rather than play for a 3-2 break.

There is a simple solution - discard 5C on the third diamond. This loser on loser play leaves declarer with no club loser and with dummy now able to cope with further diamond leads.

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

Had West cashed their AC at trick 3 before leading a third diamond declarer is up against it. As it happens 10 tricks in hearts are all but fireproof, but there is no way of telling in the bidding which 5-3 fit will play better.

## Why Do They Do It?

Dummy's hand    K 7 3  
 on board 15:    4  
                     J 8 5 2  
                     A J 4 3 2

South dealt and opened 4H, and that was the bidding done on this hand from Thursdays teams. West led the AS and switched to a club at trick 2. Dummy rose with the A, declarer discarded a diamond on the KS, and took the losing trump finesse. West tried to cash the KC, but this was ruffed, and several rounds of trumps were played with both defenders showing out on the third round of the suit.

Dummy's hand    7  
 before 3rd        --  
 round of          J 8 5  
 trumps:            J 4 3

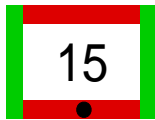
What should the defence discard?

"But you haven't shown us the defender's hands!" you cry. True, but the question stands.

Declarer has discarded on the KS and ruffed the second round of clubs. He has no more black cards. The defenders can safely discard anything black.

Indeed we soon know more than this, as both defenders show out on the third round of trumps, confirming our suspicions from the bidding that declarer started with 8 hearts. Their hand originally was 1-8-3-1 in shape, and having discarded a diamond on KS is left with 2 diamonds and a pile of trumps.

However East held on to their black honours, baring their AD. At trick 11 declarer led 10D, West rose with KD despite knowing his partner must have A or Q at this point as declarer only has one left. East was forced to go one better with his Ace, and declarer was able to ruff a black lead at trick 12 and take QD for 10 tricks.

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

In fact only 2 declarers escaped the loss of AS, AK D and KH to make the contract, and they were played in

the same match for a flat board.

I've lost count of the number of contracts and overtricks I have made through defenders holding on to cards in suits that I have shown out of. Part of me thinks "long may it continue".

## Against The Grain

North found themselves declaring 3NT on this hand from Thursday after their partner had bid both majors. East led KH and switched to a small club. Declarer won on table, cashed the other club honour and led KS. This held. A small spade to 9 was covered by East's A, who got off lead with a small diamond. So far declarer has three tricks, with the initial attack on hearts suggesting East likes them. See below.

9 x  
 x x  
 A J 9 x  
 A J x x x



K Q J 10 x  
 J 9 8 x x  
 K  
 K Q

--  
 x  
 A J 9 x  
 A J x



Q J 10  
 J 9 8 x  
 K  
 --

Declarer overtook the KD with the A and cashed three clubs, though the need to protect dummy from East's hearts meant that only one heart could be spared from table, so two spades had to be discarded. A small heart towards table saw East rise with an honour and lead a spade. Declarer was forced to lead away from Jx of hearts and East won two more heart tricks, making 4 hearts and a spade in total. The contract was one off.

Winning the diamond on table would be no better, for though he could cash three spade tricks declarer would again be forced to lead from dummy's hearts to East's benefit.

What went wrong?

Looking again at the original position we can count 4 spade tricks, so need 5 in the minors on the assumption that hearts will not contribute. These 5 tricks could be either 2 diamonds and 3 clubs or 1 diamond and 4 clubs.

Cashing the second club was fatal. Suppose instead declarer attacks spades immediately with small to 9 and continuing the suit to force out the A. A diamond continuation from the defence could be won on table,

9 x  
 x x  
 A J 9 x  
 A J x x x



spades cashed and a club overtaken in hand resulting in at least 3 club tricks and 2 diamonds. A club continuation on the other hand is still won on table, spades cashed again, and the diamond overtaken for 1 diamond and 4 clubs.

K Q J 10 x  
 J 9 8 x x  
 K  
 K Q

It goes against the grain to use honours as little cards, overtaking them to enter the other hand, but here it is necessary.

	9 4	
	7 6	
	A J 9 3	
	A J 10 9 6	
5 3 2	<b>7</b>	A 8 7
5 4		A K Q 10
Q 10 8 7 5 2		6 4
7 5		8 4 3 2
	K Q J 10 6	
	J 9 8 3 2	
	K	
	K Q	

### Forced To Go Right

No doubt South was quite pleased with their hand on Monday's board 10, and confidently bid to 4H. West led KD and dummy was a bit of a disappointment. Some things are clear though. With an inevitable diamond and two spade losers we can't afford to lose a trick in either trumps or clubs. Trumps are either 4-3 or we are dead.

There is no point worrying about what we can't control, so win AD and draw trumps in 4 rounds. They do indeed behave.

Nine tricks on top, our tenth will have to come from spades, for a 3-3 club break would only allow us an extra trick there after losing one, which we know would be fatal. Still provided West has at least one of the high spade honours a spade trick will come. A small spade towards dummy's Q is beaten by East. The defence continues with diamonds, which you ruff in due course and lead another spade towards table. Assuming you are not unlucky enough to find East with AK S the J will make either now or after West has risen with their honour, using KC as entry to table in the latter case.

	Q J 9 5 3	
	--	
	9 8 5 3	
	K 10 8 4	
A 10 8 7	<b>10</b>	K 4
10 7 2		9 5 4 3
K Q 10		J 7 6 4
Q 9 2		J 6 3
	6 2	
	A K Q J 8 6	
	A 2	
	A 7 5	

### Awkward

East also had a chance on Monday to be pleased with his hand in general and hearts in particular, this time on board 7. Propelling his side to 6H all he now had to do was make the slam on the 10S lead.

Q 8 4	<b>7</b>	A J 6
J 9		A K Q 8 6 4
J		A 10 7
A Q J 9 7 3 2		4

It looks like there is a spade loser wherever the K lies, and declarer also holds two losing diamonds. Two of the three will have to be made to disappear. A small spade is called for from dummy in case a careless North rises with the King, but you end up winning trick one with the J.

One loser could disappear if there is a successful club finesse, one could be ruffed. Or we could play for two ruffs.

Communications are difficult. We have no entry to dummy after trumps are drawn which is why we cannot simply play to get rid of everything on long clubs.

Returning to hand involves ruffing clubs and/or using AS.

Preferring to rely on black suit breaks not being too bad rather than on the club finesse, play continues AD, ruff diamond, AC, ruff club, ruff diamond.

However as North produces KC when you ruff the second club, rather than relying on the 10S not being singleton you now lead JC from table. If North shows out you can ruff safely, if North follows you get to discard your losing spade. South can ruff but not hurt you, or not ruff and allow you to play a spade to A. Again you would be safe whether South ruffed or not. Once in hand trumps are drawn and you can chalk up 1430.

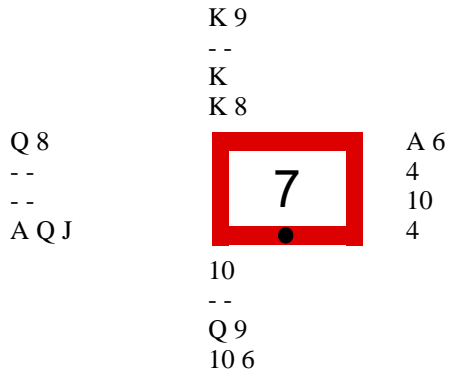
	K 9 5 3 2	
	10 5 2	
	K 6 4	
	K 8	
Q 8 4	<b>7</b>	A J 6
J 9		A K Q 8 6 4
J		A 10 7
A Q J 9 7 3 2		4
	10 7	
	7 3	
	Q 9 8 5 3 2	
	10 6 5	

Given that we have made the contract with the help of two diamond ruffs it is perhaps surprising that the slam can still be made after a trump lead. Consider that as a

double dummy problem.

Done considering?

Win the opening lead, it matters not where, and play A and ruff a diamond. Now a spade to the J and play off all the trumps. Below is the position before the last trump is led:



South may have discarded differently, but is no threat. On the last trump the JC is discarded from dummy. North must keep both black Kings protected, so lets go of KD. Now declarer can play Ace and another in one black suit to endplay North to lead away from his King in the other.

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