

## Matters Arising 65

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 7 - 11 Feb 2022

### Think Spades


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

No surprise that most of Tuesday's field reached a major suit game on this board, but somewhat surprisingly none of those in hearts made 10 tricks. How should West proceed on the lead of a trump?

The significant feature in this hand is declarer's two small spades. With no other suit in dummy to discard them on, and two certain club losers barring dilatory play by the defence, we are going to have to play spades and pick up the suit for one loser. A diamond finesse or ruffs there are red herrings - they won't save the spade problem, whereas establishing the spades will see the diamond losers disappear.

Win trick one, play a second trump, and when the suit behaves draw the last one. Then AS. Both defenders follow small. A second spade produces the J from North, Q from table and K from South. The defence must take their clubs now else you will win 5 spades, 3 trumps, AD and two ruffs for 11 tricks.

Played in spades declarer felt obliged to tackle trumps, and when they behaved made 10 tricks.

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

### Three of the Usual

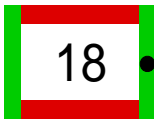
Six Souths found themselves facing the 2C lead against their 3NT contract on Tuesday's last hand, usually after the uninformative sequence 1NT-3NT, whilst a seventh was confronted by the 10C.



With spades wide open declarer has to make a potentially critical decision earlier than they would wish. Options are

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

- Rise with the A and rely on getting the diamonds right
- Finesse the J, hoping that if East produces the K they will be tempted to continue partner's suit so you still make provided you get the diamonds right
- Allow the lead to run to hand, trusting West to be leading a suit they are interested in and hence in which they hold the K. If you are right you make the contract via 4 hearts, 3 clubs and 2 diamonds even if the QD doesn't fall as desired, but if wrong East will almost certainly find the killing spade switch.

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

c) was popular, and proved correct when the Q held. The QD tumbled in two, so declarer is now in serious overtrick territory. By running the diamonds before hearts declarer was able to be in hand after taking QC and 10 red tricks, enabling a finesse of JC to bring in the lot. Despite this sufficient declarers found small deviations that only two made all 13 tricks.

## Chances

In the face of energetic spade bidding by North-South most Wests found themselves in a high level diamond contract on this board from Thursday. Faced with the AS lead (how unexpected!) what are declarer's options for making 5D?

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

There is a clear heart loser, so the contract appears to depend on picking up the club suit for one loser. The most likely way of achieving this is to hope for a 3-2 break with the K onside, in which case a simple finesse does the job. This also works if clubs are 4-1 with the K onside provided trumps are 2-2 as we can then ruff the fourth round of the suit.

Less likely is a doubleton KC in either defender's hand, allowing the desired outcome by playing A and then small in the suit. As we are unlikely to get enough clues about the distribution to pick this option with confidence it looks like the finesse it will have to be.

Any other chances?


Yes, as you probably guessed from the question. Dummy's hearts are nice, and if the A is onside we may get 3 discards, though this also requires the J to come down in three. ie the suit is 3-3 or the J is doubleton.

It could be too late to test the hearts after taking a losing club finesse and the defence returning the suit for the hand with AH might have the long club.

Play goes ruff the spade and lead a small heart towards table. If South has the A you will have no choice but to fall back on the clubs later.

Suppose North holds the A and ducks. Win on table and play A followed by J trumps overtaken by Q. (If trumps are 4-0 hearts have to be abandoned as we cannot reach them after drawing trumps, so again it will be back to the club finesse). The second heart follows, leaving the last trump out if they split 3-1 as it will be needed as entry to the table.

North hops up with the A and continues the suit. Up goes our other high honour. If South ruffs we over-ruff and return to table via a trump for the club finesse. If South follows or the long trump is North with JH having already appeared then dummy's hearts are good after drawing the last trump. Three clubs disappear on the hearts and the club finesse is taken for the overtrick.

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

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

In practice the clubs lie badly for us, but the hearts are friendly, so those who found this additional chance made 11 tricks.

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.

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