

## Matters Arising 66

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal Online 14-18 Feb 2022

### Slam At First Sight

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



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A K 9 7 2  
A Q 6  
A K 10 9 8

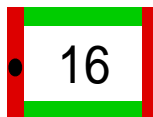
It is not often that you have the pleasure of knowing you will make at least 12 tricks as soon as you see the opening lead and dummy, but that was the case for the Souths declaring in hearts against the KS lead on Tuesday's board 16.

With 10 trumps the enemy's teeth can be drawn in at most 3 rounds, giving us 3 trumps and 4 ruffs (2 of which can be of spades). That is 7 tricks. The clubs are so good missing just the Queen from the 7 upwards that

that suit must be good for at least 4 tricks. AD makes 12 even if against all expectations East can ruff the AS at trick one, which of course we can over-ruff. The only possible loser seems to be an offside QC.

We discard a diamond as AS holds trick one, so we now draw trumps ending on table and take the club finesse. This loses as the cards lie, but our long clubs easily take care of dummy's small diamond, so there is no need for a diamond finesse too.

Indeed as we have already discarded a diamond from hand we only need to ruff one diamond on the table. Consequently we can play four rounds of trumps. Thus an improved line is: win AS throwing a diamond. Draw trumps in three rounds if necessary, making sure there is a large one left on table. Then AC in case West has a singleton Q, which they don't. Cross to table with a 4th trump and take club finesse. You end up with 13 tricks whenever QC is onside or singleton offside. In practice you end up with 4 club tricks, 4 trumps, AD, AS and two ruffs.

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

Three out of 10 declarers only made 11 tricks, distracted by the illusion that spades need to be ruffed and ending up tackling both minors from hand.

### Fourth Trick

When responder rebids their suit it is a sign of of at least a six card holding or of indisciplined bidding.

K 9  
8 6 3  
A 8 5 4 3  
A K Q

On this hand from Tuesday East-West were defending 4S after North-South bid 1D-1S-1NT-2S-3S-4S.



Q 4 2  
A J 9 4  
K 9 7 6 2  
7

West led KH, and followed up with the Q which East overtook to try their luck with the J. All followed. With three defensive tricks secured, just one more was needed to defeat the contract. Where could it come from, and what should East lead next?

Declarer has at least six spades and has additionally produced three hearts, so can have at most 4 cards in the minors. Dummy can take care of the minor suit cards.

Possible fourth tricks:

- 1) West has AS. Improbable as declarer held no points in hearts and can have few in the minors. Also not a possibility we have to worry about, as if West does hold this card we strongly suspect it will win a defensive trick.
- 2) West is void in diamonds, and so has at least 8 clubs. Lead a diamond.
- 3) West holds Jx in trumps. The defence simply needs to sit back and wait for their trump trick. East should exit with any side suit.
- 4) There is no certain fourth trick, so partner's spades are xx and they are not void in diamonds. Declarer needs to be given a chance to go wrong. Lead a heart, giving declarer a ruff and discard. The hope is that declarer will ruff on table and so be unable to take the finesse against East's QS.

A club works for 1) and 3).

A diamond for 1), 2) and 3).

The fourth heart works for 1) and 3) and is our only hope under 4).

A trump works only for 1). Note in particular a trump switch is a disaster if West holds Jx. West has to contribute the J to stop table's 9 winning, and now the suit can be picked up with the help of a finesse of the 10 against the Q. A natural trump trick has just disappeared!

The choice seems to be between a diamond hoping for a ruff or the 4th heart hoping declarer goes wrong.

<p>7 5 K Q 2 Q 10 J 10 9 8 3 2</p>	<p>K 9 8 6 3 A 8 5 4 3 A K Q</p> <div style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 5px; display: inline-block; margin: 10px 0;"> <span style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">13</span> </div> <p>A J 10 8 6 3 10 7 5 J 6 5 4</p>	<p>Q 4 2 A J 9 4 K 9 7 6 2 7</p>
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West has neither a diamond void nor a spade honour, so the contract is safe. However the 4th heart gives declarer a chance to go wrong. They should ruff in hand with J/10/8, but if they fail to do so dummy will have to ruff and in due course the QS will win a trick.

It just helps to reinforce the idea that there are no hard and fast rules in bridge play. Normally giving a ruff and discard is a losing option. Here it turns out to be the defence's only chance.

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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spadeilike on BBO