

## Matters Arising 68

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal Online 28 Feb - 4 Mar 2022

### More Please

Eight out of 9 tables at Tuesday's Pro-Am saw North declare board 6 in 4S after an auction beginning 1D from South overcalled by 2C from West, and of these seven received a heart lead. Trick one play saw West produce the K, and I ended up with 12 tricks, at least one more than anyone else. Why?

K Q 9 8 7 3  
A  
4 3  
8 7 6 2




A J 2  
Q J  
A J 10 6 5  
K J 10

At teams there are an easy 10 tricks. Draw trumps in four rounds if necessary and play a club. Regain the lead, throw a diamond on dummy's second heart and play another club, setting up a trick in the suit. A total of 10 tricks consisting of 4 trumps, 2 hearts, a diamond, a club and 2 ruffs. Completely safe, but a poor pairs score if overtricks can be made even if gaining them involves a small risk.

Thinks: maybe I can establish table's diamonds for a club discard and just lose 2 club tricks. The heart rather than club lead suggests East is void in clubs. There is a small chance that West is void in diamonds, so playing the suit before drawing trumps could expose me to a cross-ruff, but at pairs that is a small risk to take for the potential reward.

Thus a diamond at trick two to the Ace is played with intent to discard my second diamond on JH. Rather conveniently West drops KD under the A. As planned my second diamond goes on the JH and a small diamond comes off table. Up goes the Q. Ruff. Now there are three winning diamonds on the table, ready to take care of the majority of my clubs after drawing trumps. The defence win trick 13.

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

Why not draw trumps first? Because I'm anticipating that I might need spade entries to table to help set up and enjoy the diamonds. Indeed with trumps 3-1 drawing them first would prevent me enjoying the suit even though it is easy to establish.

### Using Trumps

Imagine you are West on this hand from the Pro-Am on Tuesday. You open 1H and come to rest in 3H after North overcalls 1S. North leads the QS, overtaken by South who cashes the other top spade honour before switching to QD. Plan the play.

6 3 2  
A K Q J 2  
A K 3  
5 2




9 5 4  
8 6 5 3  
6 5 2  
K Q 4

No prizes for deciding not to duck the diamond switch. Given North's overcall and the points shown so far by South it's a fair bet that North has AC, which is just as well as with seven red tricks we will need two in clubs to land the contract. Of course if North ducks the first club and takes the second we will need a non-club entry to dummy to enjoy our second club honour. Fortunately we have 2H just asking to be overtaken to provide it.

Less obvious is that if North ducks the first club we will need an entry back to hand to lead a second club. That entry isn't in spades and must not be the second diamond honour. Why? Because if we take our second diamond trick before knocking out the AC the defence can add not only a third spade but also a diamond to their winners when in with AC. One off. That entry to hand will also have to be a trump, which means that we can only afford to draw two rounds of trumps initially even if the suit is 3-1.

Play goes: Win the diamond switch and play off two top trumps. Now a club towards table. If North ducks we win with an honour, return to hand with a third round of trumps, clearing the suit if they are indeed 3-1. Now a second club towards table. If North ducks we have our two club tricks. If they rise, cash JS and lead a diamond, we can win in hand, cross to table's last trump, and discard our third diamond on the club honour so that trick 13 is a diamond ruff. We make 4 trumps, 2 diamonds, 2 clubs and a diamond ruff.

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

The layout is friendly with trumps 2-2. Sometimes people like to retain long trumps against a rainy day, but here it is vital to use the extra trumps for communication between the hands so that you retain control of diamonds until after AC has been removed.

## For Richard

A suggestion from our chairman.

*If you're looking for a hand for your newsletter take a look at Board 16 for the 'plebs' last night.*

Put like that how can I resist? The reference to plebs arises because four teams had qualified to play in the final stages of the Ellis Cup and so were not present at the normal monthly teams.

<p>A J 10 9 7 6 -- A K J 9 8 6 4 --</p>	<p>This is West's holding. I have to confess that this sort of hand rarely appeals to me, having something of 13 card brag about it, yet there is material here to discuss.</p>
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With only 13 high card points this hand is not eligible for a strong two opening unless you can disclose a special agreement that permits it. However I wouldn't want to open 2C on it anyway, as there is a grave danger of losing one of the suits. Far better to open 1D with intent to rebid 4S.

Indeed 1D was the opening bid at all 6 tables. Four Norths overcalled 1H, one made a take-out double and one passed. It is these last two that I wish to concentrate on initially, for at both tables East bid 2D. What would you recommend next from West?

East has shown a modest, or even sub-modest hand, but has at least 4 diamonds. No need to worry about any trump losers - even if the enemy have the Q it will fall under the AK.


What is going on in the spade suit? If partner is singleton or void we can surely ruff enough to avoid more than one loser unless we are very unlucky with the distribution.

Similarly with 2 spades we can lose one and all but certainly ruff out enough others to establish the suit.

If East holds three spades then 40% of the time the suit is 2-2 which means one loser, and half of the time there is a 3-1 break the singleton will be an honour, so again just one loser. Since a 3-1 break is a 50% chance we are now up to a 65% chance of playing the spades for one loser when missing 4.

If partner has 4 spades we are just missing 3, so one loser if these are 2-1. It looks like that whatever partner's spade holding is we have a good chance of losing at most one trick in the suit. Since with North-

South running interference we are unlikely to pinpoint the spade holding necessary for a grand, I reckon West's rebid should be 6D.

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

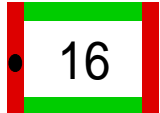
The slam rolls home for a simple 1370, though North-South do have an excellent sacrifice in 6H. Not that 1370 quite matches the 1400 for 5DXX+1 achieved by Richard's team mates Stella and Mike.

Meanwhile where North overcalled 1H can South really reply anything other than 4H? Partner only needs AH and KC for this to make, well within the scope of a simple overcall. Bidding 5H at teams for either North or South is only slightly harder as it will be wrong only if neither contract makes unless one fails by a lot. Only the belief that East-West have lost their minds justifies defending 5D, though one can understand North wanting to defend 4S, unsuccessful though such defence would be.

The difference in the shape of the East and West hands also reminds us that one hand distributional doesn't imply the others are too.

## Inter-Club Teams

Phil Rowland sent me this hand. Although it wasn't played at the club, several members played it as it was one of the hands from the February round of Cumbria Inter-Club League matches.

A J 9 3 -- Q 5 4 3 2 A 8 6 2		K Q 10 6 A K Q 3 J Q 9 7 4
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West opens 1D, North overcalls 1H, before East-West end up in 6S on a heart lead. Plan the play.

Two lines appeal, though both need some help from the defence and/or distribution:

a) Play for trumps 3-2 and KC doubleton.

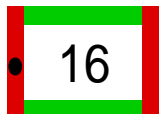
Cash three top hearts discarding clubs, then AC and duck a diamond. Suppose defence continue with a trump. Win in the East hand, ruff a small club tumbling the K, return to East via a trump and ruff the 3H. Now ruff a diamond, draw the last trump and Qx clubs secure the contract.

This line is scuppered if the distribution is wrong or if defence continue diamonds when in with the suit.

b) Play to make 3 hearts, 1 club and hence 8 trumps, all of which will have to be ruffs. Fortunately this is feasible as there is only one small trump in each hand after which the ruffing will be high.

The fly in the ointment is that we have to lose a diamond to set up the cross-ruff at which point the defence can switch to a trump.

Under b) play goes: win trick one, discarding a club, and lead a diamond. The defence win and don't lead a trump, so now you can discard 2 more clubs on heart honours, cash AC and embark on the cross-ruff. It works.

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

One would like to criticise the defence for not finding a trump switch when in with their diamond, but the layout exonerates them, with the 5-0 break being responsible for destroying plan A.

When was the last time you were relieved to face a 5-0 trump break? Played by West the contract is unbeatable as not only does North hold AK diamonds alongside his trump void, preventing a trump lead either initially or when in with a top diamond, but he also holds KC preventing what would be an effective opening lead were that card South.

As with so many of the hands I report on in these pages, if declarer first tackles trumps and then stops to think it is too late.

A small point in the bidding.

Many players reserve the auctions 1C/D - 1H (overcall) - 1S to show 5 spades, using X to show 4. This distinction can be useful if the fourth hand gets involved in the auction. Here East using X rather than 1S as their first bid makes West declarer and on the layout secures the slam, whereas if East declares after starting 1S an opening trump lead defeats the contract. On another day of course the reverse might be true.

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