

Matters Arising 70

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 14-18 Mar 2022

Trump Losers

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


The play in 4S on Tuesdays hand 18 revolved around playing the trump suit for two losers. Assuming a 3-2 break this can be achieved if South has the A by leading towards the K and rising if South plays low.

Can we improve our chances? There is no lack of entries to the East hand. Try small to the 8 first. If this loses to the 9 you are no worse off than before, leading towards the K second time, but if the 8 draws J or Q you can play for split honours by finessing the 10 second time round.

East dealt and opened 1NT. West had a decision - Stayman or transfer.

The shape is fine for Stayman, but how would you continue if opener rebid 2D? 2H would now be to play. It is possible to play 3H now as forcing, but I suspect most people don't.

The transfer auction 1NT-2D-2H-2S is usually taken to be this shape in the majors, but invitational, so the solution is 1NT-2D-2H-3S which is commonly regarded as 5 hearts, 4 spades and game forcing.

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

Played by East, South couldn't resist the thought of a heart ruff. Play often went JH to declarer's K, spade to K and A. A dutiful North returned a heart and noted his partner completing a peter. Soon in with QS North led their third heart, and South ruffed with their natural trump trick. Declarer's low diamonds disappeared on table's long hearts and the contract made for the loss of two trumps and a ruff.


Played by West there was no heart distraction, and North sooner or later led the diamond that would defeat the contract unless declarer got the trumps right.

Suit Order

We are all well versed in selecting our opening bids, and know that amongst other guidance we are told always to open our longest suit. Everyone also knows that rules are made to be broken.

Cue North's hand on board 1 of Monday's 6 face to face session. 9 points and 11 red K Q 9 8 3 cards makes an opening bid in most A 10 6 5 4 3 people's books. Suppose you follow the 5 rules and open 1D. If, as seems likely, partner responds in a black suit or in NT, how will you get to show your hearts, for 2H would now be a reverse showing extra values.

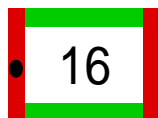
Try opening a heart and rebidding diamonds, and if necessary rebidding the diamonds again. Partner may well believe you to be 5-5 after the second diamond rebid, but at least you get to find a heart fit if one exists.

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

There was an easy 12 tricks in either red suit, but those who opened 1D were presumably those who played in that suit, or worse still in NT by South against which West had no difficulty in finding the killing defence. After an opening of 1H, the heart game was easy to find. No doubt in a big enough field someone would find the slam, perhaps in diamonds, but doing so accurately rather than by accident is a tall order.

Optimism and Pessimism

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



J 8 3
A K 10
K 8
Q 10 6 4 3

Half the field of 12 tables on Tuesday failed to find a minor suit game on this hand when North's opening bid of 1D was overcalled by East in spades, despite a combined 27 points between the North-South hands and a marked weakness in spades.

One failed through misplaced optimism:
P-1D-1S-2NT-P-3NT
with Jxx proving unequal to the task of holding off the spades.

Three failed through pessimism with South prematurely backing out of the auction despite their 13 points opposite an opening bid:

- a) P-1D-1S-2C-P-2D all pass
- b) P-1D-2S-3C-P-3D all pass
- c) P-1D-1S-2C-P-3C all pass

In a) South could continue with a directional asking bid (DAB for short) of 2S, asking partner to bid NT with spades stopped. By inference South must have hearts under control to justify the DAB. Hopefully North will now bid 3C and South can raise to 5, though if North insists on repeating their diamonds again then 5D will be the destination.

In b) 3S will be a DAB, as it would in c) despite the club agreement.

Consequently it would have been possible to check up on the possibility of playing in 3NT before settling on game in a minor.

At the remaining two tables it was North who was pessimistic, failing to recognise their partner's first response as forcing.

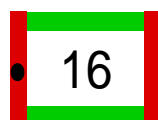
P-1D-2S-3C all pass

P-1D-1S-2C all pass

If these sequences are not played as forcing when South has not previously passed, hands such as this one become unbidable.

K 9 6
J 9 7 3
10 7 6 5
9 7

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



J 8 3
A K 10
K 8
Q 10 6 4 3

A Q 10 7 5 4
Q 5 4
2
J 5 2

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