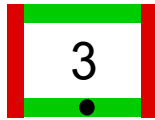


## Matters Arising 82

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal Online 6 - 10 June 2022

### King?

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



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

On Tuesday West found themselves defending 4S by North on the lead of 8H, with declarer calling for small from the table. Five Wests inserted the King and watched as declarer, possessing A and Q in

the suit was able to add 4 heart tricks to 5 trumps and the AD to make the contract.

Third hand plays high is often excellent guidance, but guidance is all it is, and as such is no substitute for thought. What is partner's 8H? The only hearts neither on table or in West's hand are the A, Q, 8.


If the 8 is singleton (surely favourite) declarer has AQ and all playing the K does is set up dummy's J 10.

If the 8 is from Q8 (why?) then declarer has the singleton A which will appear whatever we play.

If the 8 is from A8 we need to play the K to crash declarer's singleton Q. Does your partner often lead 8 from A8 doubleton?

If the 8 is from AQ8 then declarer is void and will need to ruff to win the trick regardless of what you play.

Playing the K is all but certainly the waste of an honour.

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

Where West ducked at trick one declarer found themselves unable to generate 10 tricks.

### Encouraging

J 10 9 6 5 On Thursday South found themselves  
K 9 7 6 confronted with a little explored part of their  
- - system. Having passed originally, though  
K Q 9 6 the odd person might have been tempted to  
open 1S, partner predictably opened 1D. A  
1S response was now easy, but what to do after  
partner's less than unexpected 2D rebid?

A pragmatic approach is to pass on the "when in a hole, stop digging" principle. The one South prepared to do this scored over 60% for their display of caution. Perform at that level over a whole session and you are in with a shout of finishing top of the pile.

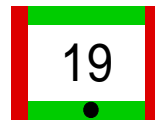
Does South have any other sensible options?

2NT is not a sensible option. Unless partner has shown extra values, which 2D denies, then 2NT is always going to be an invitational bid on 11/12 points rather than an attempt to find a better contract.

What about 2H? This cannot be forcing for partner has shown a minimum hand. As such we would only want to force with game going values, in which case 3H would be the bid.

Nor can the bid be weak, for then we have no reason to suppose the hand will be better played from our side of the table.

Consequently it is a sort of in between bid - we are happy to hear partner go on with support, but equally they can pass or simply give preference to spades.

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

With diamonds 4-3 both 2D and 2H are simple makes, with the possibility of overtricks in the major if the defence allow a cross-ruff.

## Making Life Awkward

On Tuesday's last hand J 6  
 the field was split on A 9 4  
 how to open the East 6 2  
 hand non-vulnerable. K J 9 8 5 2

Four chose 3S, three  
 picked 2S and one  
 passed but came in on  
 the second round of  
 bidding.

18	A 10 9 7 4 3 2
10 3	10 3
J 7	J 7
10 3	10 3

Each of these actions caused problems for South, but suppose you chose 2S and are now defending 3NT with partner leading the 8S after the bidding continued say X from South, 3C from North, 3NT from South.

South clearly has a big hand, for North has promised nothing in their bidding. Can partner add 4 tricks to our AS to defeat the contract? Seems unlikely. Our choice then is

- a) Give up on beating the contract and just take as many tricks as possible, or
- b) Try to beat the contract with our spades.

What is the correct plan for each option?

Those clubs on table are menacing and could easily provide a resting place for declarer's spades. Thus under a) rise with AS and switch to a diamond, which seems the best way of helping partner.

If you wish to beat the contract though you will need to run lots of spades, which means hoping that partner has a second one, and an entry to lead it. It also means playing low at trick one so that your A becomes your entry to the suit.

J 6		
A 9 4		
6 2		
K J 9 8 5 2		
8 5	18	A 10 9 7 4 3 2
8 7 6 5 2	10 3	10 3
10 9 4 3	J 7	J 7
A 6	10 3	10 3
K Q		
K Q J		
A K Q 8 5		
Q 7 4		

When East ducked at trick 1 South knew they could not afford to lose to AC, so had to rely on the red suits producing 8 tricks. Unfortunately diamonds refused to play ball, and the contract was doomed.

Where East rose with A at trick one and rather pointlessly continued the suit South felt the same thing. However when the diamonds refused to break they could try clubs hoping that the weak 2 was a 7 card suit. These hopes were met and declarer made 10 tricks for the loss of 2 black Aces and 10D.

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