

# Matters Arising 83

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 13-17 Jun 2022


## Eighth Trick

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

Tuesday started with the above hand, a classic of its kind. North had opened a weak NT, but West declared 2S after some conventional bid by East. North leads say JD. Over to you as declarer.

A quick trick count reveals a probable 5 spades, a heart and a diamond - 7 in total. Where is an eighth? Possibilities are


- Play North for KQ H so that by leading the suit through them twice make a second heart trick. Leading twice from hand will require 2 entries, which look like the trump honours, so we can't draw trumps first.
  - Play South for AJ or KJ in clubs. Lead twice towards hand to establish the Q after finessing the 10. Must be tried before drawing trumps, so that the Q can be reached once established.
  - Ruff a heart in hand, needing hearts 3-2. Again must be tried before drawing trumps.
- c) looks favourite given North's bid, and indeed hints at the possibility of a ninth trick via a second heart ruff if JS is doubleton.

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

In practice only c) works. The most important thing though is that as is so often the case one can't afford to draw trumps and then think.

There is a d) which can be tried after drawing trumps, namely playing one of the hands to be precisely KQx in hearts so that after playing A, small, small in the suit the J comes to the top, but do you really want to back that?

## Long Suit

Q J 10 5		Still Tuesday, and you are North facing a heart lead in 3NT. Needless to say you win in hand. Now what?
A K		
Q 10 2		
10 9 6 2		


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

Many players have an automatic reflex to run off a long suit in NT in the same way that they always draw trumps in a suit contract. Both are often good ideas, but there are enough exceptions that each case should be taken on its merits.

First thoughts are that you are pleased to be in NT, for with 2 obvious spade losers 5D will need the KC onside to make, barring the sort of attack on spades that allows you to create 2 winners there. 3NT however always makes 6 diamonds and at least AK A, so we could be in overtrick territory.

The first job is to secure the contract, which requires us to place the 2D to the A. Why? Because if diamonds are 4-0 this reveals the fact in a manner that will allow us to finesse against the J in whichever direction is necessary.

The diamonds are not 4-0, so in due course the Q and K will clear the suit. Running a long suit can hurt the opponents, but we have to be careful it won't hurt us too before embarking on it. Here we can safely make 3 black discards, so no worries on that score. However what do we intend to do after running the suit? It would be nice to return to hand to take the club finesse, but the only way back then is via a second heart, after which we dare not risk the finesse for fear of an avalanche of hearts from the enemy if it loses. The solution is simple: return to hand at trick 3 with QD and temporarily abandon that suit and take the club finesse instead whilst everything is under control. The balance of the diamonds can come later.

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

The club finesse works and we make an easy 10 tricks.


## No Hurry To Ruff

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

4H by East on a club lead looked an easy assignment on this deal from Monday. However of 6 declarers, one admittedly West, only one made 10 tricks. Perhaps not so easy. Three club ruffs, 5 trumps, AS and at least one of QS, a long spade, a diamond are the reasons to be cheerful, but if forced to tackle diamonds ourselves we could lose 3 diamonds and also a spade if the black suit finesse fails.

However too much emphasis on the club ruffs and not enough on communications caused many a downfall. For example ruff trick one, trump to hand, ruff a club, trump to hand ruff a third club leaves declarer on table to tackle either spades or diamonds. A diamond to the 9 may rescue him, but hardly represents a first choice play. What declarer needs to do is create entries to hand other than by overtaking trumps. In fact the missing trumps are all with South so this ruff the clubs quickly line promotes the 8H into a defensive trick.

Try taking the spade finesse at trick 3 after the initial club ruff and entry to hand via a trump. When this loses North does best to continue a club, again ruffed on table. Now AS and a spade ruffed in hand, high if North follows. If spades were 3-3 they are now established and there are 2 discards available after using dummy to draw any remaining trumps. On a 3-0 trump break that is 3 winning rounds of trumps, 4 trumps made separately and 3 spades for 10 tricks; on a 2-1 break 2 winning rounds of trumps, 6 trumps scored separately plus 3 spades for 11 tricks. We see also that a normal 2-1 trump break would allow us to succeed even with spades 4-2 as we can ruff another round to establish the suit. All this paragraph on the assumption the spade finesse fails - if it works chances improve further.

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

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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