

## Matters Arising 84

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 20-24 Jun 2022

### Ruff When They Want


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

This weeks exhibit A features East in a 4H contract from Monday's session. South leads 9D. Ideas?

West's black suit shortages hint at ruffs on table, so after winning AD lead the club with intent to set up a club ruff should A be offside.

An alternative view is that dummy's diamonds will provide ample discards provided we draw trumps as quickly as possible - that 9D could well be doubleton or singleton.

Let's test these contrasting ideas against the actual deal:

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

A club at trick 2 sees North rise with the Ace and give their partner a diamond ruff. QS is now led covered by North's K and declarer's A. KC, discard dummy's last spade, and a spade is ruffed low and overruffed. That's three tricks for the defence, and when another diamond comes declarer is defeated.

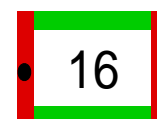
Ruffing the spade high fares no better, for North simply discards a club. South still has a trump so the diamonds cannot be played, so declarer must now play trumps and in due course lose spades as they are never discarded on the diamonds.

Now try drawing trumps at ttrick 2. We want to do this quickly so we finesse the Q rather than the 10. This holds, but when we cash the A the K doesn't fall. Now switch back to diamonds, discarding our clubs. North can ruff in when they want, and at some point we will lose a spade, but that is all. 11 tricks.

### Two Majors


A 4-4 fit will often produce an extra trick relative to playing in NT, for trumps can frequently be drawn in three rounds allowing the remaining trumps to be scored separately. This extra trick is enough to tip the scales in favour of playing in a major fit rather than in NT, though leaves NT preferred to a minor. Consequently whilst we sometimes suppress minor suits in the bidding, possible major fits should be fully explored. Acol has long since moved on from recommending opening the higher of touching suits to adding the exception *with both majors open 1H*.

This hand appeared on Tuesday, with 4 out of 6 Souths electing to open 1S. North ought to reply 1NT (though one passed), and South will now raise to 2 or 3 depending on where they stand on the pessimism/optimism scale. With KH offside declarer should be limited to 9 tricks, 400.



After the 1S opening finding the heart fit is impossible. North lacks the strength to bid a new suit at the two level, besides which the auction 1S-2H is normally taken to promise 5 hearts. Equally if South rebid hearts they would be suggesting 5 spades.

A 1H opening found North on the boundary between a 2H and a 3H response, both of which South would be happy to raise to game. Despite a 4-1 trump break the defence could only come to 2 tricks, so on this occasion the 4-4 fit was worth an extra 2 tricks.

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

It is all well and good opening 1H to discover the heart fit, but this is no gain if it loses the chance of finding a spade one. Imagine then that North's majors are switched. A 1S opening uncovers the fit straight off, but 1H works too, provided North replies 1S to show their major rather than 1NT to show their points.

## Bad News / Good News

The game never ceases to amaze. The same piece of information on Thursday's board 24 turned out to be bad news for some pairs and good news for others, despite being in the same contract.

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

West is in 4H on the lead of 5C, South having bid that suit strongly.


Declarer can see a club and a spade loser. However by running the club the AC becomes a discard for the spade, so if South has been bidding on a six card suit declarer is looking for 12 tricks - 5 hearts, 3 diamonds and two in each black suit. Moreover if South has 7 clubs and can give partner a ruff declarer still gets to discard on AC later so is still looking at 11 tricks. Moreover if South has 7 clubs they might have a singleton trump so that North is ruffing with a natural heart trick, which can't be bad news.

So it came to pass that two declarers ducked, suffered a ruff on the return, and then felt ill when a diamond from North was ruffed by South. A third club proved fatal.

Two declarers though rose with AC at trick one and drew trumps in 4 rounds, losing the lead to North in so doing. North exited with JS won on table. Now a diamond revealing South's void was good news.

Why? If South is void North started with 7, which together with 4 trumps leaves only 2 black cards. And we have already seen the 5C at trick one and JS later.


Declarer knows that the position at this point is something like

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

though the exact black cards retained by South depend on his discards to date.

Two more rounds of diamonds ending in hand sees South down to 2 cards in each black suit. Then comes the last trump on which a club is thrown from table. South is powerless. A spade discard sees declarer make 2 spade tricks as the Q drops, whilst a club discard baring the K allows declarer to throw him in to lead away from QS so that once more 2 spades are made. Either way declarer loses just a trump and a club.

No doubt one of my more erudite readers can name this particular squeeze.

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

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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