

Matters Arising 92


being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 15 - 19 Aug 2022

Fourth Best

Some people just have to play by rules. They draw trumps in a suit contract, run their long suits in NT, and always lead fourth best.

J 9 6 2 At over half the tables on Tuesday the auction
A K Q consisted of a single bid, either 1C or 1NT by
J 10 9 6 East, leaving South to find a lead. Fourth best
7 5 of either 4 card suit gives the contract away.

Let's examine the full deal:

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


On a small spade lead North has to rise and return the suit. This ensures 6 black tricks for declarer, and it is a simple matter to set up a 7th in diamonds.

A small diamond lead presumably runs round to declarer's 8 - if North rises with this A then the contract makes simply by setting a spade to go with 2 diamonds and 4 clubs. Trick 2 is overtake a club to table to lead a spade. If North rises, contract made. If North ducks declarer wins and switches back to diamonds to make 4 clubs, 2 diamonds and a spade.

Is South wrong then to lead one of their 4 card suits. No, for leads of their short suits would give declarer time to set up 2 spades and a diamond.

The killing lead is JD, top of an honour sequence. This runs around to declarer's Q. Now a club to table and a spade through the A to the K. Even if declarer now correctly guesses that AS is bare and crashes it by playing small from both hands to the next trick the defence are in control. North wins, plays a heart to South who happily cashes his honours before leading 10D. The defence comes to AS, 2 diamonds and 4 hearts.

Also on Tuesday West found themselves on A 6 3 2
lead after the auction 1NT - 2NT. J 10 9 2
Two West's alighted upon the 2H and three 7 5 4
on the 2S. 5 4

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

The problem is similar, and once again the lead of the broken spade suit is fatal, with declarer having time to establish their clubs. This time the x from J 10 9 x works, for partner is well-endowed in the suit, but the J is surely better as it works with both the types of hand partner has in our two examples.

In general top of a three card honour sequence will rarely be wrong unless it is imperative that another suit be led. With just two touching honours things are far from clear cut, with sometimes top of the honour pair being best, sometimes fourth best and sometimes another suit.

Get Cross

K Q J 8 3
Q J 10 7 3
J 3 2
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On this hand from Thursday's teams bidding 4H was not a problem for most pairs, but making the requisite number of tricks was, with two Norths defeated by the lead of 6D.

Maybe it is our old friend *draw trumps* that caused the problem.

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

Try this. Win trick one and ruff a club. KS, throw a diamond (unless East contributes AS). West wins, cashes KD and switches to a trump.

Win in hand, cash QJ S, and when both defenders follow the rest are yours on a high cross-ruff. High because you have already used your 3 of trumps to ruff a club and none of your other trumps can be beaten. You make 2 spades, AD, one natural trump trick and 7 ruffs for 11. Being greedy you could even try running the opening lead to hand in case East has underled the KQ D, though you may well prefer not to risk the lead being singleton.

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

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.

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