

Matters Arising 97

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal Online 19-23 Sept 2022

Cheap Wins

You get what you pay for is an adage that can apply to bridge tricks too.

K Q J 6 2	<div style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">4</div>	10 9
4 2		A K 9 8
8 6		K 7 5 4
K Q 9 8		A J 7

East declares in 3NT on a club lead on this hand from Tuesday. Four tricks in each black suit plus AK H are reasons to be happy, but if AS is with North and AD South there could be problems. On the other hand if that is the situation there seems to be no cunning plan available to deal with it, so no point in worrying.

The club lead is covered by the 8, 10 and often declarer won cheaply with the J even though with 10C out of harms way all declarer's club resources are worth the same. The 10S was allowed to hold trick 2, and so was the 9S on trick 3. Suddenly declarer woke up to the fact that with AC still in hand there was only one club entry to table, so the spades cannot now be set up and enjoyed. Looking at 4 clubs, just 2 spades and 2 hearts a certain amount of panic set in and at some tables declarer found ways of going down.

Winning trick one with AC would allow 2 entries to table, one to set up the spades the other to enjoy them. Failing this, overtaking the second spade on table again allows the suit to be established, though now if it splits 5-1 there are only 3 spade tricks not 4. But that is still better than 2.

As ever just because you can win a trick cheaply doesn't mean to say you should.

	<div style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">4</div>	
		A 7 4
		Q J 10 7
		A J 10 9
		10 2
K Q J 6 2		10 9
4 2		A K 9 8
8 6		K 7 5 4
K Q 9 8		A J 7
		8 5 3
		6 5 3
		Q 3 2
		6 5 4 3

Park Your Loser

It is not easy to find a sensible route to 6H on Tuesday's board 11, particularly when North opens the bidding, but most Easts found their way to 4H.

9	<div style="border: 2px solid green; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">11</div>	A K Q J 4
Q 9		A K J 4 3 2
Q 9 4 3 2		--
A J 9 7 2		8 5

Declarers who drew trumps as soon as they got in ended up losing a spade as well as a club as the former suit broke 5-2. What is the hurry? Why not ruff that 4S first? Possibly if the lead was a diamond and you are playing teams you might worry about a 5-0 trump break, but this is pairs.

	<div style="border: 2px solid green; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">11</div>	
		10 8 7 3 2
		5
		A K J 7 6 5
		6
9		A K Q J 4
Q 9		A K J 4 3 2
Q 9 4 3 2		--
A J 9 7 2		8 5
		6 5
		10 8 7 6
		10 8
		K Q 10 4 3

North's opening may have been 1D, 2D (weak) or even amusingly 2S showing a weak hand with spades and a minor.

No Hurry

Tuesday's board 16 saw an unusual unanimity in the bidding which was initially passed around to South who opened 1H and rebid 4 over their partner's raise to 3.

Q 10 7	16	The play varied, but the 4S
K Q 8 6		lead to 7, J and A wasn't
Q J 5		unusual. South drew trumps
7 4 3		in 2 rounds ending in hand,
K 5 4		and led 2D towards table.
7 2		What should West play?
A 10 9 7 4		At too many tables the
J 9 2		answer was AD. Why? I

know not. It cannot be for fear of the 2 being singleton, for then partner has the K.

Indeed the 2 was singleton, and by jumping up with the A West set up a ruffing finesse against partner's K and hence allowed declarer to get rid of a losing club.

Q 10	16	J 6
Q 8		--
Q J		K 8 6
7 4 3		K Q 10 6
K 5		
--		
10 9 7 4		
J 9 2		
		9 8
		J 10 9 5
		--
		A 8 5

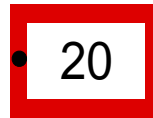
The position after 4 tricks. A club switch knocks the A out, but declarer enters dummy by overtaking 9H and leads a diamond, discarding a club if East declines to cover. If East does cover declarer ruffs and re-enters dummy via 5H to the 8 and gets their club discard, enabling them to escape with just one loser in each side suit. Had West been less keen to grab their AD then declarer always has 4 losers.

Q 10 7	16	J 6 3 2
K Q 8 6		3
Q J 5		K 8 6 3
7 4 3		K Q 10 6
K 5 4		
7 2		
A 10 9 7 4		
J 9 2		
		A 9 8
		A J 10 9 5 4
		2
		A 8 5

Simple Bidding

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

Less than half the field reached the easy 3NT game on this hand on Thursday.



3
A K 8
A 5 3 2
K Q 7 5 4

With South opening an auction of 1C – 1D – 3D – 3NT looks natural.

Some partnerships play a 1NT response to 1C as stronger than to other 1 of a suit openers - say 8-10 rather than 6-9 - on the basis that with a weaker hand they can always use a simple change of suit at the one level, or raise clubs. For such pairs the bidding might be 1C – 1NT – 3NT or 1C – 1NT – 2NT – 3NT. South will inevitably be concerned about spades, but a reverse into 2D is unlikely to clarify the position unless you are comfortable with a tortuous auction such as 1C – 1NT – 2D – 3C/D – 3H – 3NT where the 3H bid is better taken as heart stops searching for 3NT rather than a cue-bid searching for slam. Besides North's refusal to bid diamonds or support clubs surely indicates that their values are in the majors.

A sporting spade overcall by West helps matters as North will definitely bid NT now, possibly even 2NT given their spade double stop and two 10s and two 9s.

A K 5	20	Q 9 8 7
Q 10 3		9 5 4 2
10 9 6 4		Q 8
J 9 2		A 8 3
J 10 6 4 2		
J 7 6		
K J 7		
10 6		
		3
		A K 8
		A 5 3 2
		K Q 7 5 4

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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