Matters Arising 183

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 13 - 17 May 2024

Three Losers

A A K Q J 8 4 6 5 A K 10 3 How well do you know your way around your strong openings?



7 5

9842

872

On Thursday's board 8 North had a 3 loser major suited hand, and South a Yarborough. North requires very little for game - the trumps to run for no loser and the clubs to be played for one loser. The former is surely a reasonable hope - even if partner is void the chance of a 4–3 break exceeds 60%. As for clubs, if partner has at most two then there must be chances of a club ruff, and if four

chances of a club ruff, and if four then the 3–2 break is favourite to pick the suit up for one loser. Even with three clubs in partner's hand there are three chances - the suit is 3–3, the QJ fall doubleton, or when you run all your trumps bar one, a defender with four clubs discards one.

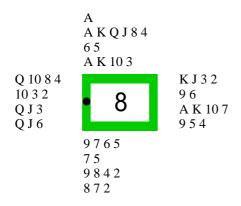
Perhaps the real question is if you're not playing the sequence 2C - 2D - 2H as forcing regardless of whether 2D is a negative response or merely a meaningless relay, why not? If opener has eight playing tricks with no hint of a ninth then for game they need partner to have two solid tricks, with which they would surely reply to a 1H opening, so no need to open 2C.

Without using Benjaminised Acol, and assuming 2C isn't game-forcing two auctions appeal:

$$2C - 2D - 2H - 2NT - 3C - 3H - 4H$$
 and $2C - 2D - 3H - 4H$.

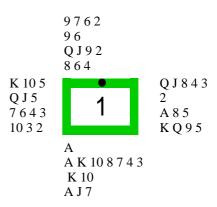
In the first auction 2NT is a (second) negative - some may prefer a Herbert (next suit up is negative) 2S.

In the second auction 3H sets the suit and is gameforcing, asking partner to cue-bid.



South has the worst possible club holding but the suit broke so declarer didn't need any help from discards.

Defensive Hold-Up



On Tuesday East opened 1S before South put their foot down at most tables and insisted on playing in hearts, typically at the 4 level.

West dutifully led their partner's suit and South surveyed their prospects. If trumps are 2–2 the contract makes for the loss of AD and 2 clubs. As we see though hearts failed to break and declarer was left feeling resigned to 1 off.

However When declarer switched to KD after 2 rounds of trumps East usually rose with the Ace, and suddenly declarer had 11 tricks as two clubs could now disappear on diamonds. If East were to display a little patience and hold off for one round then the contract is beaten.

Bad play by East? Not necessarily, but a lack of partnership understanding perhaps. It is common but not universal to signal length on suits led by declarer. If West plays the 7D under the K East should be able to read this as the beginning of a peter to show an even number of diamonds. Which means declarer has an even number too and East can safely hold off on the first round.

Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (7 tables): Chris Walker & Chris Wilkinson

Tuesday F2F (7 tables):

NS: Debbie & Roger Wilkinson EW: Sarah Bullock & Gwen Wiles

Tuesday BBO (6 tables):

Amanda Etherington & Martyn Harris

Thursday am (5 tables):

Brenda Richardson & Rita Davies

Thursday BBO (4 tables): Mike & Sally-Ann Rothwell

Total 29 tables for the week.

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.

Martyn Harris spadeilike on BBO