


Matters Arising

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 20-24 May 2024

Luck of the Lead

J 10 7 4 South found themselves on lead against
 J 7 6 3NT with the hand left on Monday, after the
 8 5 bidding 1NT – 2C – 2D – 3NT.
 A 9 7 6 Your choice.

East is known to have no 4 card major, West at least one. A spade lead could cost a trick, most notably if West has 4 spades with A, K, Q and 9 between the EW hands, whereas a club will usually cost a trick if EW have K and Q split between the hands amongst other possibilities. The spade lead looks safer.

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


In practice the spade lead works a treat. Not only does it not cost a trick but it sets up 3 tricks for the defence, which in due course will be supplemented by KD and AC for one off.

A club lead on the other hand gives declarer time to knock-out KD and secure their contract.

Whether the spade is truly the superior lead or just a lucky strike, EW are at the mercy of the luck of who they are playing against - a club leader or a spade leader - when it comes to the quality of their result.

Kill Dummy

Overbidding was the order of the day on this hand from Monday, and it should have been that all East-Wests suffered a penalty. However two were allowed home in 3NT. Being Monday we don't know the bidding or the play, but we do know that a small club was led, and it seems reasonable to assume that East opened 1H.

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

One imagines that North rose with AC at T1 and returned the suit, East winning with the K. The only hope for the contract is to make a string of diamonds, and that requires North to have the singleton A, so J is led to get it out of harms way for the follow up finesse of the 10 on the second round.

South has no reason to cover, and regardless of South's contribution North will wish to hold up the A. Yes, the 3 from South could be interpreted as a length signal showing an odd number, but if as here it is from Q3 then the play of the A is costly, as indeed it is if South for some unknown reason covers the J with the Q.

Suppose East continues diamonds, forcing North to win their A. A switch to 10H promises the 9 and presumably denies any more clubs. Thus when East wins and leads 3S South knows to rise with the A, for declarer has 5 clubs, at least as many hearts from the opening bid, and has shown 2 diamonds. The spade is a marked singleton. Whether South now continues hearts or clubs declarer has no chance.

We see that in order to kill dummy North has to duck with the AD, and to prevent it being resurrected South must rise with AS. Both defenders need to be alive to the dangers to stop 3NT slipping through.

Third Suit Forcing?

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



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


This hand from Thursday caused NS bidding problems, with no-one reaching the easy to make heart game. 1D from North, 1H from South is simple. Now what?

I am very much of the opinion that a third suit at the one level is (99.9%) forcing, so here North can simply rebid 1S and await developments. After all South has shown sufficient values to respond to a 1 level opening, so with the bidding still at

the one level bidding again would be unlikely to take them out of their comfort zone.

If South held say Qxx xxxx x Kxxxx and had thus bid simply in the hope of finding a better spot then passing 1S seems reasonable, but otherwise South should bid again. With nothing in clubs 2D looks safer than 1NT.

The knowledge that the few values that South has are all working opposite their own hand could lead North to bid an immediate 4H even though this might result in playing in a 4-3 fit. Alternatively they might try 3H which must be highly encouraging at the least, or 3C fourth suit forcing anticipating that partner can't bid 3NT so will have to bid 3H with 5 hearts and 3D without.

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

Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (8½ tables): Russell White & Jeremy Harris

Tuesday F2F (8 tables): Andrew Peill & Steven Barron

Tuesday BBO (4 tables):

NS: Hilary Storey & Jacky Truelove

EW Ray & Irene Gregory

Thursday am (5 tables): Jean Betham & Patricia White

Thursday BBO (4 tables): Robert Boyd & Andrew Peill

Total 29½ 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