

# Matters Arising 187

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 10 - 14 Jun 2024

## Grand Squeeze

On Monday North had the rare pleasure of holding a 2NT opening opposite a partner who made a 1 level opening bid. On the not unreasonable assumption that South has at least an 11 count or compensating shape North knows that the common trigger of 33 points for slam even when there is no fit has been reached.

	K 10	
	A 8 4 3	
	A K 2	
	A K J 10	
9		J 8 4 2
J 9 6 5	11	7 2
J 10 9	●	Q 7 6 4 3
Q 8 6 3 2		9 7
	A Q 7 6 5 3	
	K Q 10	
	8 5	
	5 4	

Those who believe that lots of points including all the Aces and Kings means a Grand Slam will reach 7NT, others concerned that missing a motley collection of Queens and Jacks might leave them a trick short of the maximum will settle for 6NT.

East leads a diamond, and on sight of dummy those in a small slam will be cursing, for a normal 3-2 spade break is all that is needed for 13 tricks on top. The natural line is to win the diamond lead and play off K and A S, getting the bad(?) news in that suit. A spade is conceded, and 12 tricks made: 5S, 3H, 2D, 2C.

Those in 7NT don't have the luxury of being able to concede a spade, so need to look elsewhere for their 13 tricks. 3S, 4H, 2D, 4C would do, and this requires the QC onside and the hearts 3-3. The club finesse works but the hearts don't behave. However ...

... continuing with what seems natural, after discovering the bad spade break declarer finesses in clubs, returns to table with QH and repeats the club finesse. Two more clubs and declarer disposes of two of table's spades, and East discards diamonds. The position now is

	A 8 4	
	A 2	
J 9 6	11	J 8
J 10	●	7
		Q 7
	Q 7	
	K 10	
	8	

West has had a chance to go wrong by discarding a heart rather than a club on the second spade, allowing an easy 4 tricks in hearts. A diamond discard would have put their partner under early pressure too as West would no longer be able to stop the 2D from winning.

The next two tricks are taken by A and K hearts. East needs to retain their spades so has to let go of a diamond (fatal if West discarded a diamond) and South is on lead in the three card ending below:

	8	
	A 2	
J	11	J 8
J 10	●	Q
		Q 7
	8	

The QS now squeezes West in the red suits. They have to retain the JH to prevent the 8 from winning, so a diamond goes. Declarer discards 8H, crosses to AD and takes great pleasure in winning the last trick with 2D.


## Impatience Kills

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

All Easts found themselves in 4H on this hand from Tuesday, one doubled, but only two out of 5 made the contract. South lead a club to North's Ace who cashed AS and switched to a diamond. That AS looks suspiciously singleton.

Declarer allowed the diamond to run to table and played a heart to the Q which held. Whilst South may be playing games having started with AJx H, it is sensible to play North for AH and so return to table to lead another heart towards declarer's honours.

However too often a second trump was played from hand and North was delighted to make 2 trumps to go with their 2 black Aces:

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

## Danger Hand

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




K 7 6
K 8 6
A Q
10 9 8 7 6

On this hand from Tuesday's session South found themselves in 3NT on a heart lead. If low this was allowed to run and the 7 proved a winner, else the lead was covered on table with this winning the trick. Thus declarer immediately sees 3 tricks in hearts, 5 in diamonds, plus AC., adding up to a successful contract.

The club length suggests extra tricks there, but any club finesse could put East on lead, who might lead a spade through declarer's K.

Suddenly there is a risk of several spade losers. East here is an example of a danger hand and we wish to keep them off lead. Thus the club finesse is declined.

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

Although the AS is wrong the spade distribution is such that if declarer guesses right they will only lose three tricks. What guess? The QS is naturally ducked, but what to do when JS follows? Another duck and the K falls next time no matter which defender has it. Perhaps declarer should try the K hoping that East started with AQJ and others. No surprise then that some declarers guessed wrong and saw their contract fall to a flurry of spades.

As it happens at those tables where the club finesse was taken several strange things happened.

First *lead the fourth best* obsessives led the 8S. This could have been a disaster if declarer had the 9S as declarer could play the card and so transfer the lead to the safe hand.

Secondly one West rose with the A even though partner was otherwise destined to stay on lead. Being the safe hand West could not hurt declarer.

At a third table where declarer did cover the second spade and West won, West switched. I can still hear East's cries of anguish echoing through the internet.

## Guess Aversion

Q J 2  
K 10 9 8 6 3 2  
--  
K J 6

Making an overtrick was a minority achievement on this hand from Tuesday when 4H was the contract at every table.



Imagine playing the hand as North on a defence starting A and another spade. Plan your play.

K 9 3  
A J 7 5  
K Q 8 7  
9 2

You win T2 in hand (or on table) and draw trumps. One round suffices.

Everyone believes that they will guess the clubs wrong, but by making the guess you lose at most 2 club tricks, with a successful guess restricting you to one.

Wherever spades were led declarer at this point transferred the lead to the South hand, and instead of guessing in clubs lead KD and discarded the 6C when the A didn't appear. East won, and the defence helped themselves to a club trick. The line is as successful as making a wrong guess in clubs.

Suppose though that West produced AD and declarer ruffed. Declarer could return to the South hand, throw 6C on QD, and guess the clubs. They have gained nothing, as the result still depends on the club guess.

<p>Q J 2 K 10 9 8 6 3 2 -- K J 6</p>		<p>A 10 4 A 10 9 6 3 10 8 7 5 3</p>
<p>8 7 6 5 4 Q J 5 4 2 A Q 4</p>	<p>K 9 3 A J 7 5 K Q 8 7 9 2</p>	

On the day both A and Q clubs are right, so it is difficult to make a wrong guess. By ignoring diamonds and playing on clubs 11 tricks are made.

Since the 6C is destined to be ruffed, by playing on diamonds declarer effectively makes a winner on loser play to sate their aversion to guessing.

## Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (8½ tables): Mike & Sally-Ann Rothwell

Tuesday F2F (6½ tables): Gwen Wiles & Sarah Bullock

Tuesday BBO (5 tables): Ina Gray & Mary Anne Peden

Thursday am (6 tables):

NS: Jim Thompson & John Oldroyd

EW: Hilary Claxton & Tutor

Thursday BBO (5½ tables):

Vanessa Cordwell & Mary Sapsford

Total 31½ tables for the week.

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.

*Martyn Harris*  
spadeilike on BBO