

Matters Arising 189

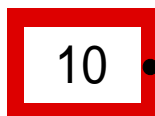
being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 24 - 28 June 2024

To Draw or Not To Draw

K 10 9 7 6 5 2 North had three problems on this
K 2 hand from Monday.

A Q 5 3

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A 10 6 5 4
J 8 7 4
9 8 7 4

First, with West opening 1NT how many spades should they overcall?

Second, facing the lead of KC, which obviously they will ruff, should they then embark on drawing trumps?

Third, to what use should they put their one entry to table?

With just 4 losers and a reasonable hope of finding some important cards outside I'd find it difficult to resist bidding 4 at teams, feeling slightly ill on sight of dummy. At pairs I suspect one should be more circumspect, so that the choice lies 3 and what I can't help feeling is a slightly pessimistic 2.

Pessimists won the vote on the night, and with 8 tricks being made at the four tables at which the contract was 2S, this appears to support the action.

Having gone to the bother of arranging for there to be trumps, why do we so often start by drawing them? So that the enemy can't use their trumps to ruff our winners. Consequently drawing trumps tends to be the default operation unless there is something more important to do or they are needed for some other purpose. Here there is no other urgent task confronting us, nor are the trumps needed for anything else. Thus start drawing them - the fact that the suit is a little holey up top is irrelevant. We won't get far trying to take tricks in our red suits if we leave the defence's trumps intact.

Lastly when we do eventually use the AH to gain entry to dummy we take the diamond finesse. There is only one possible way of picking the suit up without loss, which is for West to have a doubleton K, so lead small to the Q with intent to follow with the A next.

K 10 9 7 6 5 2

K 2

A Q 5 3

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A Q 4

8 7 3

K 6

A J 5 3 2

--

A 10 6 5 4

J 8 7 4

9 8 7 4



J 8 3

Q J 9

10 9 2

K Q 10 2

After ruffing the KC lead 10S - you don't want to lose a cheap trick to the doubleton 8, though here with the trumps 3-3 that wouldn't happen. Play could well continue club ruff, lose a trump, club ruff, lose a trump, club ruff and that is all the trumps gone. Heart to A, diamond to Q, AD which indeed fells the K. You end up losing just 3 trumps, making 4 club ruffs, 4 diamonds and 2 hearts.

There is a certain amount of good luck in finding trumps 3-3 and the KD doubleton onside, but there is nothing wrong in taking advantage of it. If you don't draw trumps the defence will start making theirs separately as ruffs, making it seem as if the trumps hadn't broken.

Mis-judged Reverse

A K 6 5 4
3
9
K J 9 7 5 4




2
A Q J 6 2
Q J 8 6 5 3 2
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Tuesday provided more evidence that misfits don't play well in NT when board 3 turned up.

Typically the auction started 1D – 1S after which South reversed into 2H. Yes, South does have only 4 losers, but the losing trick count is only a good guide to the strength of the hand once a fit has been found - until then it can only provide provisional guidance. 2D is surely a better rebid.

Expecting extra values in partner's hand North went on to 3NT, which would require generous defence to allow it to make.

An auction of 1D – 1S – 2D – 3C – 3D – P looks fair, as does 1D – 2C – 2D – 2S – 3D – P taking responder's reverse as forcing to 2NT.

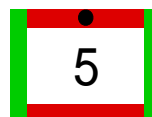
	A K 6 5 4	
	3	
	9	
	K J 9 7 5 4	
Q 9 7		J 10 8 3
10 9 8 5 4		K 7
K 10		A 7 4
A Q 6		10 8 3 2
	2	
	A Q J 6 2	
	Q J 8 6 5 3 2	
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The problem of declaring misfits in NT is that it is difficult to arrange to take tricks in both hands, and often all the defence has to do is remove entries from one hand and force declarer to play from the other. 3NT on a misfit often requires for more than the usual high card values to make. Suggesting extra strength by making a reverse on distributional rather than high card values is asking for trouble, though of course it doesn't always arrive.

How Big A Gamble?

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

A K Q J 9
9 4 3
9 8 7 4
6



10 8 5 2
Q 6 2
J 6 5 2
K 4

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A K J 8 7
A K 3
10 7 5 3 2

Sat South on this hand from Thursday I wasn't the only one to scratch my head over a rebid having opened 1H and heard the bidding go 1S – 2C – 2S before it returned to me.

Where possible we like to keep our 2 level responses up to strength after intervention, but we are not religious about it so I was aware that Alan could be a little short of the normal 10 points, though if so he would be likely to have some sort of compensation particularly at this colour.

I'm thinking 5 losers and at least a 9 card fit, and quite possibly a 10 card one, opposite a 2 level response, even if a slightly dodgy one. Game, yes, maybe even slam. Could we be better in hearts? It is likely to score more if partner has 3.

Thus I came up with 3S as my rebid. Nominally asking for a spade stop for NT, but if he has one and bids 3NT I simply remove to 4C. If he can't read that as 5 hearts, and club support time to find a new partner. Without a spade stop he will surely bid 4H with 3.

4S said West, double from Alan. Sounds like he's not ashamed of his hand. 6C from yours truly, which makes easily for a top.

I have to confess though that there is an element of a gamble in the 6C bid, whilst examination of the hand suggests that in defence to spades we take 6 red tricks and AC, which would have been 4 off and 800 to us and also a top.

One South didn't have the same problem, for West declined to overcall the 1H opening. Now North replied 1S. 2C – 3C – 3NT was the rest of the auction. West had no problem selecting a lead.

Route to Slam

A K Q 6 5 3	23	J 4 2
4		K Q 5 3
A 3 2		K J 5 4
A 5 4		K 3

This hand turned up late on Tuesday's online session. Looking at the two hands one can quickly see the attractions of a 6S contract. From West's hand a heart is lost, the third club is ruffed and the third diamond goes on the second heart honour. Bidding slam though created problems.

I confess I'm not a fan of a strong two holding 8 playing tricks without a sniff of a ninth, but here it works wonders. Knowing that partner has at most 5 losers for their strong opening, and holding 7 themselves, East is ready to launch into Blackwood as soon as West's suit is revealed. Job done.

A 1S opening makes life more difficult. East replies 2D and West has to find a rebid. Since West knows partner has 10+ points they wish to be in game, but how to find the best place, for if partner has at most a singleton spade diamonds might be the best spot. With spades so good though a 4S rebid should result in a playable contract, and give a better indication of the strength of the hand than a 3S one.

Strictly speaking 3S is not forcing, but after making a two level response does anyone ever pass? 3S though is suggestive of a 6 loser hand, so might well lead to partner settling for game when slam is on.

For forcing possibilities West would have to pick 3C or 2NT, though these could easily lead into murky waters.

It is worth pointing out though that 1S – 2D – 3C – 3S is stronger than 1S – 2D – 3C – 4S on the principle of fast arrival, which states that in a game forcing situation bidding game is weaker than agreeing the suit at a lower level. I'm assuming 3C is game-forcing, since it means that the natural place to end up with no fit is 3NT.

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

One South elected to pre-empt 3H, and East raised West's conservative 3S overcall to 4S.

At our table, perhaps wary of the colour South essayed 2H. Double from me and 3NT from Alan. That sounds like opening values, so an immediate lurch to 6S seemed called for.

Looking at the full deal you may have noticed a potential sting in the play. North leads their singleton heart, South wins and returns the suit. If NS have been silent should declarer ruff low and risk running into a 7–1 heart break (as would happen), or ruff high and belatedly discover a 4–0 trump break so that the high ruff promotes a trump trick for the defence? 7–1 is less likely than 4–0 so against a silent South declarer might go wrong.

Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (6½ tables): Gwen Wiles & Phillip Burley

Tuesday F2F (5½ tables): Roger & Debbie Wilkinson

Tuesday BBO (4½ tables):

Alan Wearmouth & Martyn Harris

Thursday am (5 tables): Suzanne Graham & Gill Green

Thursday BBO (6 tables):

Alan Wearmouth & Martyn Harris

Total 27½ 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