

Matters Arising 190

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 1 - 5 July 2024

4H

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

We all have partners who make weird bids from time to time that we are left to decipher. My partners know that feeling well. On Monday's board 13 I sat East and opened 1D. 3H quoth South. Mike selected 3NT and North passed. Back to me, and after a little thought I emerged with 4H. North-South wanted to know the meaning of this bid, so Mike told them "I don't know, but it's definitely forcing". Seems about right.

Usually our cue-bids of enemy suits are *directional asking bids*, asking partner to bid NT with a stop in the suit, but otherwise to make the most descriptive bid available. Clearly I'm not asking for a stop for NT here as he has already shown one. Mike decided that showing secondary support for my diamonds was better than announcing his clubs, so bid 5D and I raised to 6D.

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

Had he bid 5C I would have raised to 6C. In fact slam makes in both minors and in NT. Possibly I should just bid 6NT over 3NT, but Mike could hold just QJxx in hearts.

Yes 4H was just me telling Mike to make his best bid. I'm all but certain he hasn't four spades as he did not make a negative double over 3H, so the odds seem to favour our having a 5-3 minor fit. Nor does it seem likely that NS can have 2 Aces and decent enough hearts to justify 3H, so bidding the slam was a matter of backing my hunches.

It could all have gone horribly wrong of course, not least with a ruff in the suit contract whilst 6NT makes, but sometimes a bridge player has to do what a bridge player has to do, and age partner.

The Art of 13

Making 13 tricks is always pleasing even if you are not in a Grand Slam. On Thursday's board 20 East declared in spades on a heart lead. Over to you:

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

On the not unreasonable assumption that the opening heart lead won't be ruffed declarer can see 12 tricks on top. No great planning to cash those, so it must be worth investing a little time in searching for a 13th, which can come by establishing West's fifth club if the suit is no worse than 4-2.

This will require 3 entries to dummy - two after each of which to ruff a club, and the last to enjoy the final club and discard East's losing heart. KC and AK D will fulfil the entry roles admirably, so declarer doesn't even have to worry about where to end up after drawing trumps.

Play goes: win AH at T1 and draw trumps in as many rounds as necessary. AC, KC, club ruff. AD, club ruff. KD, discard heart on the last club.

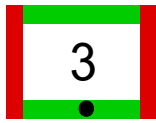
	7	
	K Q 10 4	
	Q J 10 4	
	J 10 7 3	
Q 10 3		A K 9 8 6 5 4
A J		6 3
A K 2		9 8
K 9 6 4 2		A 5
	J 2	
	9 8 7 5 2	
	7 6 5 3	
	Q 8	

You will of course know whether this like is working after the KC - if both defenders follow you are home, if one discards the clubs are 5-1 and the last one cannot be established.

It might be worth cashing 5 trumps before tackling clubs, discarding JH and 2D in case some defender on autopilot is willing to discard a club when originally holding 5, though this decreases your admittedly slim squeeze chances. Had the West hand been hidden then playing the extra trumps would certainly be worth it. After all declarer only needs two to ruff clubs, so they might as well use the others to exert pressure whilst the defence don't know what is going on.

A 3 2
 J 10 8 6 4
 K 10 8 2
 A

On Tuesday it was South in diamonds who had the chance to make all 13 tricks. Try it on a club lead.




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

6 trump tricks, assuming they split 2-1, AK S, AH, AC and two club ruffs in the short hand. The 13th will have to come from ruffing out the hearts to set up the last one, which needs the suit to be 4-3, which just happens to be the most likely split of the suit.

The plan of ruffing out the hearts requires 4 entries to table, 3 to ruff hearts and one to enjoy the last one. All of these entries will have to be available after the AH has been cashed, so AC at T1 doesn't count. The entries will have to be AS and 3 trumps, two of which can be club ruffs.

Plan of campaign:

After AC play a diamond to hand - as long as both defenders follow 13 tricks remains a live possibility. Now AH - it has to be taken before any of the aforementioned entries to table are used. Trump to K, removing the least defensive trump. Ruff a heart, ruff a club, ruff a heart, ruff a club, ruff a heart. That is 4 rounds of hearts - the A and 3 ruffs. If all is well, dummy's last heart is last man standing in the suit, and can be reached via AS and used as a resting spat for declarer's potentially losing spade.

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

On Tuesday only one of the five declarers in diamonds made all 13 tricks. They received the lead of JS, and reading it as denying the Q, they won on table and after drawing trumps successfully finessed against the QS in the East hand.

Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (7 tables): Mike & Sally-Ann Rothwell
 Tuesday F2F (6½ tables): Andrew Peil & Steven Barron

Tuesday BBO (6 tables):
 Amanda Etherington & Martyn Harris

Thursday am (6 tables):
 NS: Jo Ainsworth & Anne Urquhart
 EW: Jane Morgan & Ane-Marie Smith

Thursday BBO (3½ tables):
 Shaffin Jaffer & Charlotte Casson

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