

Matters Arising 196

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC12 - 16 Aug 2024

Trick 2

J 7
K 4 3 2
A J 8 6
J 4 3

11

A K Q
10 7
10 9 2
A 10 9 7 5

You are North defending 5C, the only suit bid by West, with South having suggested at least 6 hearts. You lead KH and this holds. What next?

Another heart looks safe. Yes West is going to ruff, but so what? A spade looks safe too. And a club is unlikely to damage the defence either.

There is no hurry to take diamonds for where are dummy's losing diamonds going to go? If you sit and wait there could be 2 diamonds coming your way.

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

And so it came to pass. A switch to the AD presents the contract to declarer on a plate, and a small one is just as bad as long as declarer calls for either the 9 or 10 from table.

Suppose instead North continues hearts at T2. Declarer ruffs and draws 3 rounds of trumps. Then come 3 spades and a diamond from table towards the Q. North still has to be careful - if they grab their Ace they will be endplayed, having either to lead a heart allowing a diamond to disappear from table whilst declarer ruffs in hand, or a diamond away from the J.

Instead North waits a little longer. Declarer crosses to table via a trump and leads another diamond, playing for the A South. Now North pounces for one off. Good things come to those who wait.

Trust Partner

A 4
K Q 10 9 8 7 5
A J 8
7

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

17

Did North have sarcastic thoughts of "Trust partner!" when East received a spade lead against their 5C contract on Tuesday despite North having bid hearts strongly. North won T1 with AS. Now what?

Desperate for tricks to defeat the contract one North tried A and another diamond. Declarer ruffed the second one, drew trumps and entered dummy via AH to discard 3 hearts on the three boss spades.

The KH at T2 fared no better. One South declined to ruff, so declarer won on table, drew two rounds of trumps staying on table and ran the spade winners. When South was unable to ruff in all declarer's heart losers again disappeared and 11 tricks made.

A second South did ruff and continued with spades hoping that it was their partner who originally singleton. No such luck, and the rest of the play followed a familiar pattern.

Setting aside sarcastic thoughts *Trust Partner* is a useful motto. If partner is trustworthy (if not find yourself a new one), then their failure to lead a heart can mean only one thing - they are void. Knowing that South can ruff a heart return North turns their attention to what they want to happen next. A diamond switch from partner would be nice. Thus lead a small heart at T2 - low card asking for a low suit rather than a high one asking for the high suit spades.

	A 4	
	K Q 10 9 8 7 5	
	A J 8	
	7	
K Q J 3		10
A 3		J 6 4 2
9 6 4 3 2	17	K
K 10		A Q J 9 8 5 3
	9 8 7 6 5 2	
	--	
	Q 10 7 5	
	6 4 2	

South ruffs, returns a diamond and is rewarded with a second heart ruff to restrict declarer to 9 tricks.

Twelve to Finish

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

West played in NT at all 6 tables on Thursday's board 24. At half the tables North led a heart. Declarer called for a small heart from table and South produced the K. Declarer could now claim the remaining 12 tricks - two in each major and four in each minor. Yes it is possible to block a minor suit, but this is not going to happen to anyone with a modicum of experience.

The three who received a club lead found various ways of making only 11 tricks, which does seem a little strange. They can count 11 top tricks, so looking for a twelfth should be automatic.

Choices are:

playing for spades 3-3 so they can set up West's last spade, a 35% chance;

playing North both to hold KH and to refuse to play it when the Q is led, presumably considerably less than the 50% chance that North holds KH;

playing South for KH to enable the Q to win through the well-known practice of leading towards an honour, a straight 50% chance.

The last is clearly the best chance, so declarer wins T1, crosses to a diamond honour and leads a small heart towards the Q. When South rises with the K it is all over. Note that the small heart is led whilst all suits are under control so that there is no question of the defence cashing extra tricks when in with the KH. In particular AH is NOT played first.

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

In an ideal world declarer would like to combine the chances of a 3-3 spade break and KH onside, but since each involve losing a trick this is not possible in a hunt for a twelfth trick.

Suppose though that we exchange the red Queens, moving spot cards in the opposite direction so as to

maintain the shapes of the EW hands.

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

Now on a club lead declarer can win and duck a spade immediately. Provided North doesn't win and play a heart, declarer wins the continuation and cashes the top two spades to test that suit. If spades don't cooperate declarer can now fall back on the heart finesse for the twelfth trick. The play cannot be reversed - try the finesse and if that fails test the spades - as that would involve the loss of two tricks. Thus a club lead on this layout would be a friendlier one than a heart lead as the latter forces declarer to try the heart finesse immediately in the hunt for 12 tricks.

Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (8½ tables): Phillip Burley & Sarah Bullock

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

Tuesday BBO (5 tables): Ray & Irene Gregory

Thursday am (7 tables):

NS: Bob Churchward & Tutor

EW: David Airey & Jennifer Whalley

Thursday BBO (6½ tables):

Alan Wearmouth & Martyn Harris

Total 35 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