

Matters Arising 201

being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 16-20 Sep 2024

3NT?!

Monday's board 17 was an annoying hand for North-South.

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

Played in spades there is a loser in each suit, in clubs two red Aces and two trumps, and in hearts whilst there are only the three Aces as obvious losers, some help from the defence will be needed to avoid a fourth somewhere. Yet with a 5-4 invitational hand sitting South opposite North's 1NT opening it is not easy to put the brakes on, particularly as East is likely to stick their oar in with diamonds.

As so often happens when no fit appears some pairs ran to NT. A small diamond lead by East beats 3NT easily. Declarer calls for the Q from the South hand, else it would be doomed to die under the A, and when West wins the AC a second diamond through declarer's K secures 5 diamond tricks to go with AH and AC.

This does require three things though. The aforementioned small diamond lead - starting with the Ace removes any chance of setting up and enjoying the suit, a cooperative West who will return partner's suit when in with AC, and a patient East willing to wait for a diamond from partner rather trying to force the pace themselves should they gain the lead early with AH.

Fortunately for the two pairs in 3NT these conditions were not all fulfilled, and the contract made.

1NT X

The double of an opening weak 1NT should frequently provide rich pickings for the doubling side, but too often their enemy is let off the hook. Monday's board 25 was a case in point.

	J 9 3	
	10 9 5 3	
	Q 10 6	
	6 3 2	
Q 10 8	25	6 5 4
K 4		A Q 8
K 7 5		J 9 4 3 2
A K 10 7 5		Q 4
	A K 7 2	
	J 7 6 2	
	A 8	
	J 9 8	

After 2 passes South happily opens 1NT and West has a fairly typical doubling hand, the minimum for which is normally regarded as being 15 points (and a decent lead if that low).

If North passes there seems no need for East to bid, for knowing their side has at least a combined 24 count declarer is due for an uncomfortable ride in 1NTX. Indeed on a small club the defence quickly wraps up 5 club tricks, with East signalling for a heart switch with their discards. West is happy to continue with K and another heart, and there should still be a ninth defensive trick to come.

500.

Should North-South employ some escape mechanism to reach 2H then East has to decide whether to double this. Certainly with AQx of trumps, and knowing of the points imbalance between the two sides they may well elect to put the boot in, and this too should result in a 500 penalty.

The alternative view though is that there is too great a danger that NS can escape two down for 300, and that since if West is anything better than minimum EW have the magic 25 points, then 3NT is called for from East.

It is easy to see that this is a simple make for 600 though this is not as safe a score as the penalties remarked on earlier.

Yet on Monday only two of the 6 East-West scored better than 130, which at teams represented excellent swings for the two concerned, and at pairs would have been equally effective at piling up the match points.

Around The Club

This weeks winners were

Monday (8 tables): Babs Matthews, John Farmer
Ian Reeves, Felicity Kay

Tuesday F2F (6½ tables):

Jennifer Whalley & Rita Davies

Tuesday BBO (5 tables): Bob Stow & Phil Hoyle

Thursday am (2 tables):

Lyn Percival & Bob Churchward

Thursday BBO (3½ tables): John & Wendy Ellwood

Total 25 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