

**Forked
By Roger Lord**

Dealer: East
Vul: None

North

♠ Q1054
♥ AK8
♦ 98
♣ Q432

West

♠ 3
♥ J97543
♦ 63
♣ 10765

East

♠ KJ9876
♥ Q10
♦ 42
♣ AJ8

South

♠ A2
♥ 62
♦ AKQJ1075
♣ K9

East

1 Spade

South

3 Notrump

West

All Pass

North

Contract: Three Notrump

Opening Lead: Heart Five

Alan and Nancy Popkin were dealt the North-South cards in a club game. Over East's one spade, South (Alan) leaped to three notrump, which ended the bidding.

Rather than adhere to the adage "lead your partner's suit," West led the five of hearts, and Alan won with dummy's king. He could count eleven tricks—seven diamonds, two hearts, one spade, and at least one club. Looking at the unbid eleven high card points on the table, one could figure that the battle would be waged over the twelfth trick, with play and defense going as they would in a slam contract. Accordingly, declarer started with the club deuce from dummy. This play turned out to be an early "Morton's Fork Coup," whereby East was confronted with two losing choices. He could fly up with the ace and establish two club tricks for declarer, or he could duck and allow South's king to win.

East chose the latter, and from there, Alan worked out the winning end position. He ran seven diamond tricks and led a heart to the ace. Dummy's last three cards were the spade Q10 and the club queen, while the South hand was the spade A2 and the club nine.

If East had blanked the spade king and held two clubs, the king would have fallen under South's ace, with the spade queen becoming the twelfth trick. Instead, East kept two spades. Then, North's club queen was used to throw East in with the now blank club ace. East was compelled to lead away from his spade king and present North with the queen.

Bidding Questions:

You hold: S) 62 H) A2 D) AKQJ1075 C) K9

Your RHO opens one spade. What is your bid? Think, then read on.

Although it is similar to the one diagramed above, this hand does not contain a stopper in the opponent's bid suit. How do you investigate? You could make a simple overcall in diamonds and hope partner does the right thing. Old-fashioned players might make a jump overcall to three diamonds, or they might double intending to rebid diamonds, or they might make a cuebid of two spades. Each of these actions is flawed—jump overcalls now are played as weak hands; double without a major likely will scramble the auction; direct cuebids usually are played as “Michaels” for two-suited hands.

A modern answer is to jump in the opponent's bid suit—that is, over East's one spade, South bids three spades—to ask for a spade stopper. With a stopper, North bids three notrump; without a stopper, North retreats to the cheapest unbid suit, which South will pass or correct to his long suit. Note that this treatment requires prior agreement, lest the advancer (North in the example) believe that the overcaller holds six or seven cards in opener's suit—especially if that suit were a minor (one club-three clubs).

You hold: S) 54 H) KJ109873 D) 63 C 107

LHO opponent opens 1 Spade, partner makes a jump cuebid of 3 Spades, RHO passes, and it's your bid.

Your partner has either long clubs or long diamonds, and he is waiting to find out whether you can stop spades. If not, he expects you to reply four clubs, which he would pass with long clubs or correct to diamonds with long diamonds. However, holding your own seven-card heart suit, you probably should bypass the minors and try four hearts. You have more to gain by the game bid than to lose by getting too high.