

**Morton's Fork Coup
by Roger Lord**

Dealer: East
Vul: East-West

	North		
	♠ A52		
	♥ Q3		
	♦ K105		
	♣ AKJ63		
West		East	
♠ 76		♠ QJ983	
♥ 109875		♥ AJ2	
♦ 9842		♦ A76	
♣ 74		♣ 92	
	South		
	♠ K104		
	♥ K64		
	♦ QJ3		
	♣ Q1085		
East	South	West	North
1 Spade	Pass	Pass	Double
Pass	2 Notrump	Pass	3 Notrump
All Pass			
Contract: 3 Notrump		Opening Lead: Spade 7	

This deal demonstrates the importance of an overtrick in a matchpoint scoring event. It took place in the St. Louis Regional tournament August 18 (evening session, #22). With a combined 28 HCP and no major-suit fit, all North-South pairs should reach three notrump one way or another—but you never know.

Most South declarers who received a spade lead took ten tricks—five clubs, two spades, two diamonds and a heart. However, there was a route to eleven tricks, which would be rewarded with a tie for top. Do you see it?

The spade seven rides to East's jack and South's king. South knocks out the diamond ace, East ducking once, winning the second and returning the third. Due to the first-seat opener, East must hold the heart ace. Accordingly, declarer goes to the table and leads a heart, but not the queen from the usual shorter holding. Instead, he leads the three of hearts away from the queen, toward South's king. This play is the "Morton's Fork Coup." Whichever branch East takes will lead to a losing result.

On the first branch, East can fly up with the ace of hearts. This would establish both the king and queen as tricks, making the total eleven.

On the second branch, East can allow South's king to win. Then, declarer runs clubs and reaches this ending:

Dummy

Spades A5

Hearts Q

Declarer

Spades 104

Hearts 6

If East, for his last three cards, holds two hearts and the blank spade queen, South picks up the queen with his ace, which makes the ten good. Or, if East decides to hold two spades and the blank heart ace, declarer plays the heart, which throws East in to lead away from the spade queen and presents declarer with the spade ten.