

Daily Bridge Club

Stick a fork in him

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John Morton was King Henry VII's treasurer. Morton extracted money from the nobility with this approach: If a man lived well, he must have plenty of money to contribute; if he lived frugally, he must have money socked away. That was "Morton's Fork."

Morton's name lives on in the "Morton's Fork Coup": You force an opponent to play in a position where he has only losing options.

At today's four spades, West leads the ace and queen of diamonds, hoping to build a second diamond trick. South counts nine tricks – six trumps, a diamond, two clubs – and sees that he can always succeed if he guesses which defender has the ace of clubs. He plays a low diamond from dummy at Trick Two, deferring a discard on the ace, and ruffs in his hand.

If South places the ace of clubs with West, he can next lead his four of clubs. If West grabs the ace, South wins a third club trick; if West plays low, dummy's king wins, and South discards the queen of clubs on the king of diamonds and loses in all two hearts and one diamond.

If declarer thinks East has the ace of clubs, South can lead a trump to dummy and return the three of clubs for the same effect.

Is South's play a guess?

West, who didn't open the bidding, has shown the A-Q-J of diamonds

and surely has another ace for his double. If West has the ace of clubs, South will always succeed since East will have the ace of hearts. The danger is that West has the ace of hearts.

If South leads the first club from dummy, you can stick a fork in the defense.

West dealer

N-S vulnerable

NORTH

♠ A J 7 6

♥ J 4

♦ K 7 3

♣ K J 5 3

WEST

♠ 4 2

♥ A 8 7 6

♦ A Q J 9

♣ 8 6 2

EAST

♠ 5

♥ Q 10 9

♦ 10 8 6 5 2

♣ A 10 9 7

SOUTH

♠ K Q 10 9 8 3

♥ K 5 3 2

♦ 4

♣ Q 4

West	North	East	South
Pass	1 ♣	Pass	1 ♠
Dbl	2 ♠	Pass	4 ♠
All Pass			

Opening lead – ♦ A