

404. A two-trick difference #2

By Ron Klinger

Dealer West : Both vulnerable

North

♠ 6532

♥ KJ753

♦ KQ

♣ A7

South

♠ AK98

♥ Q6

♦ AJ9

♣ QJ94

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♣ ⁽¹⁾
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

(1) Long-suit trial bid

Do you agree with the North-South auction?

South has 7 losers. The expectation for North's raise to 2♠ is 7 losers, $7 + 7 = 14$ and $24 - 14 = 10$ tricks expected (Losing Trick Count). If you could be sure North had four spades, South should just bid 4♠.

After 1♥ : 1♠, 2♠, some use 2NT to ask about opener's spade length. With four spades, opener bids 3♣ (minimum) or 4♠ (maximum) or cue bids 4♣ or 4♦ with a very good maximum. With only 3 spades, North makes a natural rebid. For example, with:

♠ J53

♥ AK874

♦ KJ62

♣ 5

Opener would rebid 3♦ after 1♥ : 1♠, 2♠ : 2NT. The 3♦ rebid shows 5 hearts, 4 diamonds 3 spades and a minimum opening hand. Pairs who use 2NT to check on trump length after a major-suit raise also promise 5+ trumps when making a long-suit trial.

In the actual auction above, North-South were using long-suit trials as a check-back on trump length and North's 4♠ showed 4 trumps and minimum values.

This was yesterday's question:

Against 4♠ by South, West leads the ♦6: king – seven – nine. You play the ♠2: four – king – jack. How do you continue?

There should be no problem if trumps are 3-2. You can afford to lose a spade and a heart and a club. It is not likely that you will incur a heart ruff or a diamond ruff. The greater danger is that trumps are 4-1. There is a safety play to guard against a 4-1 split in spades. What is it?

If the spade layout is like this:

	♠ 6532	
♠ J		♠ Q1074
	♠ AK98	

After the ♠J drops under the ♠A, play the ♠8. If spades are 3-2, the only tiny risk is a red-suit ruff. When West shows out, you know the trump layout. East can capture the ♠8. Later you can finesse the ♠9 and the ♠K draws East's last trump.

Dealer West : Both vulnerable

North	
♠ 6532	
♥ KJ753	
♦ KQ	
♣ A7	
West	East
♠ J	♠ Q1074
♥ 108	♥ A942
♦ 1086432	♦ 75
♣ K862	♣ 1053
South	
♠ AK98	
♥ Q6	
♦ AJ9	
♣ QJ94	

The deal arose in a knockout match in a BBO Teams' event. After the auction on page 1 and ♦6: king – seven – nine and ♠2: four – ace – jack, South continued with the ♠K, receiving the bad news. The ♠J at trick 2 should have sounded an alarm signal. Next came the ♥Q. East took the ♥A and drew trumps with ♠Q, ♠10. It is never a good feeling when the defenders draw your trumps.

East exited with the ♦5. The club finesse worked, but when hearts did not break, declarer could not make more than 2 spades, 2 hearts, 3 diamonds and 2 clubs, 9 tricks, one light, East-West +100.

Of course, South should have played the ♠8 after the ♠A, but even after ♠A, ♠K, South could have survived as the cards lie by tackling the clubs next. After the ♣Q wins, South can play ♣A, ♦Q to the ♦A and a club ruff, followed by a heart, or the ♦J, discarding a heart.

At the other table, North opened 1♥ and North-South had an artificial auction, which ended in 5♠ by North after South tried for slam, but found the ♠Q and an ace missing. East led the ♣3: queen – six – seven. North (Matt Mullamphy of Sydney) cashed the ♠A and continued with the ♠8: ♦2 – ♠3 – ♠10.

East exited with the ♣5: nine – two – ace. The ♥3 to the ♥Q won, followed by the ♥6: ten – king – ace. This was the position, with East on lead:

North	
♠ 65	
♥ J75	
♦ KQ	
♣	
West	East
♠	♠ Q7
♥	♥ 94
♦ 108643	♦ 75
♣ K8	♣ 10
South	
♠ K9	
♥	
♦ AJ9	
♣ J4	

East played the ♠7, the ♠9 winning. Declarer ruffed the ♣4 and cashed the ♥J, discarding the ♣J. Then came the ♦K, followed by the ♦Q, overtaken by the ♦A. The ♠K captured the ♠Q and the ♦J was declarer's eleventh trick for +650 and 13 Imps to North-South.

Why not phone or email your bridge partners and compare your answers and your reasoning?

Although I was told not to steal kitchen utensils, it's a whisk I'm willing to take.