

It Takes Two to Tango!



It takes
two
to make a
thing
go right...

When did you and partner last agree to have one suit as trumps but end up playing in a different suit? It would be nice to report that it happened this week at Akarana but it “takes two to tango”.

At adverse vulnerability, you open 2♥, showing less than an opener, and five hearts with at least four of any other suit, holding:

♠ JT9

♥ K8543

♦ 2

♣ KT75

While most of your high-cards are in your two suits, the heart suit does look a little bare, a danger if there was a misfit and subsequently a factor in the final contract’s failure this time. Nevertheless, you “paid your table money!”

Your left- hand opponent passed with partner raising quickly to the heart game. However, your right-hand opponent was alive with a 4♠ call. Wisely, you left the decision of what to do to your partner. They emerged with 4NT!

West	North	East	South
	2♥	Pass	4♥
4♠	Pass	Pass	4NT
Pass	?		

What did that 4NT bid mean? Unless West's action had suddenly improved South's hand and that they now rather fancied a slam, it seemed illogical that the bid was Blackwood. Therefore, what could it be? Did South really want to know what North's other suit was? Why would they want to know that?

Indeed, that was why South bid 4NT but either North was not sure or else chose not to divulge. North's 5♥ call ended the auction. (There was no need for North to own up to a 4-card spade suit!) South was to be proven correct as the four hands demonstrated:

Board 21

North Deals
N-S Vul

♠ K Q 6 5 4 3
♥ A 10 9
♦ 9
♣ 9 3 2

♠ J 10 9
♥ K 8 5 4 3
♦ 2
♣ K 10 7 5



♠ A 7 2
♥ 7 2
♦ Q 10 7 5 4 3
♣ 8 4

♠ 8
♥ Q J 6
♦ A K J 8 6
♣ A Q J 6

Our East led their ♥2 against 5♥. Declarer gave up a spade but West then played ♥A and a third round of trumps. North could have prevailed by winning in hand and taking the diamond finesse to dispose of the two spade losers on top diamonds but they opted to play diamonds from the top hoping for a 4-3 break or short ♦Q. The foul break meant that there was an inescapable spade loser for down one.

This is also the case after a spade lead and **spade** continuation. North must ruff in dummy and can take an unlikely diamond finesse but a high diamond continuation, ruffed by West, will give West two trump tricks.

Meanwhile, 5♣ will succeed whether the defence leads two rounds of spades or a low heart looking for a ruff. Declarer can play two rounds of trumps after the spade lead and continuation and force out the ♥A (retaining a trump in the South hand) or three rounds of trumps after the heart lead before playing on hearts to force out the ♥A if it was ducked initially. What a shame North did not answer South's minor suit request.

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