

CHARGE ACCOUNT**David J. Weiss**

	North	
	S: J7	
West	H: K6	East
S: AK10	D: AQ10854	S: 9542
H: QJ5	C: 965	H: A109832
D: J632		D: —
C: 432	South	C: J87
	S: Q863	
	H: 74	
	D: K97	
	C: AKQ10	

tured by declarer's jack as partner followed with the deuce. Had partner led a doubleton? No, he had ducked with KQ632, playing Rubin for A84. Perhaps it is better to return a low card in this somewhat unusual situation. Could our unfortunate West have gone wrong if his partner had returned the H3? Even with the seven and five of hearts exchanged, West might well go up. Match-points is a demanding scoring system.

North-South vulnerable, match-points. The auction:

North	East	South	West
P	P	INT*	P
3NT	P	P	P

* (15-17)

Trick 1: HQ, K, A, 4.

Trick 2: H8, 7, 5, 6

Trick 3: H3, S3, HJ, C5.

West now cashed the high spades for down one. Why was the heart suit mangled?

Steve Evans: "This hand is very interesting because it shows what can happen with a short-suit lead. West is scared that South has hearts, and East wants to get his partner to unblock. West, however, does not want to risk giving away a contract which is already beaten, and so makes a safe play for down one.

Anyway, I think East made a super play of the H8. If he leads back the H10, West might think he has A10x, A108x, or A109x and not unblock. From West's point of view, what is the H8 from? It can't be from A8x or else declarer would have 109xxx and would cover the H8. So it must be fourth best, and West should take the J and return the suit.

West didn't trust partner, but East made a super play which deserved a better fate."

Marty Shallon: "The heart suit would not have been mangled if West had given proper thought to East's lead of the H8. The 8 is either East's highest remaining heart or original fourth best. If it is fourth best, as is the case, West has no problem in winning the jack, cashing the high spades, and then exciting with the H5. If the H8 is high, then declarer would cover.

East's return of the H8, as opposed to the 10, is correct. If East had returned the 10, West would have to guess whether it came from A10x or from an A109?? holding. West could not be criticized for playing safely to defeat the contract."

Our panelists agree that East's fourth-best return is correct, and that West blew it. But is fourth-best the key to the kingdom? Ira Rubin once held A10984 of clubs, and partner Billy Eisenberg led the club three against a gambling 3NT. Rubin captured dummy's singleton 5 with his ace, and drew the seven from declarer. He then returned the club eight, which was cap-