

April 80

CHARGE ACCOUNT

by
David Weiss

<p>West S: AQ87432 H: — D: K963 C: 86</p>	<p>North S: 106 H: AK109 D: AJ872 C: QJ</p> <p>South S: 5 H: 85432 D: — C: AK109432</p>	<p>East S: KJ9 H: QJ76 D: Q1054 C: 75</p>
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E/W vulnerable, IMP scoring

West	North	East	South
3S	DbL	Pass	6C
Pass	Pass	Pass	

- Trick 1: SA, 6, 9, 5
- Trick 2: SQ, 10, J, C2
- Trick 3: C3, 6, J, 5
- Trick 4: CQ, 7, K, 8
- Trick 5: CA, S2, H9, SK
- Trick 6: C10, S3, D2, H6
- Trick 7: C9, S4, H10, H7

Since all of his hearts were good, declarer claimed. Who gets the charge?

Marshall Miles: "East gets the charge for several reasons. First, why did West lead the queen of spades at trick two? So that if East could ruff it, he would return a heart. And why would East want a heart return? Only because he had a void.

Forgetting about the spade queen, there are other important clues. South ought to have a freak hand for his bidding. Also, after East discarded his first heart, why didn't West discard a heart? Obviously, he had nothing in hearts to protect. And it couldn't be a case of keeping three small to prevent declarer from guessing that East had a doubleton queen. The reason for West's not discarding a heart at trick seven can only be that he had none to discard."

Steve Evans: "This disaster, which I remember is from a very high level match, is solely East's fault. I think West made the best possible play to every trick. East, on the other hand, didn't think at all.

West's lead to trick two should have told East that his partner wanted a heart return. Since East is looking at every heart down to the nine, there can be only one reason why West wants a heart lead. Also, West played his lowest spade at every discarding opportunity, which says that I definitely don't have anything in hearts. If West had a small stiff or doubleton heart, he should have discarded it.

However, even if East doesn't look at his partner's plays, he should beat the contract. South has 5 red suit cards. If East comes down to two hearts, South will make the hand any time he has 3, 4, or 5 hearts. If South has 1 or 2 hearts, East can still beat the hand by keeping 3 hearts and 3 diamonds in the six-card end position."

Steve's memory has served him well. This deal was played in the semi-finals of the 1975 Vanderbilt, and I submitted it to the panel because Kaplan's Bridge World account of it featured one of his rare incomplete analyses. Kaplan suggested that East should keep diamonds because of the message of the heart queen. I agree that this signal should have helped East, but it was hardly necessary to his finding the proper defense.

East needs to keep all of his diamonds only if South has the king of that suit, otherwise, declarer cannot have enough tricks. However, if declarer has the singleton king of diamonds, pitching hearts surrenders by setting up declarer's four-card heart suit. If declarer has the doubleton king of diamonds, he would have played to establish dummy's fifth diamond by ruffing. And if declarer had king-third or fourth of diamonds, he would play to squeeze East in the red suits by keeping three hearts in dummy, as the diamond threat would be in his hand. Since East needs to keep only Qx of diamonds, he need have no problem maintaining a heart guard. South cannot have the diamond king.