

FEB 81

CHARGE ACCOUNT

by
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| | | |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| | North | |
| | S-AK | |
| West | H-94 | East |
| S-3 | D-AKQJ5 | S-J962 |
| H-AJ762 | C-QJ53 | H-Q1053 |
| D-10862 | | D-73 |
| C-A106 | South | C-K97 |
| | S-Q108754 | |
| | H-K8 | |
| | D-94 | |
| | C-842 | |

Matchpoints. E-W vulnerable

| | | | |
|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| North | East | South | West |
| 1D | Pass | 1S | Pass |
| 3C | Pass | 3S | Pass |
| 4S | Pass | Pass | Pass |

Trick 1: HA*, 4, 10 8 *could be from AKx
Trick 2: H6, 9, Q, K

Declarer now played off two rounds of spades and started diamonds, forcing East to ruff. This cost the defense its trump trick, and South lost only two clubs and one heart. Who gets the charge?

Steve Evans: "This hand points up the problem of leading A from AKx. This one should have been solved anyway, but without A from AKx, it would be easy. Because of such problems, I think that Rusinow leads (K from AKx, Q from KQx, J from QJx, etc.) are much preferable to A from AKx as a way of clearing up the ambiguity of a standard K lead.

But, this deal was West's error. East's reason for playing the heart 10 was obviously to get partner to play three rounds of hearts to tap the dummy. Then East would get two trump tricks.

But West had a couple of chances to do the right thing. He might have led a club instead of the heart ace, and once he did choose the heart, he should certainly have switched to the club ace to test partner's reaction. When a defender, leading A from AK, chooses to lead an unsupported ace, he must remember that partner's signal is likely to be based on the presumption of AK. Once East plays the club 9 on West's ace, West will know to lead a club instead of a second heart."

Marshall Miles: "If South's hand were Q10xxxx, Jxx, xx, Ax, the only defense would be three rounds of hearts. A wishy-washy signal, such as 5-3 of hearts, might not persuade West to continue. West knows that he has only the ace, not the ace-king. East may or may not have the king of hearts. It can't cost West to play the ace of clubs at trick two to see what sort of signal partner gives. In fact, East can afford to signal with the ten of hearts, knowing that an expert defender in the West seat will cash the ace of clubs at trick two, if he has it, regardless of East's play to the first trick."

The panel has done a fine job on this hand, absolving East (whose heart 10 was criticized at the table) and enunciating an important principle for the situation when an unsupported ace has been led.

Steve's comment about the lead agreement may not be as pertinent as it seems. If East knew for certain that West did not have the heart king, he should still encourage in hearts. South might have, for example, Qxxxxx, Kxx, xxx, A and continuing hearts gives declarer a possible losing choice of plays. The real defensive point is that West simply must cash the club ace at trick two; if it gets ruffed and a heart trick (or even worse, a heart and a trump—South having QJxxxx, xxx, xxx, -), that's just too bad.

get away