

# Charge Account

David J. Weiss

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>
S—Q10763	S—KJ	S—9842
H—J10752	H—6	H—AKQ9
D—A53	D—KJ842	D—7
C—	C—KJ942	C—8765
	<b>South</b>	
	S—A5	
	H—843	
	D—Q1096	
	C—AQ103	

E—W vulnerable, IMP scoring

<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>West</b>
1D	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

- Trick 1: S6, J, 4, 5.  
 Trick 2: C2, 5, A, H2.  
 Trick 3: DQ, 3, 2, 7.  
 Trick 4: D10, A, 4, S2.  
 Trick 5: S3, K, 8, A.

Declarer cashed out his 11 tricks and the defenders discussed signalling. Who gets the charge?

**Marshall Miles:** "I think East was entirely at fault. From West's point of view, if South had the king or queen of hearts in place of the queen of clubs, a spade continuation would set the contract. Normally, East should show his length when playing to the first trick if it is obvious that he can't have a crucial honor. But here East should want a heart shift very badly since the suit will probably run for four or five tricks, and at worst, the shift will cost nothing. So East should have followed to the first trick with the two of spades, and on the second round of diamonds, he could discard either another spade to discourage a continuation or a club to let West know he doesn't have a club stopper."

**Steve Evans:** "West and East are a partnership made for each other, they both defend as badly as they bid. East is the major culprit on this hand. He made the old automatic signal in spades, which goaded partner into returning the suit at trick 5. It's as if East didn't notice the AKQ of hearts. He should certainly pitch a club at trick 4 to tell partner that declarer has the clubs. But West could have saved the day if he made an inference from

declarer's play. Why did South lead a club to the ace? If he were missing the club, then he would certainly play on diamonds first. The only conclusion is that both minors are solid and therefore a heart at trick 5 is the indicated play. However, West had to solve the problem of who was the idiot, partner or opponent. Of course, if either East or West knew how to bid, this disaster would never have happened. How East can pass one diamond with that hand is beyond me; either one heart or double seems definite. And West should probably have bid 3D over 2NT, although, granted the vulnerability was not in his favor. Not that we should give any awards to N—S for their bidding; 5 of a minor looks like a little more intelligent contract. They did know the quality of their opposition though."

Yes, the defenders, East especially, took a nap during the bidding. The auction was a disgrace. Notice that despite their having only 16 HCP, they own the hand. The distribution allows E—W to make a game or to defeat N—S in minor-suit games.

During the play, E—W had a chance to achieve their par result (+100 against 50 doubled), by taking their six tricks against 3NT. A meaningless 50 got away when West pitched his small heart, and another 510 when West continued spades at trick 5.

East also did not shine during the defense. His giving count is spades is silly because if West has the hoped-for Axxx of spades, declarer will probably take 10 tricks in the minors. Notice that East was consistent in his unfortunate view even after his sole viable hope, that declarer had Qx, Jxxx, A10x, AQ10x and would have to guess diamonds, had been dispelled at trick 3. Thus the really atrocious play, the one with no possibility of working, was the spade deuce at trick 4. At that moment, East could have saved the day by pitching the spade nine, hoping that partner could read the suit preference signal. The spade four at trick one was not as terrible in its effect as in its intent, since West probably couldn't read it anyway. But when East followed it up with the deuce, he killed the defense.

Could West have worked out how to save the day? If West can be sure that declarer has the club queen, he knows 11 tricks are there for the taking, and only hearts offer hope. But pity poor West. Why would declarer come to his hand in order to lead the diamond queen? Can this play make sense under any circumstance? The only rational infer-

ence is that declarer has misplayed the hand. A diamond to the queen at trick 2 sets the defenders a very difficult problem even if East has properly played the spade deuce at trick one). Perhaps partner had irrationally ducked the spade ace. It is always hard to know what inferences to trust when an opponent is obviously untrustworthy. When partner is no better, defense can be very embarrassing.

