

CHARGE ACCOUNT

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	North	
	S: K4	
	H: 10762	
West	D: QJ86	East
S: 10765	C: KJ7	S: J932
H: K83		H: Q954
D: 95	South	D: A72
C: A1098	S: AQ8	C: 42
	H: AJ	
	D: K1043	
	C: Q653	

Neither vul, IMP scoring.
The Bidding:

South	West	North	East
INT	P	3NT	P
P	P		

TRICK 1: Sp. 7, K, 9, 8
TRICK 2: D Q, A, 4, 5
TRICK 3: S 2, A, 5, 4

Declarer had no more difficulties with the contract. Should East be faulted for not finding the shift?

Marty Shallon: "Yes, East should be faulted for not shifting to a low heart. If West's lead is standard, then the only time that a continuation is correct is if West started with AQ107 of spades. If this were the case, would the lead have been the spade 7? This means that West's lead was either second best or top of nothing.

From the auction we know that West has 6-8 HCP. If these had been concentrated, West probably would have led that suit. Therefore, West should have an honor in each of two suits. This implies that West has either a heart honor and an entry in another suit or that West has honors in both minors. Combining this information with the knowledge that the Q9 of hearts is over the 10, and with a hope that West has the third heart instead of declarer, a low heart is the clear choice for East to return."

Steve Evans: East had a choice of plays at tricks 2 and 3. To defeat 3NT, East must assume partner has AQ107X of spades or Hxx of hearts with the diamond king of club ace. Unfortunately, East doesn't have the luxury of waiting around because one diamond trick might be all declarer needed if he had:

S: 8x H: AKx D: Kxx C: AQxxx

Also if West has the hand without spades East must rise with the diamond ace to get the hearts started from his side.

Since he can't wait for any more diamond tricks the only thing he has to go on is West's play to Trick 2. West's 5 ambiguous however; it could be from 9,5 or from 5,3 and East can't tell which. If West has spades and East doesn't lead one, East will be ridiculed.

In my mind, East has a guess and it seems better to return a spade since that beats the hand automatically when West has spades. If West doesn't have spades, he still needs specific cards to beat the hand.

The solution is to play attitude leads vs. NT. From AQ1075 West would lead the 5 and East would know he wanted the suit returned. From 10765, he would lead the 7 and East would know the only hope was in the heart suit."

Our panelists have neglected to mention the advantageous position East-West were in because they did not lead Fourth-best from worthless suits. Had West made a standard lead of the spade 5, East would have had no chance to go right.

Unfortunately, the spade seven (second from a bad suit) was not completely unambiguous. When this situation arises, an additional signal can serve to solve the problem. The signal is a variant of one introduced by Marty some months ago, in which third hand indicates that his holding in the suit originally led is better than it would seem by playing an unnecessarily high card in the first suit declarer attacks. Here the opening leader can signify that the suit he has led is good by playing an unnecessarily high card in declarer's suit. Thus with good spades, West should signal with his diamond nine.

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Of course, no signal is always interpretable. As Steve observes, the diamond 5 could have been played from 5,4, 5,3, or 5,4,3. In these cases West would be calling for the originally led suit. Perhaps East should have risked ducking the diamond queen. Incidentally, attitude leads are themselves not without difficulties. Suits such as AQ98 and J432 present problems when led, and the ~~recommended~~ signal can be used for clarification.