

CHARGE ACCOUNT

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	North	
	S-74	
West	H-A6432	East
S-83	D-K9642	S-K105
H-J5	C-8	H-KQ1087
D-AJ5		D-10
C-AQ8763	South	C-J1094
	S-AQJ962	
	H-9	
	D-Q873	
	C-K2	

North vulnerable, IMP scoring

North	East	South	West
Pass	Pass	1S	2C
Dbl.*	3H*	3S	4C
4S	Pass	Pass	Dbl.
Pass	Pass	Pass	

*Negative / **Fit showing (promising) clubs as well as hearts

Trick 1: HJ, **A**, 10, 9
 Trick 2: C8, J, K, **A**
 Trick 3: S8, 4, 10, **Q**
 Trick 4: D3, 5, **K**, 10
 Trick 5: D2, C4, DQ, **A**
 Trick 6: S3, 7, K, **A**
 Trick 7: D8, J, 4, **S5**
 Trick 8: HK, **S6**, H5, 2

Declarer now pitched his losing club on the fifth diamond. Who gets the charge?

Marshall Miles: "East is entirely at fault. I don't care much for West's double, and it may have caused East to believe that the jack of hearts was a singleton. However, xx, J, AJx, AQxxxxx (after East's bid showing club support) would be no better a defensive hand than the actual one.

Also, I'll admit that South adopted a strange line of play (a spade finesse at trick two, followed by a low diamond, looks more logical).

Nevertheless, the only way East could gain the lead is by ruffing. If South held AQJxxx, xx, Qxxx, K, (a) he would be unlikely to lead a club at trick two, and (b) he would surely pick up East's trump so that he couldn't get in to cash his heart winner. When the opponents deliberately give you an option, presumably it is not with the intention of helping you."

Steve Evans: "West's defense certainly seems correct although an original trump lead would have been my choice. The reasoning for East's play at trick 8 is hard to follow. Apparently he was playing his partner for xx, J, AJx, AQxxxx. Although this is conceivable, the seventh club would have made West's double even more insane than it was. Also, this would give South AQJ9xx, xx, Q87x, K. Possible, but an awfully aggressive bid. And why would declarer play a club at trick 2? Logically he should finesse trumps, lead a diamond to the king, and finesse trumps again. This is the most obvious reason why East's play was incorrect.

East was correct to ruff partner's winner at trick 7 though, since he knows to lead a **club**. Partner might make an error and lead a heart at trick 8 even though he shouldn't, for the same reasoning given above."

The panel has correctly focussed on East's error, one which allowed the contract to be made at the moment it was about to be defeated. And surely East was wrong to play his partner for having doubled with a seven-card club suit. Incidentally, though both panelists disliked West's double, notice that it is precisely this action which simplifies East's defensive dilemma. The panel also noted declarer's inferior line of play. South could simply have finessed trumps twice and led toward dummy's diamonds, relying on either a 2-2 diamond split or a natural error by West, ducking when he holds A and two others. Could this inferior line have been chosen because of the double? A call which induces a competent declarer to go down in a contract he would normally make should not be criticized.

Still, West has been let off too easy. Declarer could have made the hand legitimately after the spade return at trick 3. He can ruff a club, ruff a heart back to hand and cash the spade ace. Next he should give up a spade, so he can see who has the king. When East wins the trick, a complete count is available. After regaining the lead, declarer can lead the diamond queen; and subsequently a finesse against West's remaining Jx of diamonds is marked. No other return at trick 3 can interfere with this line; a club or heart return merely changes the timing, while a diamond is **too late**. Thus, the club play by declarer was perhaps unduly criticized. In fact, because it cuts the defenders' communications, it is the only play to guarantee the contract on a double-dummy basis!

So, should E/W have saved then? No, West could have, and should have, beaten the contract off the top. East's 3H call promised at least 9

cards in the rounded suits. The opponents' bidding marked them with a 6-2 spade fit (not guaranteed, of course, but with 7 spades South might have jumped to game instead of bidding 3S; and with 3 spades, North would probably have raised immediately instead of doubling). So West should place his partner with 3 spades and, therefore, one diamond. The ace of diamonds should have been the opening lead, not as a random brilliancy but logically deduced from the auction. And if the appearance of the dummy then called for a heart switch, West would still be on lead.