

# Charge Account by David J. Weiss

<p><b>West</b> S—107632 H—98 D—AJ95 C—64</p>	<p><b>North</b> S—KQ95 H—AKJ6 D—1064 C—102</p> <p><b>South</b> S—8 H—Q3 D—K832 C—QJ9873</p>	<p><b>East</b> S—AJ4 H—107542 D—Q7 C—AK5</p>
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*Neither vulnerable. IMP scoring.*

<p><b>North</b> ID INT Pass Trick 1: H9, 6, 7, <b>Q</b> Trick 2: S8, 2, <b>K</b>, 4 Trick 3: C2, <b>K</b>, 3, 4 Trick 4: H10, 3, 8, <b>J</b> Trick 5: C10, <b>A</b>, 7, 6</p>	<p><b>East</b> IH Pass Pass Pass</p>	<p><b>South</b> Dbl.* 2C *denied as many as 4 spades Trick 6: DQ, K, <b>A</b>, 4 Trick 7: S3, 9, J, <b>C8</b> Trick 8: <b>CQ</b>, S6, SQ, C5 Trick 9: D2, <b>J</b>, 6, 7</p>	<p><b>West</b> Pass Pass Pass</p>
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Finally declarer could claim. Who gets the charge?

**Steve Evans:** "Each defender made an error on this hand; East at trick 2 and West at trick 7. At trick 2, East knows declarer has 1 or 3 spades, probably 2 or 3 hearts, and undoubtedly 6 clubs since with 5 he would have either raised diamonds or passed INT. If South has 3 spades, he's probably 3-2-2-6 or 3-3-1-6. However, if South held either of these patterns, then West would probably have bid 2D over 2C. Also, ducking the spade doesn't gain East a great deal. So he should win the spade and play the diamond queen; hearts can come later if necessary. West at trick 7 knows that his partner wants a spade return. However, East must have the spade ace (otherwise, South has an opening bid) and the only holding with which he'd duck would be AJx. East's Q of diamonds would tend to be from Qx but it doesn't have to be. Unfortunately, West's only hope at this point is East's actual hand, so that he can exit with the spade A after securing his ruff of the third round of diamonds. West gets more of the charge because he knew more about the hand when he made his error."

**Marshall Miles:** "I think West deserves 60% of the blame and East 40%. East made the first clear-cut error when he failed to win the ace of spades at trick two. It might not occur to him that South would make a negative

double with a singleton spade, but presumably he was alerted. Even if South has 3-3-2-5 distribution, for example, it is difficult to see how it can cost to win the first spade trick—so that West will have an easy exit in spades after ruffing the second round of hearts (the 10). East took a needless risk if South could hold a singleton spade. However, West made an impossible play at trick 7. South can't have the ace of spades. With that, he would be too strong for the bidding. Also, with Axx of spades, declarer would undoubtedly win the opening lead in dummy to lead a trump. So if West was trying to give his partner a spade ruff, he was mistaken. His only chance at this point was to play declarer for a four-card diamond suit.

It is not often that the defenders have a chance to recover from two mistakes like this. But if West had played small at trick nine, declarer might still misguess. Putting up the J was a give-up play."

I do not share the panel's view here. I see East as the major culprit on this deal. First, his peculiar overall allowed N-S to stop in a playable contract. (Notice that after a pass, a doomed 2D or a hopeless 3C is the best they can achieve.) Second, his pointless duck of the spade A jeopardized the easy set the defenders were headed for.

To be sure, a more inspired play by West at trick 7 could have saved the day. But West's picture of the hand was wrong because he thought East had done the right thing. When would East's duck of the spade Ace be correct? Why, when he had A4, in order to deny late entry to dummy. Since West had given correct count in the spade suit, he had to assume East was doing something sensible. On this construction the diamond Q was played from Qxx, hoping for a misguess from declarer. (Since declarer thought West had the spade Ace, he had to play the diamond K, albeit the right guess was made for the wrong reason.) West was disappointed that declarer had solved the diamond problem, but that was no reason to concede an overtrick. Returning J and another diamond would allow declarer to pitch his spade loser on one of dummy's hearts, so West tried to cash the defense's spade trick first.

After recovering from the shock of seeing the spade ruffed, West correctly snatched the diamond J at trick 9. Rather than being a give-up play, this was a realistic acceptance of a made contract. Ducking cannot gain. If declarer guesses correctly to go up with the 10, two overtricks roll in; while if he misguesses and plays low, the contract will be made anyway. When East wins the diamond 7 and exits with the spade A, declarer (with a complete count) simply discards a diamond from hand and East has only hearts left to play.