

CHARGE ACCOUNT

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	North	
	S:QJ943	
West	H:J	East
S:A72	D:1097532	S:10865
H:AK2	C:—	H:Q63
D:K84		D:A6
C:10642	South	C:J875
	S:K	
	H:1098754	
	D:J	
	C:AKQ93	

Neither side vulnerable, match-points.

The auction:

North	East	South	West
P	P	1H	P
1S	P	2C	P
3D	P	3H	P
P	P		

Trick 1: Heart A, J, 3, 4.

Trick 2: Diamond 4, 2, A, ~~6, J~~

Trick 3: Spade 5, K, 7, 3.

Declarer now gave up two trump tricks and one club, to achieve down one. Whose responsibility was the extra undertrick?

Steve Evans: "This shows how the defenders can get screwed up through stupid plays. The lead of the HA must be to confuse partner; certainly declarer knew he was off the A and K. The diamond switch seems right but why East felt he had to return a spade is beyond me. A diamond return would be safest and best, although declarer could then give West a problem with a spade lead. Best defense would be HK lead and diamond shift. Then East would know South had a ten-high trump suit and would inform his partner by leading trumps. Then West would know to take the spade A, because

(Continued on page 4)

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(Continued from page 2)

South wouldn't pull 3D with KX, 109xxx, J, AKQx. Therefore declarer's pattern must be 1-6-1-5."

Paul Maier: "West's play states that he perceives East as a moron! East's play of the spade 5 clearly foresaw the problem West would have if declarer simply led the SK. West would have no clue as to the number of spades East had. East surely had to have 3 or 4 spades and would not play small from both holdings. Clearly the 5 is from four small (10865) on this hand. It's unbelievable that West could go wrong given the auction and his partner's having played the most informative card in his hand."

Marty Shallon: "It seems correct that East should lead a spade at trick 3 because of he does not, South will win the trick and continue with the spade K at trick 4. This will be almost impossible for West to read, and so declarer may escape for down one. The only problem remaining is which spade to lead. West cannot read a lead of the 5 or the 6 because with South playing the king, it seems very likely that South can also have the 6 or the 5. The lead of the 8 tends to deny

a higher card. This would imply that South started with the K-10.

Therefore, the only possible hope is for East to lead the spade 10. While this lead does not guarantee having four spades, it certainly denies having three. Also, the lead of the 10 with the QJ9 in the dummy must be asking something special of partner. Armed with these facts, West should not have great difficulty in winning the spade ace and beating the contract two tricks."

I always love it when the panelists disagree with one another. It seems to me that Steve and Paul have not given the defenders sufficient credit. West led the right suit and switched to the right suit, perhaps intending that partner would return a spade. East too did the right thing. The only problem was that there was a lack of agreement on how to transmit the count information. Perhaps in this sort of situation the simplest style to adopt is to lead the card with which one would have signaled; the least ambiguous card to show an even number is the ten. When one is known not to have an honor, count may be given unambiguously.