

# Charge Account

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## North

S—Q5

H—J72

D—AQJ8

C—AKQ7

## South

S—A109863

H—109

D—92

C—J62

## East

S—~~K10763~~ 742

H—A63

D—K10763

C—109

## West

S—KJ

H—KQ854

D—54

C—8543

Neither side vulnerable, IMP scoring

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

- Trick 1: **HK**, 2, 6, 9.
- Trick 2: H5, 7, A, 10.
- Trick 3: H3, **S3**, H4, J.
- Trick 4: S6, **K**, 5, 4.
- Trick 5: HQ, D8, D7, **S8**.

Declarer now led a spade to the queen, followed by a club to his jack. He drew the last trump and claimed. Who gets the charge?

**Marshall Miles:** "West is entirely at fault. He should lead the queen of hearts at trick two and switch to a diamond. I don't have strong feelings as to whether East should play the three or six of hearts at the first trick, but that has nothing to do with West's defense. He can't tell who has the three.

Perhaps West led low at the second trick because he was afraid that East had started with the doubleton ace (and didn't overtake because he thought West had six of them). But East wouldn't raise to three hearts with the doubleton ace and, at most, one high card on the side."

**Steve Evans:** "This hand is an example of poor signaling followed by worse reasoning. When West leads the heart king and North has the jack, East's play need not encourage or discourage a heart lead. This is because when the king holds, West knows his partner has the ace; if declarer had it, he would win the trick so that the jack would be worth a trick. So East's play should give count, and therefore he should play the three."

West must try to visualize how the contract can be beaten. Either East-West will need two hearts, one trump and the diamond king, or they will need two hearts and two trump tricks. Whatever declarer's hand is, a second heart should be led. If declarer has only one heart, the tap must be continued; and if declarer has the expected two hearts, he must not be allowed to pitch one on a high club. But West must remain on lead to push a diamond through. I can't see why West wanted his partner on lead at trick 2."

There are two basic hand types on which the defense can prevail. One is the high card type, on which East will score either the spade ace (West need only cash a second heart), or diamond king (West must cash a second heart and shift immediately to a diamond). The other type involves scoring a second trump trick. If East has four spades, the defense has a chance. East might score a club ruff, or if his four trumps include the nine, a trump trick can be promoted if West plays a heart every time he can.

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The defense can cater to all of these hands, but care is necessary. West must have faith that his partner will be able to direct the defense. East can tell whether the defense should try for a diamond trick or a trump promotion, because he has the key holdings. East will assume his partner has a trump trick, since that is required under any construction.

West should play the queen of hearts at trick 2. This can never cost. If East held xxxx, Axx, xxxxx, x, a hand with which I would raise hearts, he should overtake the second heart (establishing the jack of hearts cannot matter) and switch to a club. If East held the actual hand, West should switch to a diamond. But if East held 9xxx, Axx, xxxx, Jx, a hand with which I would also raise, although it is marginal, West should play a third heart. How can West tell what to do?

Why, he should see whether East has *encouraged* in hearts. If East has the king of diamonds, he should play up the line in hearts; if East has the potential trump trick, he should high-low in hearts. Count is not the primary obligation here. East misdefended the hand by playing the six of hearts at trick one. But West gets the charge, for when he continued a low heart at trick two he cut off one of the defense's primary options. As Marshall correctly observed, West could not tell what message East was intending because he didn't know East's heart holding. Had East held his actual hand with the three and nine of hearts switched, East would have been signalling correctly.