

	<b>North</b>	
	S—AK1084	
	H—84	
<b>West</b>	D—AQ1092	<b>East</b>
S—963	C—K	S—Q752
H—KJ73		H—1096
D—J8643	<b>South</b>	D—K7
C—10	S—J	C—A952
	H—AQ52	
	D—5	
	C—QJ87643	

*Both vulnerable, IMPs*

North	East	South	West
1S	Pass	2C	Pass
2D	Pass	3C*	Pass
3D	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		*not forcing

- Trick 1:** H3, 4, 9, Q  
**Trick 2:** C3, 10, K, 2  
**Trick 3:** S4, 2, J, 3  
**Trick 4:** CQ, D3, D2, CA  
**Trick 5:** H10, 2, 7, 8  
**Trick 6:** H6, A, J, D9  
**Trick 7:** CJ, S6, D10, C5  
**Trick 8:** C8, D4, S8, C9

East was end played and had to give dummy 4 of the last five. Who gets the charge?

**Steve Evans:** "East made a couple of errors on this deal, but West might have saved the day. I think East should win the club at trick 2 to play back the heart 10. He still has a stopper in clubs and South may be encouraged to go up with the heart ace. If that happens, the defense will prevail easily. One reason not to duck is that if South has either pointed jack he will set up that suit. Also, East should go up with the spade queen at trick 3, although that would be wrong if partner had the jack. In the actual case, the contract will be beaten if East wins the spade queen, plays a heart, overtaken by West for a diamond return. However, at trick 5, West knows everything about the hand. South's distribution must be 1-4-1-7 or 1-4-2-6 with the honors he had and no others. West should overtake the heart to play a diamond. If South guesses wrong, he will go down; otherwise, the contract will still be made."

**Marshall Miles:** "At the fifth trick, West ought to overtake the heart 10 with his jack and return a diamond to prevent East from being end played. If East wins the first round of clubs to return a heart, and if South plays the ace expecting the clubs to run, the defense would be easy. But I don't think East can tell what is best so early in the hand. Also, South should realize that the clubs are not breaking, or East wouldn't take the ace."

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In my view, East bears the entire responsibility for this disaster. He defended mechanically. I'm sure his ducks were made smoothly—but without looking into the predictable future. Let us look at his critical plays in turn. The first decision concerns the club ace. I agree with ducking; it's hard to see how it can cost and East wants to see where declarer goes next. When declarer, in fact, turned to a low spade, East should have paused. South has at most two spades (so the auction tells us), but does he have the jack? Obviously, East should take the trick in that case but what an embarrassment if South has one or two small! Well, anything is possible, but why would South start spades with such holdings when diamonds offer superior prospects because of the powerful spots that East can see? South would likely leave his spade entries intact and try to smother the jack of diamonds. The severe danger in ducking the spade is that if South does have the jack, the fourth round of spades will be sure to end play East.

After snatching the spade queen, East should return the heart 10. It is tempting to try the six of hearts instead, to force West to win the trick and play a diamond, but declarer might have the heart KQ instead of AQ, and the defense could run the suit. Even if declarer guesses to duck the heart, the defense prevails unless declarer finds a double-dummy line. With no substantial clues to the unseen hands, a flesh-and-blood declarer will win the heart and finesse the diamond queen for the contract. East will win the king, cash the club ace, and put a heart through. Down two.