

By DAVID WEISS

Trick 1: S7, 2, 6, Q.
Trick 2: HA, 5, 7, 3.
Trick 3: H2, C8, H10, K.
Trick 4: C6, K, A, 2.
Trick 5: CO, 5, 9, H4.

Steve Evans: "East gets most of the charge. Returns like the club 6 almost always create problems because partner will never believe you had three small and led the middle one. If you lead high, partner will know you have no honors. Leading low will give partner count but leading middle just confuses. I think East should ignore partner's signal and return a trump. He knows the declarer's losers aren't going anywhere so it's best to play passively. West's play of the club queen can probably never gain, but I'm sure he never considered that his partner had three clubs."

The real point of the hand is that a club exit is so unlikely to be necessary. Even on deals on which West can be thrown in with a diamond and forced to lead a club, breaking up the endplay by pushing through the club early does not gain. On such constructions, the early club merely establishes the club jack for an eventual spade pitch. The trump exit avoids all accidents by allowing West to infer his partner's club length. The only risk is that West will be annoyed at having his signal ignored. So long as the defenders are careful in their discards if declarer chooses to run his trumps, the defense will collect all of its entitlement plus the gift of a trump trick.