

CHARGE ACCOUNT . . . By David Weiss

		North				E-W vulnerable, IMP scoring		
		S—J1098						
		H—9						
West		D—KQ73	East	South		West	North	
	S—Q72	C—Q982		1C*	Pass	3D**	Pass	
	H—K104			3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass	
	D—1052			**4-1-4-4 pattern, 8+ HCP				
		South						
		S—K5						
		H—AQ7652						
		D—J6						
		C—AK3						

As the cards lay, if West had played the diamond 10, East would have ducked the diamond. Then the defense could not have gone wrong. Even if declarer had held AQJxxx of hearts, West could win the heart finesse, play a diamond and thus force declarer to guess spades. By missing this seemingly trivial good play, West gave his partner a chance to screw things up. As partners do, East seized the opportunity.

I can see why East played a heart instead of a spade. East correctly guessed that the club queen was an entry to dummy and he was afraid to establish spade tricks lest two tricks there be enough. Even setting up an additional diamond trick might not do the job. A heart trick was needed for the defense and so East went for it. This defense was risky since, clearly, hearts was declarer's longest suit, but the decision was not in itself fatal. I'm not sure that the jack was such a terrible card to play, but East was lucky enough to be dealt a better one. Had he returned the heart 8, West would not have dared to return a heart and would have been odds-on to find a winning defense.
