

Charge Account

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West			
S—AJ752	North	S—Q96	
H—K106		H—AQ72	
D—Q		D—K752	East
C—AJ96		C—108	S—1083
	South		H—J84
	S—K4		D—10943
	H—953		C—Q43
	D—AJ86		
	C—K752		

IMPs, East-West vulnerable

The auction:

West	North	East	South
1S	Pass	Pass	Dbl.
Pass	2S	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Trick 1: S5, 9, 10, K
 Trick 2: H5, 6, Q, 4
 Trick 3: DK, 3, 6, Q
 Trick 4: D2, 4, 8, S2
 Trick 5: DA, S7, D5, D9
 Trick 6: DJ, HK, D7, D10
 Trick 7: S4, A, 6, 8
 Trick 8: H10, A, 8, 3
 Trick 9: SQ, 3, H9, SJ

With South and West both down to four clubs, declarer was able to force a club trick by leading the 10 from dummy. Who gets the charge?

Marshall Miles: "East is at fault, although the hand might be one of Eddie Kantar's. With the five of spades lead, can 3NT be made or defeated with best play by both sides? It is unrealistic to expect double dummy play.

East got the defenders off to a bad start at trick one. He knew declarer had Ax or Kx of spades—consequently two spade tricks whatever East might play, so he should play the three to show distribution. Suppose that South held Kxx, Jxx, AJ10x, Qxx. The most promising defense would be to discard spades, holding all the hearts (to avoid declarer's getting an extra trick there) and all the clubs so as to take four club tricks and the ace of spades. If West realizes that South has four clubs, he will abandon clubs, save spades, and play his partner for the jack of hearts."

Steve Evans: "It is hard to see how West was planning to beat this hand based on the way he defended. To have any hope of a set he has to assume partner has a club honor. If so, the defense is pretty clear. Pitch a club on the second diamond, heart king on the third (if partner doesn't have the jack, West will get end-played anyway), and a

spade on the last diamond. This guarantees beating the contract no matter how declarer proceeds. Another alternative is to play partner for the club king and no heart jack. This seems less likely, although possible. West's defense, though, catered to neither possibility. This hand does point out the difficulty the defense has when declarer knows one defender has almost all of the high cards."

This is, indeed, a tough deal and it is not surprising that the panelists differed in their assessments. Clearly, West has to do the hard work, since he can see the high cards.

At trick 4, West can count eight tricks for declarer: two spades, two hearts, and four diamonds. If South has a fifth diamond or the king-queen of clubs, the ninth trick will be available immediately. South should not have an immediate extra heart trick, because a 4-4 fit would have come to light in the auction. The cards West must worry about are the heart jack and the club king.

If declarer has both of these key cards, the defense has no chance. After running diamonds, South will exit with a spade and West cannot escape the end-play. Can West create an end position which will cater to partner's having one (or both) of the crucial cards?

Yes. West must pitch his low club and two spades. Then, if declarer exists with the spade, West must grab it and a) if East has the club king, West must exit with a club, win the club return, and lock dummy in with a spade; b) if East has the heart jack (and no club king), West must throw dummy in with the spade queen immediately. On this line, West must make sure he does not win the defense's heart trick, and East must play the club queen on the first club trick.

This defense requires precision and delicacy. As we can see, West must know which key card his partner holds in order to defend accurately. The only signalling opportunity East has is during the cashing of the diamond suit. So suit preference must give the message, and on the actual deal East should have played the diamond ten before the nine.

However, the terrible East hand presented its owner with another opportunity for glory. East might well have split his diamonds at trick 4. Then declarer would be forced to get back to dummy in hearts. On this line, West must not play the king of hearts lest declarer simply duck it and subsequently have an easy path. However, after declarer wins the heart ace (if he ducks the ten, East can overtake and shoot back the club queen), West again must face the problem of what to pitch on the third and fourth diamonds. But now it will be easier for West, since if declarer has the club king West cannot beat him. So long as he has the king of hearts, West cannot beat him. West will throw the king of hearts on the third diamond, and the hand will be set. Since East could conceivably foresee all this, and he knows that he doesn't have the club ace or king and that he does have the heart jack, East should get the charge. But if this were East's worst crime of the session, I would not be too hard on him.