

# CHARGE ACCOUNT

David J. Weiss

<b>North</b>		
S: AQJ54		
<b>West</b>	H: 2	<b>East</b>
S: 8732	D: AQ10542	S: K6
H: A7	C: 10	H: QJ9654
D: K983		D: 7
C: 653	<b>South</b>	C: A982
	S: 109	
	H: K1083	
	D: J6	
	C: KQJ74	

North-South vul., IMP scoring —

North	East	South	West
1D	1H	2C	P
2S	P	2NT	P
3D	P	3NT	P
P	P		

Trick 1: HA, 2, 6, 3.

Trick 2: H7, D2, HJ, HK.

Trick 3: DJ, 3, 4, 7.

Trick 4: D6, D8, D10, H5.

Trick 5: C10, A, 7, 3.

Trick 6: HQ, H8, C5, D5.

Trick 7: S6, 10, 3, 4.

Declarer now took the rest of the tricks, cashing clubs and then spades. Who gets the charge?

**Paul Maier:** "All of the defensive plays but one were reasonable, even logical. West might have helped his partner somewhat by furnishing count in diamonds, but this is not critical since East knows that the hand will always make if South has a third diamond. Taking the club ace was the killer. If East ducks two clubs, the hand can be beaten. I can find no hand where the snatch is necessary, but the hand is complex. I would not seduce a partner who made that error, but I would not divorce one either."

**Steve Evans:** "Winning the club ace was the disaster. East's exit of a low spade after the grievous error was actually quite a good play, since the right spots and the wrong guess offered the only hope."

**Marty Shallon:** "While the lead of the heart ace seems like a normal lead it proved to be very unlucky for the defense since it seems to guarantee the contact for South. If West had analyzed

the auction more carefully he would not have led a heart. North has shown at least four spades and six diamonds; South has shown clubs and hearts. By leading the heart ace West is not only setting up an extra trick for South, but he is also improving declarer's timing. From the auction West knows that a diamond lead is almost sure to bring disaster. This leaves clubs and spades to consider. A club lead might work (in fact, on the given hand it does work if the defense is double dummy); however, a club lead has a good chance of finessing partner. This leaves a spade as the only alternative. This lead is also correct because it is leading through dummy, it is unlikely to give up any trick, it is unlikely to set up a suit for declarer that he could not set up for himself, it may cut communication between two distributional hands, and most importantly, because it works."

The panel has looked at two key plays, but only one is really crucial. Grabbing the club ace looks like, and was, an atrocious play; but on the actual hand it did not matter. If the club ten had been allowed to hold, declarer could continue with a small spade from dummy, and the defense is powerless. Marty's attack on the opening lead is more apt. For precisely the reasons that Marty details, releasing the key control is wrong. West made the critical error without a second thought. Until opponents have the courage and foresight to bid no trump without stoppers, such leads should be repressed. Even if East held South's heart 10, so that leading partner's suit would have been successful, the contract would have been defeated by a spade lead.