

# Charge Account

by David J. Weiss

## North

S-Q1076

H-K95

D-J96

C-KQJ

## South

S-J94

H-AQJ10762

D-AK

C-9

## East

S-853

H-3

D-752

C-1087543

## West

S-AK2

H-84

D-Q10843

C-A62

Matchpoints, E-W vulnerable

The auction:

## South

1H

4H

## West

Pass

Pass

## North

1S

Pass

## East

Pass

Pass

**Trick 1:** D4, 6, 2, A

**Trick 2:** HA, 4, 5, 3

**Trick 3:** HQ, 8, 9, C8

**Trick 4:** C9, A, 6, 3

**Trick 5:** S2, 6, 8, 9

Now declarer made 6! Who gets the charge?

**Steve Evans:** "Assigning blame in matchpoints to greedy anti-percentage actions is difficult. Here I'm sure West was so happy he hadn't led a spade at trick one, and so sure South would misguess spades, that he went for the throat. Unfortunately, he wasn't correct in his placement of the spade jack. West may have misconstrued East's play of the C8 at trick 3 as indicating something in spades. Certainly it was pretty stupid to play the 8; the five or four would have been more appropriate. But since West's play works only when declarer has specifically xxx in spades, he has to be extremely hungry to risk it."

**Marshall Miles:** "East gets 100% of the blame. His first discard should have been the three of spades to show nothing in the suit. It was not necessary to show his club distribution because, with dummy's entry in trumps, West would have no reason to duck with the ace. If East felt like showing his length in clubs, he could wait until the suit was played and signal while his partner was winning the trick.

It would be a mistake—or an indication that he lacked partnership confidence—for West not to underlead his ace-king of spades. At the highest level, East was pleading for an underlead to his jack of spades."

I would not wish to disagree with Marshall, who literally wrote the book on matchpoint play. All the same, his analysis requires a superhuman East. To be sure, East's signal with the club 8 was pointless; and he should have played his low spade. On the other hand, if his yardborough had been improved by switching the spade jack for the eight, could he possibly have visualized the necessity for an underlead of his partner's hypothetical AK of spades? Is anyone that good?

So East was wrong, but West should be more philosophical. He gambled and lost. West might have compromised by playing the spade king first; this does not give the show away, since that is what he would play with KJx. When East's three appears, West might chicken out and cash his ace.