

APPEAL	Non-NABC+ Seven
Subject	Unauthorized Information (UI) - Tempo
DIC	Bill Michael
Event	Tuesday Evening Side Swiss
Session	Only
Date	July 24, 2007

BD#	23
VUL	Both
DLR	South

2540 Masterpoints	
♠	K Q 6 4 2
♥	8
♦	A K T 9 8 2
♣	A

1135 Masterpoints	
♠	9 7 5
♥	J T 5 3 2
♦	
♣	J T 6 3 2

Summer 2007 Nashville, Tennessee	
7254 Masterpoints	
♠	A J 8
♥	A 7 4
♦	Q 7 6 5
♣	8 5 4

1491 Masterpoints	
♠	T 3
♥	K Q 9 6
♦	J 4 3
♣	K Q 9 7

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	1♦	Pass	2♦ ¹
Pass	4♦ ²	Pass	5♣ ³
Pass	5♦ ⁴	Pass	6♦
Pass	Pass		

Final Contract	6♦ by North
Opening Lead	♥K
Table Result	6♦ +1, N/S +1390
Director Ruling	5♦ +2, N/S +640
Panel Ruling	6♦ +1, N/S +1390

(1)	2♦ = inverted, not Alerted
(2)	4♦ = minor suit Roman Key Card Blackwood
(3)	5♣ explained as 0 or 3 key cards after the auction completed by North. South intended to show 2 key cards and trump queen, no correction to explanation given
(4)	5♦ = slight break in tempo

The Facts: As stated above. Director determined there was a slight break in tempo (BIT) with the 5♦ bid.

The Ruling: There was a BIT. There are logical alternatives to bidding 6♦, including pass. The BIT suggested the action taken. The result was adjusted per Law 16A2 and Law 12C2 to 5♦ making seven, N/S plus 640.

The Appeal: N/S attended the review. E/W did not attend, but did stop by to state they trusted N/S to fairly present the facts. South said he had enough to bid 6♦ over 4♦, but thought that they might have a grand slam. He said he would have bid the grand slam if he held a sixth diamond, or maybe even a fifth. He repeated his belief that 5♦ asked for kings, although he did not see how he could hold one and be a passed hand. North said he had a senior moment, he was tired and could not remember what 5♣ showed. He just knew that N/S should not be playing 5♣, so he bid 5♦. He estimated the break in tempo at 5-7 seconds. North thought less, but certainly no more.

The Decision: Three players were asked for their opinions. Two were absolutely positive 5♦ asked for kings and South had to bid 6♦. North could not have fewer than three key cards and still be willing to immediately force his side to 5♦ even if South had zero aces. The third said he would pass because he thought 5♥ would ask for kings. He also said that a 5-7 second BIT at this level of bidding should not be considered UI and saw no problem with bidding 6♦. The question was asked “How do you sign off in 5♦ over the 5♣ bid?” The answer was that if partner shows two key cards and the trump Q, you have to be going to slam.

Based on the expert testimony, South’s contention that he was forced to bid on regardless of any BIT was accepted. Since Law 16A2 was not violated, the table result of N/S plus 1390 was restored.

The Panel: Charles MacCracken (Reviewer), Patty Holmes, Millard Nachtwey, Tom Whitesides and Gary Zeiger.

Players Consulted: Donna Compton, Gary Cohler and Jeff Roman.

Commentary:

Polisner What does a “slight BIT” mean? In a Roman Keycard Blackwood sequence which starts with something other than 4NT, most players do not have the meaning of the responses committed to memory and will need to take a few seconds to make sure that the response is understood correctly. If there was not an unequivocal BIT, then the table result stands. However, even if there was UI, how can there be any LA holding two aces and the trump queen as a passed hand?

Rigal There is bridge, and there is Non-NABC+ bridge. The idea that one could not sign off in the trump suit after keycard is shocking, even to me as a case-hardened studier of the idiocies of bridge players. The argument that as a passed hand you can’t have more is a reasonable one, but what really seems to have happened is that South bid on because of his partner’s tempo or failure to Alert 2♦. Was there authorized information (AI) to allow him to do so? The canvassed players say yes; those who live by the canvassed players die by it too.

Smith Five to seven seconds to sign off after asking for aces seems to me to be a significant amount of time and shows doubt about whether to sign off or not. So, I don't agree with the third polled player's opinion on that matter. But I am swayed to the correctness of the panel's ruling by the bridge arguments of the other two polled players. I would have preferred to see a few more polled players with the same opinion to make me more comfortable that the third player's opinion was an anomaly.

Wildavsky A close one. The poll showed that pass was a LA. Was there UI, and if so what did it demonstrably suggest? I have no quarrel with either the tournament director's or the panel's ruling.

Wolff Allowing 6♦ making seven would be my choice as it was the committee's, but there are more important issues to be tackled.

1. Since South, being a passed hand, could have no key cards (KQJ of both hearts and clubs are still out there) isn't it conventional for the Blackwood bidder to be conservative and allow the responder to press on when he has his announced three?
2. In these days of so many Blackwood asks and some different responses, how can we be sure that both parties know the asks and the responses. Obviously we can't, so in order to form a more perfect bridge union, shouldn't we require close to perfect asks and answers by the convention users instead of soft compliance.

I think we should spend some time directly discussing these two points rather than fly to worlds we know not of. Granted that is not as much fun, but somebody has got to do it.