

APPEAL	NABC+ THREE
Subject	Unauthorized Information(UI) - Tempo
DIC	Henry Cukoff
Event	Platinum Pairs
Session	Second Qualifying
Date	March 12, 2010

BD#	<b>25</b>
VUL	<b>E/W</b>
DLR	<b>North</b>

<b>William Wickham</b>	
♠	K T 6
♥	K 6 3
♦	A K Q 5
♣	6 4 2

<b>Perry Johnson</b>		<b>Spring 2010 Reno, NV</b>	<b>Jeff Meckstroth</b>	
♠	A Q J 7 2		♠	9 8 5 3
♥	8 7 5 2		♥	Q 9 4
♦	8 2		♦	J 9
♣	9 7		♣	J T 8 5

<b>Marshall Miles</b>	
♠	4
♥	A J T
♦	T 7 6 4 3
♣	A K Q 3

West	North	East	South
	1NT <sup>1</sup>	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	3♦
Pass	3NT <sup>2</sup>	Pass	4♣
Pass	6♦	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Final Contract	<b>6♦ by North</b>
Opening Lead	<b>Low spade</b>
Table Result	<b>Made 6, N/S + 920</b>
Director Ruling	<b>3NT N made 5, N/S + 460</b>
Committee Ruling	<b>3NT N made 5, N/S + 460</b>

(1)	15-17.
(2)	Slight break in tempo (BIT).

**The Facts:** The director was called when dummy's hand was exposed and again after the play of the hand was completed.  
North and East agreed that the BIT was about 6-7 seconds in length.

**The Ruling:** The BIT demonstrably suggested bidding on and pass was judged to be a logical alternative. The result was adjusted to 3NT by North making five, N/S plus 460 for both sides. Laws 16B1(a) and (b) and 12C.

**The Appeal:** N/S appealed the director's decision. West was the only player who did not attend the hearing. North admitted to a slight BIT and agreed with East's statement that the length of the hesitation was six seconds. South said he didn't notice it. South added that, when the answer to Stayman revealed that N/S had at least an 8-card fit in a minor, bidding both minors seemed an appropriate way to try for slam. South said that he decided to bid both minors before he bid 3♦.

East stated that although South has a lot of HCP, there may be no play for a tenth trick in 4NT. Furthermore, bidding past 3NT is what the hesitation suggests and passing is certainly a logical alternative.

**The Decision:** The hesitation was not protracted but it was sufficient to make UI available. The committee did not doubt South when he said that he did not notice the hesitation, but the legal standard is whether the information was available to him. The committee found that it was

North's hesitation demonstrably suggests that he was considering raising diamonds, since 3♥ and 3♠ are easy bids to make (i.e., neither would likely be preceded by a hesitation).

The directors polled seven players about what they would do over North's 3NT bid.

Three of the players chose to pass. The committee decided that enough of South's peer group would pass in that situation to make pass a logical alternative.

The directors ruled 3NT making five. The committee noted that on a spade to the ace, North can make six on a double squeeze. However, on a spade to the jack, the count is not rectified and the squeeze does not operate. The committee decided that West's play of the jack at trick one was sufficiently likely to justify ruling as the TD did, and adjusted the score to 3NT making five, N/S plus 460 for both sides.

The committee found that the appeal had substantial merit.

**The Committee:** Michael Huston (Chairman), Fred King, Ed Lazarus, Jacob Morgan and Hendrik Sharples.

### **Commentary:**

**Goldsmith** If South had already decided to bid both minors, why didn't he do it immediately? His methods allow him to show both minors, show a game force, find out if partner has four pieces in a minor, and show a stiff spade, all below 3NT. He didn't do that. Why not? Either he was planning to drive to slam, which seems optimistic, or he was planning not to bid clubs, which seems odd.

Of course there was a hesitation. Look at North's hand. Clearly passing is a LA. Clearly bidding is suggested by the UI over passing. So passing is required.

What about the adjusted score? If West puts in the SJ (I wouldn't say that's "likely," but more like "at all probable"), North wins and runs 8 minor suit winners.

Each defender has to come down to four cards. If the defenders keep six hearts, it is relatively safe for declarer to exit spade and claim. East's normal lead of the S9 should give enough away that E/W will have a great deal of trouble fooling declarer. All in all, it does not seem likely to me that E/W will take two tricks. It is at all probable, maybe. I'd rule E/W-490, N/S +460, but it's close, and I could be talked into reciprocal 490s.

Does the appeal have merit? If N/S had appealed the adjustment, sure, I'd buy that. They didn't. The screener must have told them they had no chance, so they get an AWMW. Does South's action deserve a PP? Close call. I could go either way on that. Being oblivious is no excuse. Regardless, he should get a stern lecture on his responsibilities. South is a Hall of Famer, after all.

- Polisner** Once the determination was made that there was a BIT (even though N really had no reason to hesitate with no major suit ace, the BIT does suggest removing 3 NT. The poll reveals that P is a LA, thus the ruling is correct. Under these circumstances, how could this appeal not result in a AWMW?
- Rigal** I agree with the decision to roll back to 3NT. I think the committee was incredibly generous to E/W to give them plus 460 since West can be pretty sure there is a decent chance he will never score a spade trick if he does not take his trick at once. A split score seems far more appropriate at plus 460/minus 490.
- Wildavsky** I agree with the decisions. If N/S agreed that North broke tempo then I see no merit to the appeal.
- Wolff** Wrong decision, since the non-offenders stand to gain so much by this type of appeal. The accused are stripped of their 6♦ contract, based on a questionable BIT which may or may not have enabled them to get to a lucky (based on the cards held) 6♦ contract which was high percentage and, of course, was made. Please look at the advantage accrued to their opponents wherein if 6♦ would have gone down they would have accepted it happily and when the slam makes they get it ruled back to whatever the most favorable score would be to them. What did they do to deserve anything? To me normal playing luck (NPL) dictated that they live with 6♦ bid and made and if any slight advantage had accrued to the possible offenders that it be dealt with by a procedural penalty which only deducts from their score. I do not think that the BIT involved was anywhere near helpful enough to challenge any score. Sometimes BITs are in the opposite category and do direct that partnership to select the right options. Here, and at the time it was made, there was still much water to flow under the bridge (pun intended) and with that crappy strong NT where 3/5 of the one notrump bidder's hand was all in one suit, still the mix of the two hands, as the bridge puppeteer knows better than anyone, was very favorable.

Marshall's hand, x/AJ10/10xxxx/AKQx opposite a strong NT, although only 14 HCPs, should be almost forcing to a slam once this hand learns that partner (the strong NTer) has 7+ cards in the minors. Certainly not foolproof, but I think percentage. If partner would have held: AKQ/KQx/xxx/Jxxx he would merely sign off in 4NT.