

APPEAL	Non NABC+ Twelve
Subject	Disputed Claim
DIC	Matt Smith
Event	North American Pairs – Flight B
Session	First Qualifying
Date	March 20, 2010

BD#	19
VUL	E/W
DLR	South

897 Masterpoints	
♠	K 9 7
♥	Q
♦	A 7 4
♣	A Q 8 6 5 2

1,128 Masterpoints		Spring 2010 Reno, NV	1,829 Masterpoints	
♠	A J 2		♠	Q T 6 5 3
♥	8 7 3		♥	K J 6 5
♦	J T 9 8 5		♦	
♣	J 3		♣	K T 9 4

1,147 Masterpoints	
♠	8 4
♥	A T 9 4 2
♦	K Q 6 3 2
♣	7

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	1♣	1♠	Dbl
ReDbl ¹	2♣	Pass	Pass
2♠	3♣	Dbl	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Final Contract	3♣ doubled by North
Opening Lead	♠ 3
Table Result	Made 3, N/S +470
Director Ruling	3♣ doubled N made 3, N/S +470
Panel Ruling	3♣ doubled N made 3, N/S +470

(1) Rosenkranz = a high spade honor.

The Facts: The director was called after trick 8 when declarer claimed. Declarer stated, “You get your high clubs.” After a pause, declarer said, “Then my diamonds are high.”

Facts continued.

The remaining cards were:

	♠	
	♥	
	♦ A 7 4	
	♣ Q 8	
♠		♠ T
♥		♥ K J
♦ J T 9 8 5		♦
♣		♣ K T
	♠	
	♥ T 9	
	♦ K Q 6	
	♣	

The Ruling: The director judged that declarer's statement did not constitute a line of play. The director judged that declare never intended to lead trump and that diamonds would be played first. Therefore, the director ruled that E/W gets two of last five tricks and N/S gets three, resulting in declarer making three. Law 70D3.

The Appeal: E/W appealed the director's decision and all four players attended the review.

The appellants felt that the words declarer used constituted a statement of a line of play, and declarer should be forced to lead a club at trick nine, which would allow East to score all five of the last tricks. Declare originally simply conceded the high trump. He admitted that he had miscounted trump and forgotten about the trump ten. He said he was pointing out that the diamonds were good and were what he was planning on playing without leading clubs. Four players with around 1,000 points were consulted. They were given the 5-card ending and were told that they were declarer in 3♣ doubled. They were asked to play the hand out. All four immediately led diamonds. They were asked whether they thought leading a club was rational. All four said, "No."

The Decision: The panel did not believe the statements made by declarer indicated a line of play. Had play actually continued it is certain, or very nearly so, that diamonds would have been led, which would enable declarer to score three tricks. The polling suggested that it would be irrational for declarer to lead a trump at trick nine. Therefore, the panel ruled as the director had that leading a trump is not an alternative normal line of play and that is judged to be careless or inferior. The panel considered whether the appeal had merit. Since the claim was poorly worded and if taken at face value would have resulted in 3♣ down three, it was judged that the appeal had sufficient merit to avoid an appeal without merit warning (AWMW).

The Panel: Bill Michael (Reviewer), Susan Doe and Harry Falk.

Commentary:

- Rigal** I'd be ashamed to have called the TD and then to have appealed it. An AWM seems only just, to teach E/W about the spirit in which the game should be played.
- Polisner** I agree with the ruling and the Decision; however, I want to point out that the word "irrational" has been removed from the footnote to Law 70. What should have been stated is that the polling indicated that all peers polled would have led Ds
- Wildavsky** The Panel procedure looks wrong to me. Certainly leading a club would be irrational, but the panel knew that without asking. The question is what would be rational for a player who thought there was one high trump out. Myself I'd play a trump. If I planned to play diamonds I'd say so. Actually, though, that's not the question. Law 70 no longer uses the term "rational". It reads:
The Director shall not accept from claimer any successful line of play not embraced in the original clarification statement if there is an alternative normal* line of play that would be less successful.
* For the purposes of Laws 70 and 71, "normal" includes play that would be careless or inferior for the class of player involved.
I disagree with the TD and Panel rulings. It could have been worse -- at least the Panel found merit!
- Wolff** This hand is about a too common malady these days at tournament bridge, "MUCH ADO, ABOUT SHEER GREED"! There should be a stated limit on what pair's can do who are seeking a good result at any cost to the game.