

APPEAL	NABC+ SEVENTEEN
Subject	Unauthorized Information (UI) - Tempo
DIC	Steve Bates
Event	North American Open Swiss
Session	Second Final
Date	March 18, 2007

BD#	6
VUL	E/W
DLR	East

Helene Bauman	
♠	T 9 4
♥	J T 4
♦	K
♣	A K T 8 6 3

Leslie Amoils		Spring 2007 St. Louis, Missouri	George Mittelman	
♠	A Q 8 7 3 2		♠	6
♥	2		♥	Q 8 6 5 3
♦	A 8 7 6 5 2		♦	J T 9 3
♣			♣	Q 5 2

David Stevenson	
♠	K J 5
♥	A K 9 7
♦	Q 4
♣	J 9 7 4

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♣
1♠	2♠	Pass	3NT
4♦	Pass	Pass	Dbl ¹
Pass	5♣	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Final Contract	5♣ by South
Opening Lead	♠A
Table Result	5♣ S down 2, E/W +100
Director Ruling	5♣ S down 2, E/W +100
Committee Ruling	5♣ S down 2, E/W +100

(1) Hesitation before doubling.

The Facts: All players at the table agreed that South's double of 4♦ was out of tempo. Three Flight A players were polled and all would have bid 4NT or 5♣ over the double. 2♠ was a limit or better raise of clubs. The partnership did not have a firm agreement about whether a pass of 4♦ by North would be forcing.

The Ruling: While there was an unmistakable hesitation that suggested pulling the double, there was no logical alternative (LA) to North's pulling. Therefore, the table result of 5♣ by South down 2, E/W plus 100 was allowed to stand.

The Appeal: The only issue before the committee was whether there was a LA to bidding over the double. South told the committee that he is fairly random about which minor he opens when they are 3-3, but that he tends to open diamonds when they are 4-4. North said that she erred in not bidding directly over 4♦.

The Decision: The committee reasoned that with E/W vulnerable, West was very likely to have a highly distributional hand. North's holding in spades suggested that East would likely hold at most a singleton spade, making ruffs of the suit a way to garner tricks and set up the suit. North's authorized information strongly suggests that South does not have four diamonds and might have as few as two. Furthermore, if there is a finesse to be taken in spades, it is through South, who is pretty well known to hold the stopper(s) in the suit. The committee decided that the authorized information available to North made passing illogical.

Since North is free to bid, North's choice of bids is unconstrained since the hesitation did not suggest one bid over another. Also, the fact that the double may have intimidated E/W from bidding their 5D contract is irrelevant since there is no violation on which to base an adjustment.

Accordingly, the committee upheld the director's ruling that the table score stands, E/W plus 100.

The Committee: Barry Rigal (Chair), Ken Barbour, Michael Huston, Jeff Meckstroth and Chris Moll.

Commentary:

Goldsmith I don't agree that passing is not a LA for this North. Once she had chosen to pass 4♦, either she was thinking that the pass was forcing and was planning a pass and pull slam try, which she obviously was not, or she was planning to abide by her partner's decision to pass (if her pass was non-forcing) or double 4♦. The poll isn't useful, because the directors didn't consult players who would have passed 4♦. So to bid 5♣ is inconsistent. The appeals committee (AC) members all think that passing 4♦ doubled is impossible, but none of them would have passed 4♦ in the first place, so it is in fact impossible. Passing 4♦ doubled is only possible for a player who would have passed 4♦ undoubled. North, prima facie, is such a player, so for her, passing 4♦ doubled must be a LA, and thus is imposed upon her. 4♦ doubled making five for both sides. This is a basic "transfer of intelligence" case.

Polisner I am uncomfortable with only three players polled - but that is better than not even taking a poll. Based on the poll, the result seems fair.

Rigal Once in a while the UI of a slow double can be overridden by the fact that passing is not a logical alternative. The unanimous view of the committee and sampled experts made North's action acceptable – if very lucky.

- Smith** The poll and the opinions and reasoning of the committee convince me, but I am still troubled by North's pass over 4♦. It is always hard to decide what is a LA to a player who takes a strange action before getting UI and then to try to judge what is logical to that player later. Polling in this kind of case only helps if you find players who would match the earlier action, and I suspect in this case that would have been very difficult.
- Wildavsky** The committee reasoned that West must be highly distributional, but they labored under the handicap of knowing the West was 6-6. A player who should have acted on the previous round should normally be deemed to have left the decision to partner. Holding ♦s QJx and ♣s xxx South would have doubled in tempo. I think the TD and the AC got this wrong, in spite of the poll. It seems to me that under current ACBL Laws Commission guidelines, a poll of three players cannot suffice to rule that there were no LAs to an action. In addition, as Jeff Goldsmith points out, North's peers are those who would have passed 4♦, so if enough of them can be found they are the ones who should be polled.
- Wolff** A very poor decision. First, when a pair gets doubled for penalties in 4♦ it is usually very difficult to then later bid 5♦. After all the 4♦ bidders do not know the tendencies of their opponents and that is a significant disadvantage.
Second, a slow double of 4♦ is much worse than the directors and committees can imagine, because, if South in this case doubles in relatively fast (but not necessarily noticeable) tempo, can we take them to committee if partner stands for it? Of course not! Hesitation disruption was very present here and could always have been avoided if North would have bid her hand immediately over 4♦ and just bid 5♣. This way worked much better for her and for all the wrong reasons. Why are we aiding and abetting this form of unethical behavior?
- Zeiger** This one, at least, is interesting. After hopelessly passing 4♦, I'm not sure North should be allowed to make the intelligent 5♣ call. Maybe passing the double wasn't a LA, but neither was passing 4♦. I would submit that any player who passed 4♦ might have thought of passing an in tempo double. I suspect I may be alone in disallowing the pull, but I've been alone before. E/W plus 910.