

2015 Summer NABC

Appeals Casebook



Foreward

The appeal hearings and commentary descriptions are now compiled and edited by the American Contract Bridge League. They are published on the ACBL web page. This internet publication is intended to be a tool to help improve the abilities of Tournament Directors and to communicate decisions and the process to arrive at those decisions to the membership at large.

A total of twenty-three (23) cases were heard.

Thirteen (13) cases were from unrestricted (by masterpoints) North American Bridge Championship Events. The names of the players involved are included.

Ten (10) cases were from all other events. The names of the players involved are included when the event from which the appeal came was a Flight A/X event or was the top bracket of a bracketed knockout event. When the names of the players are not used, the player's masterpoint total is included.

The cases are first presented without commentary. After the official panel of commentators has had an opportunity to provide their commentary and any corrections to the cases, the commentary is added, corrections made and the internet publication is finalized.

Everyone involved in this process is due praise for their efforts. Special thanks to the NABC Appeals Committee and the Tournament Directors serving on the Review Panels and commentators. Without their considerable contribution of time and effort, this publication would not exist.

ACBL Headquarters
Horn Lake, MS

Abbreviations used in this casebook:

AI	Authorized Information
AWMW	Appeal Without Merit Warning
BIT	Break in Tempo
CoC	Conditions of Contest
LA	Logical Alternative
MI	Misinformation
NOS	Non-offending Side
OS	Offending Side
PP	Procedural Penalty
TD	Tournament Director
UI	Unauthorized Information

Expert Panel

Jeff Goldsmith is an American bridge player originally from Schenectady, NY, currently residing in California. He graduated from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Caltech and works as a software engineer, focusing on computer graphics and animation and internet programming, all with a heavy mathematical perspective. He created computer animation for JPL for several years including the movie about Voyager's encountering Neptune. He ice dances and plays many other games, particularly German board games. Goldsmith is an ACBL Platinum Life Master and serves on the ACBL Competitions & Conventions Committee.

Rui Marques grew up in Portugal. He is Chemical Engineer, with a M.Sc. in Applied Mathematics and a Ph.D. in Chemometrics. Married to Connie Goldberg, he currently splits his time between Philadelphia (U.S.A.) and Cascais (Portugal). Having started as a Tournament Director in 1989, he directed his first international championship in 1992. He has been the Assistant Chief TD for the WBF since 2011, Chief TD for the EBL since 2015, Sports Personality of the Year in Portugal in 2016. He also is a Lecturer and Group Leader in the EBL International Tournament Directors Courses. He joined the ACBL Tournament Director staff in 2017.

Jeanne van den Meiracker became a Director in 1988 because her club in Amsterdam with more than 200 members needed more Directors and she loved the job immediately. She took the International Tournament Directors course in Amsterdam in 1993, along with seventy-six other TDs from all over Europe, including Rui Marques. They both passed the exams, and she started working in the EBL as a TD. In 1996 she started directing for the WBF and was promoted to Chief Tournament Director in 2004. She also served on the WBF Laws commission from 2004 to 2010. In 2012, she and her husband Huub Bertens moved to the United States, and she joined the ACBL Tournament Director staff.

Adam Wildavsky was born in Ohio and grew up in Berkeley and Oakland, CA and London, England. A graduate of MIT, he is a retired software engineer and now spends winters in Keystone, CO and much of the rest of the year in New York City. Mr. Wildavsky has won numerous national championships including the Blue Ribbon Pairs twice, the Reisinger BAM Teams once, and the USBF Team Trials twice. He won a bronze medal in the 2003 Bermuda Bowl in Monaco. Mr. Wildavsky is vice-chair of the National Laws Commission, a member of the WBF Laws Committee, and a former chairman of the National Appeals Committee. His interest in the laws is informed by his study of Objectivism, the philosophy of Ayn Rand.

Kit Woolsey is a world-class bridge and backgammon player, analyst, and writer, born in Washington, DC. He graduated from Oberlin College and earned a master's degree in mathematics from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He is a three-time World Champion and holds more than a dozen NABC titles. His most recent major victory was winning the Cavendish Invitational Pairs in 2011. He was elected to the ACBL Hall of Fame in 2005 and lives in Kensington, CA. He has been one of the panelists on *The Bridge World* Master Solvers Club since 1984. He also serves on the ACBL Competitions & Convention Committee and the Bridge Integrity Task Force.

Subject of Appeal:	Tempo/Unauthorized Information	Case:	N1
---------------------------	--------------------------------	--------------	----


Event	von Zedtwitz LM Pairs	Event DIC	Matt Koltnow
Date	08/07/2015	Session	First Qualifying

Auction

West	North	East	South
		1♦	1♠
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

Hand Record

Board	10	N	Jerry Jackson		
Dealer	E	♠	K5		
		♥	QJ1076		
Vul	Both	♦	J5		
		♣	10853		
W	Mickie Chambers			E	Jim Bachelder
♠	Q32			♠	76
♥	95			♥	K8
♦	K84			♦	AQ10632
♣	AKJ74			♣	Q96
		S	Wayne Snider		
		♠	AJ10984		
		♥	A432		
		♦	97		
		♣	2		

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
3NT by W	Down 3	N/S +300	♠ K

Facts Determined at the Table

The Director was summoned after the lead to Trick 2. After the ♠K was led, South fumbled, moving cards around within his hand and finally playing the ♠J. East and West stated that the break in tempo (BIT) took approximately one minute. After the ♠K held, North switched to the ♥Q, resulting in down 3.

Additional Factors Determined Away from the Table

Three Flight A players were given this problem. All three stated that while the ♥Q was a possibility, they would have continued spades.

Director Ruling

Law 16B1 indicates that if a spade continuation is a logical alternative (LA), and the BIT demonstrably suggests another action, the Director must enforce the spade continuation. Per Law 12C1 the result was changed for both sides to 3NT by West, Making 4, E/W +630.

Director's Ruling	3NT by W, Made 4, E/W +630
--------------------------	----------------------------

The Appeal

North/South appealed, and both attended the hearing. South explained that he was considering whether to overtake the ♠K and knock out the Q versus ducking and giving suit preference. Finally, he decided that his goal was to cash their three tricks. While he was thinking, he pulled out one card and another. He does this often. South said any high

spade would encourage, but that the ♠J was suit preference. He had assumed that the ♠K was singleton, so attitude was not relevant. North/South use standard signals.

Committee Findings

A spade continuation would be right when South held something like ♠QJTxx. The play of the ♠J, authorized information to North, showed both that South did not hold QJTxx and that South could have afforded to overtake if he judged that it was right to set up the spades.

The AC found that the UI from the slow play to trick one did not demonstrably suggest one action over another. Accordingly it found no reason to adjust the score. The TD ruling was incomplete in that it did not address this point. Had useful UI been present, the AC noted that it could not imagine anyone's not playing the ♥Q after seeing the ♠J, so the AC would not have deemed a spade continuation a LA in any case. The AC restored the table result for both sides, 3N by West, down 3, N/S +300.

The AC encouraged South to refrain from pulling out one card then another while thinking.

Committee Decision	3NT by W, Down 3, N/S +300
---------------------------	-----------------------------------

Committee Members

Chair	Jeff Goldsmith
Member	Scott Stearns
Member	John Lusky
Member	Abby Heitner
Member	Ray Miller

Note from the National Appeals Chairman

Had the AC found that the UI did suggest a heart over a spade it would have proceeded to determine whether a spade continuation was a logical alternative. Unfortunately it would have needed to discount the TD's poll results because, contrary to the latest revision to the ACBL Handbook on Appeal Committees, the poll had not been conducted in writing. Accordingly the AC could not be confident as to who was polled or exactly what questions they'd been asked. Fortunately, the AC ruling did not require relying on this aspect of the case.

Commentary

Goldsmith: I don't like the note from the chairman. No AC "needs to discount the TD's poll results." The most important rule for ACs is to use common sense. In this case, at Trick 2, any play other than the ♥Q would be an obvious blunder, so the poll was irrelevant.

On the other hand, I wonder what went on in that poll. It makes no sense. If it were written down, perhaps we'd know what happened.

Marques: Maybe the polled players were rushing and didn't give the problem enough thought, or maybe some other unusual circumstance happened, but the initial poll did produce some odd results. Without knowing the questions asked we can only wonder if the poll was properly done. It looks like the poll had maybe only one question when it should have had two or three, the extra ones being about the meaning of the Jack of spades by itself and about the additional meaning of the hesitation. It looks like, by playing the Jack, South denied the Queen, and from South's point of view the King could be a singleton, so if it is right to continue spades South could have overtaken. Therefore, it is clear that the Jack of Spades looks like a suit preference. Good AC decision.

Just as an aside relative to the final note from the NAC chairman, a suggestion would be whenever possible to do the polls with a (sound) recorder, or something similar. This would improve the reliability of information transmission from the field TD to the AC.

Meiracker: A poll of three players is not enough and it shows in a strange outcome. Perhaps the Director didn't ask them what for them the meaning of the Jack of Spades was.

Wildavsky: Good work by the AC. This case shows the limits of relying on TD decisions combined with polling.

Woolsey: I agree with the Committee that the UI doesn't in any way suggest the heart shift. The Jack of Spades is simply a very informative card, telling North that West has the queen but otherwise the spades are solid. It also tells North that South doesn't have the King of Diamonds, since with that card South would have overtaken and continued spades. Thus, the heart shift is pretty obvious from any holding. With the actual holding, North should be jumping out of his chair to shift to a heart. I would like to know who those so-called flight A players who continued spades are.

Subject of Appeal:	Break In Tempo	Case:	N2
---------------------------	----------------	--------------	----

Event	von Zedtwitz LM Pairs	Event DIC	Matt Koltnow
Date	08/07/2015	Session	First Qualifying


Auction

West	North	East	South
		1♦	1♠
2♣	Pass	2♦	2♥
2♠	3♥	3NT	Pass
Pass	4♥	Dbf!	Pass
4NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: Agreed Break in Tempo

Hand Record

Board	10	N	Li-Chung Chen		
Dealer	E	♠	K5		
		♥	QJ1076		
Vul	Both	♦	J5		
		♣	10853		
W	Marin Marinov			E	David Yang
♠	Q32			♠	76
♥	95			♥	K8
♦	K84			♦	AQ10632
♣	AKJ74			♣	Q96
		S	Ari Greenberg		
		♠	AJ10984		
		♥	A432		
		♦	97		
		♣	2		

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
4NT by E	Made 6	E/W +690	♥ 2

Facts Determined at the Table

The Director was summoned at the end of the hand. The break in tempo (BIT) before East's Double was agreed to by both sides; East/West said it was 30-40 second, North/South said it was 1-2 minutes.

Additional Factors Determined Away from the Table

Three players were polled and all three were reluctant to take any action after partner's Double. Accordingly, Pass was determined to be a logical alternative (LA) to bidding 4NT.

Director Ruling

Under Law 16, the unauthorized information (UI) from the BIT suggested that another action was more likely to be successful. Based upon the poll results, per Law 12C1, the result was adjusted to 4♥X by South, Making 4, N/S +790

Director's Ruling	4♥X by S, Made 4, N/S +790
--------------------------	----------------------------

The Appeal

East/West appealed and all four players attended the hearing. With his ♦K filling in his partner's suit, and a potential source of tricks in his own suit, West thought that 4NT would have a good chance of making. With almost no strength in the majors, the penalty against 4♥X was unlikely to be sufficient to compensate for the vulnerable game so passing the Double rated to be accepting an inferior score.

North/South argued that passing the Double could easily be the winning action, either by going plus instead of minus or by getting a penalty worth more than the value of the game.

Committee Findings

East took at least 30-40 seconds before doubling 4♥, which clearly suggested doubt about defending. The Appeals Committee (AC) determined that Pass was a LA to the suggested bid of 4NT, since it could easily work out better to defend. West should have recognized at the table that he was constrained by his partner's tempo and should have passed. East/West certainly should not have appealed the Director's ruling.

The AC upheld the Director's ruling for both sides of 4♥X by South, making 4, N/S +790. Additionally, East/West were assigned an Appeal Without Merit Warning (AWMW).

Committee Decision	4♥X by S, Made 4, N/S +790
---------------------------	-----------------------------------

Committee Members

Chair	Douglas Doub
Member	Ed Lazarus
Member	Eugene Kales
Member	James Thurtell
Member	Fred King

Commentary

Goldsmith: "West should have recognized at the table that he was constrained by his partner's tempo." That is almost a perfect criterion for a 1/4 board PP. Otherwise, good.

Marques: West probably tried to do the right thing, knowing that he was in possession of UI from partner. It looks like he bid 4NT trying to ignore the UI from the break in tempo. It is a common misconception regarding the actions of a partner that receives UI. According to law 16, the actions that could demonstrably have been suggested by the UI are "off-limits" for the player in question.

In this case, both the TD and the Committee properly established that the BIT suggested bidding on, so this is a perfect decision (also regarding the AWMW). I would just suggest once again to add a second question to the poll, regarding what the BIT suggests, in order to build a more solid case.

Meiracker: The players asked about bidding after the slow Double were reluctant to bid, but did the TD also asked them what the slow Double suggest? The TD and AC made a good decision to adjust the score.

Wildavsky: I agree that this appeal had no merit.

Woolsey: This is sort of difficult. There is a lot about West's hand which suggests that bidding 4NT is the winning action, and East's slow Double doesn't really tell West all that much on this particular auction since any Double would just suggest that West shouldn't bid on. However, the UI does indicate that East doesn't have something like KQJ tripleton of Hearts. So, if the poll indicated that passing is a LA, which apparently is the case, then I would agree with the ruling.

I do not agree with the AWMW. In this sort of situation one can make a reasonable case that Pass isn't a LA. That is what the Committee, with its bridge expertise, is deciding.

Subject of Appeal:	Tempo/Unauthorized Information	Case:	N3
---------------------------	--------------------------------	--------------	----

Event	von Zedtwitz LM Pairs	Event DIC	Matt Koltnow
Date	08/08/2015	Session	First Semi-Final


Auction

West	North	East	South
			1NT ¹
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: 15-17 HCP

Hand Record

Board	11	N	Chris Willenken		
Dealer	S	♠	J106		
		♥	9852		
Vul	None	♦	10862		
		♣	QJ		
W	Nikolay Demirev			E	Bob Drijver
♠	K987			♠	Q2
♥	J			♥	AQ63
♦	KQ953			♦	J4
♣	962			♣	K10843
		S	Allison Wilson		
		♠	A543		
		♥	K1074		
		♦	A7		
		♣	A75		

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
1NT by S	Down 3	E/W +150	♦ K

Facts Determined at the Table

The Director was summoned at the end of the hand due to a one-minute hesitation at Trick 3 by East. The play proceeded as follows:

- Trick 1: ♦K-♦2-♦4-♦7
- Trick 2: ♦5-♦6-♦J-♦A
- Trick 3: ♣5-♣2-♣J-♣3* (BIT)
- Trick 4: ♥9-♥3-♥4-♥J
- Trick 5: ♣6-♣Q-♣K-♣A

Additional Factors Determined Away from the Table

Based upon an expert opinion, unless South could be ruled out of holding both the ♣AK, then the play of a spade at Trick 5 was a logical alternative (LA).

Director Ruling

The break-in-tempo (BIT) effectively showed East to have the ♣K, making a club shift at Trick 5 much more tempting. Per Law 16B1 and Law 12C1, the result for both sides was adjusted to 1NT by South, Down 1, E/W +50.

Director's Ruling	1NT by S, Down 1, E/W +50
--------------------------	----------------------------------

The Appeal

East-West appealed the ruling, with West appearing at the hearing. West stated that East's ♣3 was actually suit preference for hearts. Therefore he decided to defend passively at Trick 5, so as not to give up a trick in spades or diamonds, not necessarily to establish club tricks.

Committee Findings

The Appeals Committee (AC) judged that East's extended hesitation demonstrably suggested the ability to win the trick. East might have been considering which suit preference signal to give, but not for all of a one minute BIT. Therefore, South could not have a hand like Qxx-KTxx- Ax-AKxx, where it would be necessary to switch to spades or diamonds to set up 7 tricks before Declarer could. After either such switch, Declarer could establish an extra trick in the suit led and eventually score the ♥K for down one.

Since not playing a club was a LA that was made less attractive by East's BIT; and since it could not conclude that the table ruling was incorrect, the AC affirmed the adjusted result of 1NT, down 1, for both sides. Because West's analysis was reasonable and the decision was not clear cut, the appeal was held to have merit.

Committee Decision	1NT by S, Down 1, E/W +50
---------------------------	----------------------------------

Committee Members

Chair	Ron Gerard
Member	Ray Miller
Member	Eugene Kales
Member	Patty Tucker
Member	Ed Lazarus

Commentary

Goldsmith: I like the ruling. Defensive BITs are very hard to handle. The amount of analysis needed to determine which plays are reasonable is too much for polls to determine, and most Directors don't have the bridge skill level that's needed, so I'm not sure that the current approach will work in the long run.

In this case, I'd like to know how long West took to play a club at Trick 5. Yes, he had a minute to think about his shift at Trick 3, but he didn't know he'd be on lead with the ♥J, and even a top card player needs time to work out problems when UI is present. This was the first board of the round, so I think West had time available to try to work out his problem, and I'd like to know if it was clear at the table that he was thinking about it. A 30 second pause there would make me feel better about not assigning an AWMW than would a club play in tempo.

Marques: The initial poll size looks a bit small (one expert). We don't know EW's defending methods, but let's presume that the ♣3 is indeed a preference for hearts. Like the AC pointed out a small BIT in this type of situation would look normal and West would probably be off the hook. A one-minute hesitation, on the other hand, clearly shows the ♣K and by inference also some length in the suit. This piece of information makes a non-club lead at trick six less attractive. Declarer could have come to six tricks anyway on a club continuation, but it's a very hard play to find. On a non-club lead, it is very likely that declarer comes to six tricks.

The BIT suggests playing a club. Without the BIT, even if the club continuation seems best, a spade as per the expert's opinion is a logical alternative, so it is hard to disagree with the final decision.

It looks like declarer could have followed a better line of play (♣A at trick six, for example, is an unfortunate choice), but that doesn't change the fairness of the decision.

Meiracker: The hesitation of 1 minute is too long to find out what card to play to give suit preference, so West knows that East has the King of Clubs.

Wildavsky: This appeal certainly had merit. I agree with the TD and AC rulings, but I could easily see either going the other way. As a deliberate player myself, I can imagine it taking a full minute to decide which suit preference signal to give.

Woolsey: Of course, West knew that East could have won the club trick. The statement that East's club is suit-preference is completely self-serving. I could understand ruling against E/W simply because West made such a statement.

In order to justify the club return, West would have to demonstrate conclusively that a different defense could not be superior. That example hand found by the Committee refutes that, so the ruling is correct.

Subject of Appeal:	Break In Tempo	Case:	N4
---------------------------	----------------	--------------	----

Event	von Zedtwitz LM Pairs	Event DIC	Matt Koltnow
Date	08/09/2015	Session	Second Final


Auction

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

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: 15-17 HCP
2: Alleged Break in Tempo

Hand Record

Board	13	N	Jill Meyers		
Dealer	N	♠ A63	♥ KJ9		
Vul	Both	♦ QJ876	♣ K7		
W	Peter Fredin			E	Andrew Rosenthal
♠	104			♠	QJ97
♥	A10843			♥	65
♦	92			♦	A
♣	8643	S	Ed Davis	♣	AQJ1095
		♠	K852		
		♥	Q72		
		♦	K10543		
		♣	2		

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
4♦ by S	Down 1	E/W +100	♦ A

Facts Determined at the Table

The Director was summoned at the end of the auction when the dummy was tabled. East/West stated that the auction in general was slow, but that the 3NT bid by North was particularly slow. East/West maintained that South's 4♦ bid was made more attractive by the tempo of the 3NT call and that Pass was a logical alternative.

Director Ruling

The Director ruled that the tempo of the 3NT bid suggested doubt about the contract and that Pass was a logical alternative (LA). Per Laws 12C1 and 16B1, the result was adjusted for both sides to 3NT by North, down 3, E/W +300.

Director's Ruling	3NT by N, Down 3, E/W +300
--------------------------	-----------------------------------

The Appeal

North/South appealed the ruling and appeared at the hearing. N/S stated that the entire auction was a little slow after the 1NT opening, not just the 3NT bid. It was apparent from the auction that North did not have two club stoppers because she kept searching for a place to play rather than bidding 3NT immediately over South's 3♦ bid. Since South held a singleton club and his diamonds were not topped by the AK, he felt No Trump would not be a success.

Committee Findings

The Appeals Committee (AC) judged there was definitely unauthorized information (UI) from the slow rebid of 3NT. The UI demonstrably suggested that 3NT was a doubtful final contract and a different final contract would be better.

The AC reasoned, however, that the auction itself had already revealed that 3NT was a doubtful final contract and that some other final contract would be better. Therefore, the AC did not believe that Pass was a LA based on the auction and restored the table result of 4♦ by North, down one, E/W +100.

Committee Decision	4♦ by S, Down 1, E/W +100
---------------------------	----------------------------------

Committee Members

Chair	Richard Popper
Member	Eugene Kales
Member	Fred King
Member	James Thurtell
Member	Scott Stearns

Commentary

Goldsmith: Would the bidding have been any different if North had held Axx Axx AJxxx Kx? I think the Directors got this one right. If N/S had argued that if South had bid 4♦ at his third turn then it would have been forcing, but this way it wasn't, that might have been convincing, but I don't think that's the case

Marques: To establish if there was damage caused by the mistaken explanation we need to know what action would the pollees take (as proxies to the player at the table) with the right information and the wrong one, and it is almost always best to start with the right information. In this regard, the report points to the correct procedure being followed. But I would love to know the order in which the players were asked. If the poll carried through until someone was found to change his mind, that would have been the wrong procedure. I raise this question because "six" is not a popular poll size and it seems that Double is a vast favorite on West's cards with either explanation. Anyway, working with the published report, five out of six players agree with that and one changed his opinion. This has some similarities with UI cases where one of two actions is a clear minority one. Is one out of six big enough to give it all to West, or is it small enough to give him nothing? I always hate my job when I get these "one out of five or six" cases. It would be nice but often impractical to have the poll extended by a few players. As a personal opinion, I think that if we find that only one in eight players changes his mind then there is no damage. For higher fractions, the final judgment call by the TD will often depend not only on the actions expressed by the pollees, but also and most importantly on the arguments that they put forward to justify them. For example, if all five that Double in either case said that Pass was idiotic, and the odd one said "I guess I would change my bid", I would rule "no damage". If the three that were less optimistic actually said that they might eventually Pass on a rainy day, I would probably rule "damage". The finer details of the poll are important in a case like this. Both decisions are reasonable with the information given, but my opinion is that the TD got it "more right". Also, South was a bit careless creating the impression that North's hand had to have 15-16 HCP, but West seems experienced enough, judging from his masterpoint total, to know better. I'm with the TD on this one.

Meiracker: I don't see any mention of the fact that players are polled. A TD cannot rule that the tempo of bidding 3NT suggest doubt without asking players of the same level as South. The same for the AC, they decided on their own that 3NT was a doubtful contract, so that South has the right to bid 4♦. The hesitation made it a 100% bid!

Wildavsky: Both the TD and the AC decisions were reasonable.

Woolsey: Clearly the UI suggested the pull, so the only issue is whether or not passing 3NT is a LA. I believe that it is. Would North have bid any differently with something like xxx, AKx, AJxxx, Kx? I don't think so, so I agree with the Director and not the Committee.

This is just my bridge judgment. Why was this not polled? Since the issue is whether or not Pass is a LA, all the Director had to do was to give the hand as a bidding problem (without giving the UI, of course), and see if there were passers or if those polled considered passing as a serious candidate. That should have settled the issue quickly.

Subject of Appeal:	Disputed Claim	Case:	N5
---------------------------	----------------	--------------	----

Event	Spingold Knockout Teams	Event DIC	Matt Smith
Date	08/09/2015	Session	Day One, First Session


Auction

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

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: 15 -17 HCP
2: Transfer to ♦
3: 3+ ♦
4: Control cuebid
5: ♥ Control, denied ♣

Hand Record

Board	19	N	Andy Kaufman		
Dealer	S	♠ AQ7	♥ 9	♦ KJ10643	♣ J85
Vul	E/W				
W	Peter Gill				
♠ 984	♥ J107	♠ K1062	♥ 8654	♦ 952	♣ K6
♦ 7	♣ AQ10432				
		S	Michael Cassel		
		♠ J53	♥ AKQ32	♦ AQ8	♣ 97

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
5♦ by S			♣ A

Facts Determined at the Table

South claimed following the ♣A lead before East had played to the trick, and the Director was summoned. His initial claim statement was that he would pitch two spades on the hearts. When the cards were tabled, he added that he would ruff a heart. The Director left the table to confer with colleagues about the ruling. When they returned, South changed his statement to pitching two spades on hearts and then trumping a club before playing trumps.

Director Ruling

Under the guidelines established by the ACBL Laws Commission in 1998 with regard to Law 70B3, "When a claim occurs, both opponents have the right to inspect the [claimant]'s cards and confer before they acquiesce. If the non-claiming side can show a line of play, consistent with the claim statement but not irrational, that produces more tricks for their side, the Director should award them those tricks. The Director should not raise objections on behalf of the players involved."

South's changes to his claim statement showed that there were doubtful aspects to the claim. Per Law 70A, "any doubtful point as to a claim shall be resolved against the claimer." South had not taken into account with his statement how he would play if the defense switched to a spade following the opening club lead. While there was a line of play consistent with the claim statement that would allow him to still come to eleven tricks, there were others that would only allow ten tricks. Based upon this doubt, the Director assigned the result of 5♦ by South, down 1, E/W +50.

Director's Ruling	5♦ by S, Down 1, E/W +50
--------------------------	---------------------------------

The Appeal

North/South appealed the ruling and all four players attended the hearing. The screening Director seemed to favor the appellants' case. They did not explain why they had not changed the ruling, given that they had the power to do so.

South was the only one to speak for the appellants. He noted that play had been going slowly and they had received a warning. East went into a huddle after the opening lead. South presumed he held ♣Kx and was deciding whether to unblock. South became impatient so finally claimed before East had played to the first trick.

East/West countered with the argument that after a spade switch at trick two, declarer would have two more club losers if he pitched spades on hearts per his claim statement and he had not specified how he would deal with them. Were he to draw trump and pitch his spade losers, he would go down.

Declarer and the defenders had engaged in several rounds of questions and answers before the Director was called. The two sides did not agree as to some aspects of declarer's claim statement and the subsequent discussion.

Committee Findings

Law 70D and its explanatory footnote 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." Several lines of play were available to declarer.

After a club continuation at trick two:

Declarer could ruff a club high and throw spades on the hearts per his claim statement. He would be successful on the lie of the cards no matter in which order he did things.

After a spade switch at trick two:

Declarer could win the spade ace, draw trump, pitch two clubs on the hearts, and give up a spade. While this looks like the best line the Committee rejected it as inconsistent with declarer's claim statement.

Declarer could duck the spade in dummy and go down on the lie of the cards. The Committee also rejected this line as inconsistent with declarer's claim statement.

Declarer could win the spade ace, pitch spades on hearts per his claim statement and then either ruff a heart to set up his 11th winner or duck a club, planning to ruff the third club in his hand. Either would be successful.

Declarer could win the spade ace, draw three rounds of trump, pitch two spades on the hearts, and lose two more club tricks to go down one.

The Committee judged that drawing trump and leaving Declarer with two more club losers would not be a normal line of play per Law 70 and so changed the result for both sides to 5♦ by South, making 5, N/S +400.

Committee Decision	5♦ by S, Made 5, N/S +400
---------------------------	----------------------------------

Committee Members

Chair	Aaron Silverstein
Member	Curtis Cheek
Member	Mitch Dunitz

Commentary

Goldsmith: Good. E/W's argument against this claim seems pretty dubious given the actual layout. If the hearts didn't break, then a normal line (ruffing a club) will go down, but every normal line works.

Marques: A claim to save time often ends up wasting more time. The AC produced a very good analysis of the possible lines of play that are compatible with declarer's claim. I like the AC's decision, but it's a judgment call. I would not be very surprised if it went the other way.

Meiracker: I was the TD and I polled expert players! The Declarer simply miscounted his tricks, that is all there was.

Wildavsky: Declarer said he'd pitch spades on hearts, so we can presume that he'd go up with the ♠A after a spade shift at trick 2. He could not have meant that he'd take his discards before drawing trump since he had no way to know hearts would break. Accordingly, drawing trump first was implicit in his claim statement. Having done that he could still make by discarding clubs, but that's not what he said he'd do. We must take him at his word and presume that he'd play as he stated he would, ending up down one. By this argument, the TD got this one right.

On the other hand, Jeff Goldsmith and Rui Marques make good cases for the AC ruling. I make this one too close to call.

Woolsey: The Committee lost it here. It is quite obvious from the claim that declarer miscounted his tricks and thought that all he needed was those 3 heart winners. Declarer's intended plan was to draw trumps, cash the AKQ of Hearts discarding 2 spades, and claim. Declarer doesn't get to go back and play the hand correctly once he sees the trumps are 3-1 and that he will be a trick short if he draws the last trump. He can't add something to his statement once he sees the other hands and knows what the winning line of play is. Director 1, Committee 0 on this ruling.

Subject of Appeal:	Unauthorized Information	Case:	N6
---------------------------	--------------------------	--------------	----

Event	Truscott Senior Swiss Teams	Event DIC	Tom Marsh
Date	08/11/2015	Session	Second Final


Auction

West	North	East	South
1NT ¹	Pass	Pass	2♦ ²
Pass	Pass	DbI ³	2♥
DbI ³	Pass	Pass	Pass

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: 12 -14 HCP
2: Intended as Transfer
3: Penalty

Hand Record

Board	28	N	Craig Jacobson		
Dealer	W	♠	Q1098		
		♥	Q9		
Vul	N/S	♦	10862		
		♣	K108		
W	Michael Efraim			E	Hirsh Schnayer
♠	KJ4			♠	A53
♥	A765			♥	43
♦	74			♦	KJ95
♣	AJ52			♣	Q974
		S	Alexander Weiland		
		♠	762		
		♥	KJ1082		
		♦	AQ3		
		♣	63		

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
2♥X by S	Made 4	N/S +1070	♠ 4

Facts Determined at the Table

The Director was summoned at the end of the hand. South's 2♦ bid was intended as a transfer to hearts, but the actual North/South agreement is that in the balancing seat it is natural. East asked about the 2♦ bid prior to doubling. South did not ask the meaning of the Double.

Additional Factors Determined Away from the Table

Four expert players were polled by being given the South hand without the MI and all four passed after the Double by East.

Director Ruling

East/West received the correct explanation so there was no misinformation (MI). However, South had unauthorized information (UI) when partner failed to alert 2♦. Per Laws 12C1 and 16B1, the Director adjusted the result to 2♦X by South, down 1, E/W +200

Director's Ruling	2♦X by S, Down 1, E/W +200
--------------------------	----------------------------

The Appeal

North/South appealed the ruling and all four players attended the hearing. South assumed that the Double of 2♦ was for penalty without asking. He felt that on that basis there was authorized information that his partner had not interpreted 2♦ as a transfer, since he would have at most four diamonds and not the 6-card suit necessary to fail to accept

the transfer. North said that he passed the Double of 2♥ because he was not sure that South had diamonds and hearts and was allowing for a misunderstanding. North/South also questioned whether East/West's defense to 2♥X, allowing two overtricks instead of holding it to two, would affect the result in 2♦X if that were the assigned contract.

Committee Findings

The Appeals Committee (AC) determined that both the failure to alert and the explanation of "natural" were UI to South. The AC did not agree that North needed 6 diamonds to Pass 2♦ if transfers were in effect, especially since 5-card length was apparently acceptable for the real suit. There were holdings such as 3-0-5-5, 4-0-5-4 and perhaps even 4-1-5-3 where North might Pass 2♦ rather than bid 2♥. Furthermore, it was entirely possible that East's Double was negative, in which case North could have 6 diamonds and would deliberately Pass the transfer. By failing to ascertain what East's Double meant or what the minimum trump holding would be for a penalty Double, South clearly acted on the basis of UI in removing to 2♥. Therefore, the table ruling was affirmed, 2♦X by South, down 1, N/S -200.

The AC judged that the number of tricks taken against 2♥X was not relevant in assigning a score in 2♦X. No favorable result was available for East/West in 2♥X (therefore, the concept of "egregious error" by the non-offending side did not apply) and under Law 12.C the normal result of down one in 2♦X met the standards for both the offending side and the non-offending side. The AC determined that North/South presented no evidence as to why the Director's ruling should be overturned and issued an Appeal without Merit Warning.

Committee Decision	2♦X by S, Down 1, E/W +200
---------------------------	-----------------------------------

Committee Members

Chair	Ron Gerard
Member	Greg Herman
Member	Scott Stearns
Member	Patty Tucker
Member	Ed Lazarus

Commentary

Goldsmith: How long did South take to bid 2♥? I suspect not long at all. If so, South so clearly acted on UI that he deserves a PP. Otherwise, good, including the AWMW.

Marques: A waste of the Appeal Committee's time. Does South believe that over

1NT	Pass	Pass	2♦ (transfer)
Pass	Pass	Dbl	?

he would in real life remove the Double and bid 2♥?

And if South passes, why would North bid something after

1NT	Pass	Pass	2♦ (natural)
Pass	Pass	Dbl	Pass
Pass	?		

Nothing to add. Perfect decision.

Meiracker: Totally agree that the appeal had no merit.

Wildavsky: I agree that the appeal had no merit. South was lucky not to receive a procedural penalty in addition, for blatant misuse of UI.

Woolsey: Very clear. South had UI, the UI suggested bidding 2♥, and the poll showed passing was clearly a LA (the logical call, in fact). Fully agree with the ruling, and considering that all those polled did Pass, this appeal definitely did not have merit.

Subject of Appeal:	Tempo/Unauthorized Information	Case:	N7
---------------------------	--------------------------------	--------------	----

Event	Truscott Senior Swiss Teams	Event DIC	Tom Marsh
Date	08/11/2015	Session	Second Final


Auction

West	North	East	South
			1♣
2NT ¹	Db1 ²	3♦	Db1 ³
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: Hearts & diamonds
2: Willingness to defend one
3: Break in Tempo

Hand Record

Board	27	N	Robert Cappelli
Dealer	S	♠ A109	
		♥ Q10832	
		♦ Q	
Vul	None	♣ AK106	
W	Phillip Becker		
♠	Q2		
♥	K97654		
♦	K9843		
♣	(void)	E	Pierre Flatowicz
		♠	K7543
		♥	(void)
		♦	10752
		♣	9532
		S	Robert Katz
		♠	J86
		♥	AJ
		♦	AJ6
		♣	QJ874

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
3NT by N	Made 5	N/S +460	♦ 2

Facts Determined at the Table

The Director was summoned after North bid 3NT. South's Double over 3♦ had been slow, approximately ten seconds. North/South had the partnership agreement that the Double showed three good diamonds and suggested defending.

Director Ruling

As North held prime defensive cards and the partnership agreement suggested defending, the Director ruled that Pass was a logical alternative to bidding 3NT. Per Laws 16B and 1C2, the Director adjusted the score to 3♦X by East, Down 2, N/S +300.

Director's Ruling	3♦X by E, Down 2, N/S +300
--------------------------	-----------------------------------

The Appeal

The North/South players appealed the Director's ruling, and South and East attended the Committee. N/S are a regular partnership. The Double of 2NT showed a desire to penalize at least one of the red suits shown by West. N/S always open 1♣ with 3-3 in the minors and 1♦ with 4-5, unless the clubs are much better than diamonds. North knew the latter was not the case here based upon his own hand. The Double of 3♦ showed three good diamond cards, which was the actual South holding, so any Unauthorized Information from the BIT was duplicated by the Authorized Information of the auction.

East believed that the tempo showed doubt, and that North should have passed.

Committee Findings

It was stipulated that there was a BIT before the Double of 3♦. However, it was not clear to the AC that the BIT actually gave North UI, or that the UI demonstrably suggested that bidding would be more successful than passing.

A poll of six players had two taking some action in order to explore for a club slam, with the other four players passing. South's hand matched the partnership agreement for the Double, so the slowness does not suggest that bidding 3NT would be more successful than passing. If South does not have good diamonds, then 3NT would be unmakeable and the hesitation would suggest exploring a club contract. North did not pursue a club contract, so he did not use any UI to follow a suggested alternative.

Since the UI did not demonstrably suggest that bidding 3NT would be more successful than passing, and the authorized information from the auction was the same as the UI, the AC decided that there was no cause to overturn the table results. They therefore restored the result to 3NT by North, making 5, N/S +460.

Committee Decision	3NT by N, Made 5, N/S +460
---------------------------	-----------------------------------

Committee Members

Chair	Richard Popper
Member	Eugene Kales
Member	Chris Moll
Member	Gail Greenberg
Member	Dick Budd

Commentary

Goldsmith: If South's Double showed three good diamonds, why did it take him ten seconds to Double? I'd like to see that agreement in writing before I ruled based on it. Since the write-up doesn't mention N/S's system notes's backing up their claims, and assuming that they didn't have them with them, I'd rule as the Director did.

I'm not sure how many tricks E/W would take in 3♦X, but I suspect eight. ♦Q, ducked. Ruff a heart, spade to the queen loses, club ruffed, heart ruff dropping the ace. ♠K, spade ruff leaves

	(void)	
	Q108	
	(void)	
	K10x	
(void)		xx
Kxxx		(void)
Xx		x
(void)		xxx
	(void)	
	(void)	
	AJ	
	QJxxx	

with six tricks remaining. Ruffing a heart low ensures two more tricks for declarer. Other lines are possible, but this seems like a pretty normal line, and I think the other lines will usually result in eight tricks as well.

Marques: The partnership agreement is that the Double by South shows three good diamonds, so E/W likely have a nine card fit. From the report, should we presume that the TD didn't conduct a poll before making his decision? It does seem that the UI from the hesitation is either replicated in the AI or points to another direction than the one taken by North, depending on the point of view. This is a difficult case. If only the poll also contemplated what did the polled players think about the hesitation, the final decision would be much better supported, but all in all, it seems like the AC reached a good decision.

Meiracker: Did the poll of 6 players also receive the information that Double of 3♦ promises 3 good Diamonds? But again, the hesitation made any doubt go away. I don't agree with the AC decision.

Wildavsky: It seems to me the AC overthought this one. UI was present and it demonstrably suggested bidding over passing. Passing was a LA. I prefer the TD's ruling to the AC's. Note that N/S rated to outscore 3NT on defense against 3♦X had the E/W hands been a little less shapely.

If the N/S agreement was as described, one must wonder why it took South so long to find a Double.

Woolsey: It doesn't seem to me that 10 seconds is a BIT on an auction such as this. In fact, any action much faster than that would give the UI that the action was clear-cut.

However, the Director apparently judged that there was a meaningful BIT, so we have to base our ruling on that assumption. The Committee determined that the UI didn't suggest bidding vs. passing. I strongly disagree with that. Even if we accept the supposed agreement that South will usually open 1♦ with 4 diamonds and 5 clubs, who is to say that South might not choose to open 1C with K10xx of diamonds and QJxxx of Clubs. Furthermore, even if South has only 3 diamonds they might be as good as AKJ. The UI makes it clear that South's diamonds aren't so good, since with either of these diamond holdings South would have an easy Double. The UI definitely suggests bidding. Since many of the players polled passed, passing is clearly a LA. The Committee was off base here.

Subject of Appeal: Misinformation	Case: N8
--	-----------------

Event Wernher Open Pairs	Event DIC Candace Kushner
Date 08/12/2015	Session First Qualifying


Auction

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

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: 14-17 HCP
2: Initially explained as Majors

Hand Record

Board	8	N	Ed Rauch
Dealer	W	♠ K974	
		♥ 96	
Vul	None	♦ A87543	
		♣ Q	
W	Alan Osofsky		
♠	A8		
♥	QJ1083		
♦	Q102		
♣	AJ9	E	Phillip Alder
		♠	Q52
		♥	A542
		♦	9
		♣	107653
		S	Peter Jargowsky
		♠	J1063
		♥	K7
		♦	KJ6
		♣	K842

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
3♣ by S	Down 2	E/W +100	♦ 9

Facts Determined at the Table

Following the 3♣ call, South corrected the explanation of the 2♦ call from showing the majors to the correct partnership agreement of showing Diamonds and a Major. West summoned the Director following the corrected explanation and stated that he wanted protection later as his Double had been based upon the misinformation. He then passed, which meant the Director could not roll back the auction to offer East the chance to change his bid based upon the corrected explanation (Law 21B1a). Following the conclusion of play, West contended that he would have bid 3♥ over 2♠, rather than Double, if he had received the correct explanation of the opponents' methods.

Director Ruling

As West had elected to Pass over 3♣ instead of bidding when they had the correct information about the opponents' methods, it was deemed unlikely that they would have bid 3♥ over 2♠ with the proper information. Therefore, the table result (3♣ by South, down 2, E/W +100) stood.

Director's Ruling	3♣ by S, Down 2, E/W +100
--------------------------	----------------------------------

The Appeal

East/West appealed the ruling and attended the Committee hearing. West stated that he would have taken a different action at his second turn to call if he had not been misinformed as to the opponents' methods. West did not believe that he needed to bring hearts into the auction once he received the correct information, which is why he passed following 3♣.

Committee Findings

West stated that he would have taken a different action if he had received proper information at his second turn to call. However, at his third turn to call, with proper information and little new information, he elected to not take the action he had claimed he wished to have taken at the earlier opportunity. West did not claim that bidding 3♥ at his third turn would have been inconsistent with his initial Double as a rationale for passing, despite being given an opportunity to do so. East did not mention a desire to have changed his call when provided with the correct information.

Thus, while the indicated actions by E/W may have happened had the correct information been available from the start, their actual actions at the table were not consistent with that scenario. This suggests that the proposed actions were unlikely. Also, it was considered likely that N/S would have still reached 3♠ even with the heart overcall. Therefore, the table result was confirmed.

Committee Decision	3♠ by S, Down 2, E/W +100
---------------------------	----------------------------------

Committee Members

Chair	Chris Moll
Member	James Thurtell
Member	Greg Herman

Commentary

Goldsmith: Over a DONT 2♦, doesn't 2♠ show real spades? If so, North's had UI that partner was just taking a preference, rather than bidding a real suit. A raise is probably a LA. South would go on, and East has a Double. This scenario isn't likely, but it may well be at all probable. I think I'd award N/S -500 and E/W +100, as +100 seems like the best result for E/W that is likely.

If the AC ruled as they did, which is OK ignoring the UI issue, they needed to state whether the appeal had merit and why. I don't see any, given West's arguments.

Marques: A perfect decision by TD and AC. Nothing to add.

Meiracker: Maybe East would have changed his first Pass, but he never mentioned that to the TD or AC, so I agree with the outcome.

Wildavsky: The write-up doesn't say whether the TD asked East whether he might have changed his call had he been correctly informed that 2♦ was natural. Many players would make a negative Double with his hand, given the correct information, and then West surely would have bid hearts.

Woolsey: I agree that West would have been just as likely to bid 3♥ on the actual information he received as he would had he received the information timely. I also agree that N/S would as at least as likely to compete to 3♠ over 3♥ as over 3♣. Thus, it is difficult to see how E/W were damaged as far as them buying the contract at the three level is concerned.

There is, however, one point which nobody seems to have brought up. Given that North's call showed diamonds and a major, what was the meaning of South's 2♠ call in the partnership agreements? Logically it would appear that it should be Pass or correct, but if that is accurate North would have alerted the call as such. The conclusion is that 2♠ is a natural call, made in light of the likelihood that North's major is hearts. Given that, North's quiet auction looks pretty strange on a hand which looks like it would be worth a 4♠ call opposite a hand which was prepared to play in 2♠. Of course, North did have the UI from South's explanation that South didn't have the hand which the bidding said he had. For that reason, I would give the North hand as a bidding problem, telling those polled that 2♦ shows diamonds and a major and 2♠ is natural. If there are 4♠ bidders or some think about bidding 4♠, I would adjust the result to 4♠ Doubled, down 3.

Subject of Appeal:	Unauthorized Information	Case:	N9
---------------------------	--------------------------	--------------	----

Event	Freeman Mixed BAM Teams	Event DIC	Steve Bates
Date	08/13/2015	Session	Second Final


Auction

West	North	East	South
1♣ ¹	Pass	1♥ ²	Pass
1NT ³	Pass	2♥ ⁴	Pass
3♥	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♠	Pass
4NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: Strong, 15+ HCP
2: 5+ ♠, Game forcing
3: Balanced, Unlimited, <4♠
4: Intended as Re-transfer

Hand Record

Board	28	N	Ida Groenkvist		
Dealer	W	♠ (void)			
		♥ 109854			
		♦ J9843			
Vul	N/S	♣ J95			
W	Kit Woolsey			E	Sally Woolsey
♠	A7			♠	J109832
♥	KQ62			♥	J
♦	A72			♦	KQ6
♣	K876			♣	Q104
		S	Greg Humphreys		
		♠	KQ654		
		♥	A73		
		♦	105		
		♣	A32		

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
4NT by W	Down 1	N/S +50	

Facts Determined at the Table

The Director was summoned at the beginning of the fourth round by North/South. The hand had been played in the second round. East had intended the 2♥ call as a re-transfer to spades, but West had not Alerted. After the auction, East had volunteered the information concerning the failure to Alert, but West said that was not their agreement. When asked if the 3♥ call might have been a super accept, E/W said that they do not use super accepts in game forcing auctions. N/S felt that the Unauthorized Information from the failure to alert might have influenced East's bidding and resulted in damage to them.

Director Ruling

The failure to Alert did provide East with Unauthorized Information. However, the 3♥ response to the "re-transfer" provided Authorized Information to East that duplicated the UI, as it was impossible under E/W systemic agreements. Accordingly, no adjustment was necessary to the table result.

Director's Ruling	4NT by W, Down 1, N/S +50
--------------------------	----------------------------------

The Appeal

The North/South players appealed the Director's ruling, and North, East and West attended the Committee, along with the Captain of the N/S pair's team. In North's opinion, if 2♥ was intended as a re-transfer, but was not alerted, this provided UI to East. If 2H had been alerted, then East would have interpreted 3♥ as a super-accept, 4♣ as a cuebid, and 4NT as Blackwood, resulting in a higher contract that would have gone down more, possibly a lot more. Instead, the UI tipped East that the auction had gone off the rails and enabled her to bail out at the first plausible opportunity.

West argued that from his vantage, with a promising spade fit, he had several alternatives to 1NT at his second turn. He could have raised spades directly to make partner captain, or he could have initiated a relay sequence to get specific information about East's hand. 1NT was more neutral, though still unlimited, and allowed East to describe her hand further.

West interpreted 2♥ as a natural bid, the actual systemic agreement. His 3♥ was a raise, 4♣ was a cuebid, and 4NT was a keycard answer (showing three keycards for hearts) based on West's interpretation of 4♠ as a keycard ask for hearts. East got lucky that the 4NT "response" was a plausible contract that she could Pass.

West said that systemically they do not super-accept in game-forcing auctions. Over transfers, they simply accept and await further description, even with very strong hands. West noted that with such a hand, he could have chosen to take control on the previous round. This systemic knowledge was authorized information to East, who knew that something had gone wrong based on the 3♥ bid itself.

Committee Findings

To the Committee, the major question in the decision was how much authorized information did East have. Even without systemic knowledge about "no super-accepts in game forcing auctions", East could see that 3♥ was a peculiar bid, since it bypassed several lower calls that could have been used to super-accept. Also, East knew that if West had a very strong hand (strong enough to think about slam opposite a hand like East's), he probably would have chosen a relay sequence on the previous round. Thus, 3♥ was a powerful indication that something had gone wrong.

East's 3♠ and 4♠ were normal attempts to slow the auction down, regardless of what was happening. Over 4NT, the UI did not demonstrably suggest that passing was more likely to be successful than it would have been to a player having only authorized information. Therefore, the Committee upheld the Director's ruling of letting the table result stand

Committee Decision	4NT by W, Down 1, N/S +50
---------------------------	----------------------------------

Committee Members

Chair	Bart Bramley
Member	Lou Reich
Member	Mike Passell
Member	Ray Miller
Member	Meyer Kotkin

Commentary

Goldsmith: E/W's argument that they don't play super accepts in game forcing auctions doesn't clearly apply to this case. They don't play retransfers, so how can they know they didn't play super accepts over retransfers? The argument is of the form, "if false then," and such statements have no logical meaning.

On the other hand, no one ever plays super accepts over retransfers; it simply does not make sense to do so. Is partner forced to re-retransfer? Re-re-retransfer? This argument is so much more convincing than the "if we played retransfers, we would not play super accepts, because we are in a game force" one that had it been made at the table, everyone would likely have agreed.

So, while there was UI from the failure to alert, it was duplicated by AI from bridge logic. In theory. In practice, I'm not so sure.

East's bidding makes it seem as if she was trying to use the UI, albeit clumsily, and not thinking through the auction. I strongly suspect a violation of Law 73C, and I'm not at all sure she was thinking clearly enough to have the AI that duplicated her UI. We cannot tell now, and without knowing what her other choices mean (what's 3NT? For that matter, was 3♠ natural or a cue bid in support of hearts?), I don't think we can evaluate this case. Absent more information, I think we have to go with the AC's conclusion that most players in East's position would have AI that duplicated all the UI she had, and thus she was free to do as she pleased.

Of one thing I am sure: East got very lucky. Her partner never made a non-forcing bid, and she could have missed a laydown slam.

Marques: Again, a perfect job by the TD and the AC.

Meiracker: Nothing to add in this complicated case.

Wildavsky: These look like reasonable decisions in an unusual case.

Woolsey: Obviously I am biased, since I was involved. However, I do agree that when the auction makes it totally clear that the wheels have come off, a player is permitted to do anything to recover, UI or not.

Subject of Appeal:	Tempo/Unauthorized Information	Case:	N10
---------------------------	--------------------------------	--------------	-----

Event	Roth Open Swiss	Event DIC	Gary Zeiger
Date	08/14/2015	Session	Second Final


Auction

West	North	East	South
	2♠ ¹	3♥	4♠
Pass ²	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♥	5♠	Pass	Pass
6♥	Pass	Pass	6♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: Spades & a minor, weak
2: Break in Tempo (1 minute)

Hand Record

Board	29	N	Ai-Tai Lo	
Dealer	N	♠ Q109xx ♥ (void) ♦ AQ10xx ♣ Qxx		
Vul	Both			
W	Rodrigo Garcia Da Rosa		E	Carlos Pellegrini
♠	xxx		♠	x
♥	AQJ10		♥	K8xxxxx
♦	xxx		♦	J
♣	xxx		♣	AK102
		S	Alan Schwartz	
		♠	AKJx	
		♥	xx	
		♦	Kxxx	
		♣	Jxx	

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
6♠ by N	Down 1	E/W +100	♣ K

Facts Determined at the Table

The Director was summoned at the conclusion of play of the hand. North/South explained that there had been an obvious break in tempo of almost a minute following the 4♠ call by South before West passed. East/West agreed to the BIT.

Additional Factors Determined Away from the Table

Four expert players were given the East hand and the auction without the BIT, in order to determine if there was a logical alternative to bidding. Most were in favor of bidding, but agreed that the BIT clearly made the choice easier.

Director Ruling

While the poll showed that bidding on was certainly a possibility, based solely on the East hand, the BIT clearly suggested that bidding would be more successful than passing. Accordingly, per Laws 16B1 and 12C1e, the results were changed to 4♠ by North, making 5, N/S +650.

Director's Ruling	4♠ by N, Made 5, N/S +650
--------------------------	----------------------------------

The Appeal

East/West appealed the ruling, and they along with the North player attended the Committee hearing. East felt his hand stood on its own merits, and it was obvious to bid 4NT in order to show a four card minor suit.

Committee Findings

The AC agreed with the polled players that taking action with the East hand after 4♠ was about a 75% action. However, the lengthy hesitation by West suggested values and that action rather than inaction would probably be the winning call by East. Per Law 16, a player may not choose from amongst logical alternatives one suggested UI. The AC therefore upheld the Director ruling that Pass was a logical alternative over 4♠, with the result of making five, N/S +650. As bidding was considered a high percentage action, the appeal was judged to have merit.

Committee Decision	4♠ by N, Made 5, N/S +650
---------------------------	----------------------------------

Committee Members

Chair	Gail Greenberg
Member	James Thurtell
Member	Ellen Kent
Member	Scott Stearns
Member	Chris Moll

Commentary

Goldsmith: Good job. The rationale for not giving an AWMW is sound. When only four players are polled, one or two outlier opinions could easily bias the result.

Marques: – “Most were in favor of bidding,” in this case, necessarily means that three out of the four polled players bid 4NT and one passed. From the report, it seems that this proportion created the impression that 4NT is a 75% action, and thus “Pass” being a 25% action it was deemed a LA. Case closed... or not?

Using the percentage extracted from a limited sample size as the absolute percentage for the action is a fundamentally flawed approach. Imagine that two additional players were polled and both bid. Would this make bidding an 85% action? Whenever we get a “one in X” situation, maybe that one (in this case, the “passer”) is by chance the odd chip out of the block, making us reach the wrong conclusions.

The case is very interesting because it touches the problem of judging borderline minority actions. We have two possible actions, A and B, where B is the minority one. If a significant proportion of peers consider B, but only a very small number (in a poll, typically only one) of them choose it, we cannot base our judgment of whether it is a LA or not on the “one out of X” fraction. We need to analyze the reasoning behind the choices, and other factors like for example, the tempo, reaction and body language of the pollees, when relevant. Otherwise the probability of making an error is very high.

To illustrate this, let’s temporarily consider that a 10% action (an action considered by a significant proportion but chosen only by 1 out of 10 peers) is not a LA. On a poll (a sample) of four players, we have a 34% chance of finding at least one that takes the minority action, masking it as potentially LA. On the other hand, let’s consider that a 25% action is a LA. On a poll of four players, there is a 32% chance that all the sampled players take the majority action, masking the 25% action as not a LA. We clearly need to use more information, if we want to reduce the likelihood of making errors like these.

This case depends a lot on the additional information obtainable from the pollees about the minority action. It doesn’t seem to me that the TD did as much as he could to get it, and reading the report I am left with a strong feeling that too much weight was given to the “1 out of 4” factor.

I’m not so sure that passing by East is a logical alternative, and I’m not completely confident that enough information was obtained with the poll, and that the information was used in the best possible way.

Meiracker: The poll procedure doesn’t seem complete. Which questions did the TD ask? What will you bid and were you considering passing or which bid to make? Also 4 players are not enough to rule that Pass is a LA. But I think that the TD and AC made the right decision.

Wildavsky: Either the TD poll was deficient or it is not reported to us accurately. Per ACBL polling guidelines, mirroring the wording of Law 16, the two most important questions are “What call would you make?” and “What other calls would you seriously consider?” E/W agreed that West’s hesitation made bidding more attractive than passing – that was not at issue. What we need to know is how many of East’s peers would Pass, and of those who bid how many seriously considered passing.

The TD ruling as presented is illegal because it does not address the issue of whether Pass was a Logical Alternative.

"While the poll showed that bidding on was certainly a possibility, based solely on the East hand, the BIT clearly suggested that bidding would be more successful than passing. Accordingly, per Laws 16B1 and 12C1e, the results were changed to 4♠ by North, making 5, N/S +650."

The TD may well have addressed the LA issue, but his statement does not mention it.

If Pass were judged to be an LA, then the TD and Committee rulings would be accurate. The correct way to determine this is by a properly conducted poll where at least one of East's peers passed and a significant proportion seriously considered passing.

Woolsey: There was UI. The UI suggested bidding vs. passing. Pass was judged to be a LA, both by the poll and by the members of the Committee. That makes the ruling clearly correct.

Subject of Appeal:	Tempo/Unauthorized Information/Misinformation	Case:	N11
---------------------------	---	--------------	-----

Event	Spingold Knockout Teams	Event DIC	Matt Smith
Date	08/14/2015	Session	First Session, Quarterfinals


Auction

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	2♥	2♠
3♠	4♠	Pass ¹	Pass
5♥	Pass ²	Pass	5♠
Pass	Pass	Dbl	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: Break in Tempo (3 minutes)
2: Alerted as Forcing

Hand Record

Board	24	N	Ron Schwartz		
Dealer	W	♠ AKJ1096			
		♥ 2			
Vul	None	♦ KQ7			
		♣ 985			
W	Allan Graves			E	Richard Schwartz
♠ 4				♠ 852	
♥ KJ63				♥ AQ10954	
♦ 1082				♦ AJ4	
♣ A10764				♣ 3	
		S	Lotan Fisher		
		♠ Q73			
		♥ 87			
		♦ 9653			
		♣ KQJ2			

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
5♠X by N	Down 3	E/W +500	♣ 3

Facts Determined at the Table

The Director was summoned after the bidding tray was returned to the South/West side following the 4♣ call. The tray had remained on the North/East side for almost three minutes. Following the play of the hand, North/South expressed concern that the long hesitation had influenced West to bid in the pass out seat.

Additional Factors Determined Away from the Table

Ten players were polled as to whether the delay could be ascribed either North or East, based upon the auction and their hands. Some felt it could not be determined, while many thought it was likely the East player. Ten other players were then given the West hand and asked, based upon the auction and the hand, if they would bid following 4♣. Nine of the ten said they would. Based upon this poll, Pass was deemed to not be a logical alternative.

Director Ruling

While the extensive hesitation did create Unauthorized Information that could be attributed to the East player, based upon the player poll conducted, the UI had no effect as there was no logical alternative to West bidding. Therefore, no adjustment to the table results was necessary, 5♠X by North, Down 3, E/W +500.

Director's Ruling	5♠X by N, Down 3, E/W +500
--------------------------	-----------------------------------

The Appeal

The North/South players appealed the Director's ruling, and all of the players attended the Committee. The North/South pair believed the UI from the long break in tempo heavily influenced the decision by West to bid over 4♠. When asked about the hesitation, East explained that his partner's 3♣ bid had created a forcing situation, and that he had taken some time to decide upon their course of action before making a forcing Pass.

N/S at this point raised an additional argument to their appeal. They had not been made aware that East's Pass was forcing, and under their agreements, the meaning of North's Pass following 5♥ would have changed to non-forcing. South stated he would have passed out the auction if he had received the information that 5♥ had been forced by East's Pass.

Committee Findings

The original charge in the appeal had been to address the possible UI generated by the Break in Tempo by East before passing over 4♠. As the E/W agreement was that this was a forcing Pass, West was not acting under the influence of UI as the auction itself gave authorized information that they should make some call. Therefore, there were no grounds to adjust based upon UI.

However, N/S did raise a valid point that they had received MI when they were not informed that East's Pass was forcing, as this affected their bidding agreements. The AC consulted with the directing staff as to whether a forcing Pass is an Alertable call. While this is not specifically addressed under the Alert Procedures, the bidding regulations when using screens strongly encourage informing the opponents of any calls that may have an unusual or unexpected meaning.

Per Law 40B4, "a side that is damaged as a consequence of its opponents' failure to provide disclosure of the meaning of a call or play as these Laws require is entitled to rectification through the award of an adjusted score." As 5♥ by East will make five, for a score of only E/W +450, compared to the E/W +500 that resulted in 5♣X by North, it was decided that N/S had been damaged as a result of the MI concerning East's Pass. Accordingly, the result was adjusted to 5♥ by East.

Committee Decision	5♥ by E, Made 5, E/W +450
---------------------------	----------------------------------

Committee Members

Chair	Michael Huston
Member	Lynn Deas
Member	Craig Allen
Member	Joel Wooldridge
Member	Jacob Morgan

Commentary

Goldsmith: Could West have determined who broke tempo? Yes. No one thinks for three minutes than just bids game. If North seriously considered a bid other than 4♠, he would have chosen it. He was hardly considering passing or doubling if he chose to bid game, so almost certainly East caused the BIT. Is that likely? Sure. East can easily have a tough 5-over-4 decision; in fact, that's extremely likely. I'll guess that West had about 10-1 odds on where the time went.

Was passing 4♠ a LA? If E/W were in a force, no. Before I'll rule that they were, I'll need documentation of their agreement. A passed hand can't normally force a simple overcall. Players shade overcalls opposite passed hands, just because they are unlikely to get buried. I play 3♣ shows a good raise to 4♠, one with which West would be happy to set a force, but I do not believe it is binding on East. Let's hypothesize that they were not in a force. The Directors' poll was 9 out of 10 to bid. I don't know how it was worded, but if it was worded as written up, I'd throw it out. "Ten other players were then given the West hand and asked, based upon the auction and the hand, if they would bid following 4♠." That's a terrifically leading question. Presumably, the TD followed correct procedure and gave the hand to ten players and asked for their actions at West's first three opportunities. One out of ten passed. By the National Law Commission's definition of LA, that makes passing a LA. The write-up says, "based on this poll, Pass was deemed not to be a LA." Perhaps the nine who bid said something like, "bidding is automatic," and the one who passed thought it a toss-up. Without more detail about the results, I'll judge to believe the Directors' conclusions and decide that to Pass isn't a LA. I'm a little skeptical; West's hand is pretty much what East expects, so if East wants to sell to 4♠, who is West to overrule him? Could East have Kx AJ10xxx Kxx Qx? Is he supposed to Double 4♠ vs. a passed hand with that? So, if West's Pass is forcing, which I do not have enough evidence to aver, or if passing is not a LA, which I can buy, but am not convinced of, then West is allowed to bid 5H.

If East's Pass is not forcing, which seems normal to me, then North's Pass is forcing? That's hard to buy. North could have bid 4♥ over 3♠ to create a force. When he bid 4♠, he was captain. On the other hand, North alerted his Pass as forcing, and South bid 5♠ with sterile shape, so they clearly thought they were in a force. It makes plenty of sense that if the opponents are in a force, you are not, so North's argument seems reasonable.

In the ACBL, forcing Passes are not normally alertable, unless they are "highly unusual or unexpected." I don't know if this means "highly unusual or highly unexpected," or "highly unusual or just normally unexpected," but if E/W can argue Pass is forcing and we don't reject that argument out of hand, then it does not reach either standard. So, no MI was given to N/S, at least by ACBL rules. North alerted his forcing Pass, so maybe he expected a different standard, but I judge that his force is at least normally unexpected, maybe even highly unexpected, so it is a reasonable argument that by ACBL standards, it requires an alert.

It is reasonable to rule result stands. If you don't buy that E/W were in a force, and if you think passing 4♠ on West's third turn is a LA, then I think East's BIT demonstrably suggests bidding 5♥ over passing 4♠, so rolling the result back to 4♠ down 2 is also reasonable. The Directors concluded from a large poll (ten is a lot compared to some of the others described here) that passing wasn't a LA. I'll guess that it is more likely that they did a good job determining this and a poor job of writing up the process than they did a poor job of determining it and a good job of writing it up, so on balance, I'll guess to rule result stands.

Marques: This is a case for the history books, for a number of reasons. The TD did a very good job establishing who, from West's point of view, was hesitating and also solving the first problem about Pass being a logical alternative or not. It's a pity that, at the table, the forcing character of East's first Pass was not established. Once it becomes apparent that Pass is forcing, we get a whole new case. Should it have been alerted? The Alert procedures don't specifically address it. Alert procedures should be simple and clear, with a minimal number of gray areas and ambiguous situations. Somehow, we keep running into these situations where it takes a long discussion to decide if something is alertable or not. Anyway, even if players are strongly encouraged to actively inform the opponents about their own agreements and especially behind screens, players should also protect themselves by asking questions namely when the answer is highly relevant for choosing their own actions. In this case, I respectfully disagree with the conclusion that this forcing Pass should have been alerted and that the non-alert caused damage to the opponents. At such high level of play, even considering that West is a passed hand, E/W are voluntarily committed to game and I don't think that the forcing Pass situation carries an unusual or unexpected meaning, and if N/S' agreements on their own passes being forcing or not are so highly dependent on the meaning of the opponents passes, I do think that N/S should have asked about it, in order to protect themselves.

It's curious that an ACBL regulation is quoted in case NABC 13 as "Players who, by experience or expertise, recognize that the opponents have neglected to alert the special agreement will be expected to protect themselves." I think that this regulation should have been applied here also.

Also, I would expect N/S to have some written notes about their agreement which, as far as I know, was not produced to the AC.

Meiracker: West's 3♠ bid forces East to bid at least 4♥, so Pass will be a forcing Pass. N/S should have protected themselves by asking. Poor decision by the AC.

Wildavsky: Subsequent developments made this the most significant appeal in modern history, though not because of the details of the case itself.

Not much looks right to me:

a. The poll does not seem to have been conducted according to ACBL guidelines. As in case 10 I must note that these require the TD to ask "What call would you make?" and "What other calls would you seriously consider?" Since one pollee did choose to Pass, we need to know how many seriously considered it. Per Law 16, an action is a LA if a significant number of the player's peers would seriously consider it and some might select it.

b. It seems to me unlikely that as a passed hand West could set up a force here, and E/W did not provide documentation for such an agreement. I presume the AC accepted East's contention that his Pass was forcing as an admission against interest.

c. N/S's contention that North's Pass was forcing seems likewise unlikely, in spite of the alert. North bypassed the opportunity to cuebid 4♥ to set up a forcing Pass. If the meaning of North's Pass depended on the meaning of East's Pass then South surely should have asked East about his Pass. Since the players were behind screens there would be no risk of making UI available.

Were it an option, I'd have ruled against both sides here.

Woolsey: Oh, come on. West's 3♠ call not only forced the partnership to 4♥, it did so in the strongest possible manner, presumably suggesting some slam interest. It clearly puts the partnership in a force, and any expert bridge player knows this. The N/S argument is a lot of hot air, and it is incredible that the Committee bought it.

As we all know, had the ruling gone the other way the Schwartz team would have won the match, and quite likely bridge history would have been changed.

Subject of Appeal:	Unauthorized Information	Case:	N12
---------------------------	--------------------------	--------------	-----

Event	Roth Open Swiss	Event DIC	Gary Zeiger
Date	08/15/2015	Session	Second Semi-Final


Auction

West	North	East	South
1NT ¹	2♦ ²	2NT ³	Pass
3♣ ⁴	Pass	Pass	3♦
Pass	3♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: Explained as 14 -16 HCP
2: Explained ♦ & 4 card Major
3: Lebensohl – puppet to 3♣
4: Pass or correct

Hand Record

Board	24	N	Cezary Balicki
Dealer	W	♠ Q98	
		♥ AK9853	
		♦ 3	
Vul	None	♣ QJ3	
W	Mitch Dunitz		
♠	KJ75		
♥	1074		
♦	AKJ2		
♣	K2	E	Joanna Stansby
		♠	106
		♥	Q
		♦	97654
		♣	A10986
		S	Adam Zmudzinsky
		♠	A432
		♥	J65
		♦	Q108
		♣	754

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
3♥ by N	Down 1	E/W +50	♠ 10

Facts Determined at the Table

The Director was summoned at the conclusion of play of the hand. East had explained that the 1NT opening showed 14 to 16 HCP, when the actual agreement was 13+ to 16. The North/South agreement was that 2♦ showed a major suit over a weak NT (minimum of range under 14 HCP), diamonds and a four card major over a strong NT. North, hearing the incorrect explanation, had Unauthorized Information that suggested pulling from 3♦ to 3♥.

Additional Factors Determined Away from the Table

Three players were given the North hand, and polled as to their call over 3♦. All passed.

Director Ruling

The player poll confirmed that Pass was a logical alternative to bidding. Per Law 16B1, North had UI due to the improper explanation of the systemic agreement, and the UI suggested that bidding would be more successful than passing. Per Law 12C1e, the contract was adjusted to 3♦ by North, Down 7, E/W +350.

Director's Ruling	3♦ by N, Down 7, E/W +350
--------------------------	----------------------------------

The Appeal

The North/South players appealed the Director's ruling. North, East, and West were present, as well as Mike Passell, a member of North's team, to help with potential language problems.

North argued that if South had held six or more diamonds headed by the KQJ10 (or similar) he would have bid directly over 2NT. His Pass, followed by 3♦, suggested two places to play. Thus, a Pass by North of 3♦ was not a logical alternative to the suggested 3♥.

East/West stated that 3♦ was not alerted at the table, nor explained as showing two places to play at any time before the Committee took place. If North or South had stated that 3♦ showed two places to play, E/W would not have called the Director. E/W believed that South might choose to delay competing over 2NT with many lesser diamond holdings than ♦KQJ10xx where 3♦ would be the best contract for N/S.

Committee Findings

The Committee agreed with the Director that Pass was a logical alternative to the demonstrably suggested bid of 3♥. N/S's failure to alert 3♦ or explain their agreement regarding 3♦ as showing two places to play significantly weakened their argument that they had a clear partnership understanding of the meaning of 3♦. Thus, the Committee upheld the Director's ruling, 3♦ by South, down 7, E/W +350. The appeal was found to have substantial merit.

Committee Decision	3♦ by N, Down 7, E/W +350
---------------------------	----------------------------------

Committee Members

Chair	Douglas Doub
Member	James Thurtell
Member	David Caprera
Member	Marc Rabinowitz
Member	Ed Lazarus

Commentary

Goldsmith: Good enough.

I don't like the argument that if North had alerted 3♦ as two places to play, that would strengthen the claim that 3♥ is allowed. Would the AC really accept such an argument? Because then North can just alert and bid 3♥ when he knows there's been a misunderstanding. An alert here isn't good enough; we need system notes to accept such a statement.

N/S had a good argument...which wasn't made. If they play one method over 13+-16 and another over 14-16, then the incomplete announcement may well have led to the N/S accident, and if so, N/S may have redress available. I don't buy that argument much; everyone knows that 14-16 really means 13+-16, but had they made it, they may have obtained a different result. This suggests that we ought to make a rule now that says, "when a notrump range is announced, it is understood that players will upgrade with some regularity, and announcements such as 'a good 13 to 16' or '14 and a half to 17' are not needed." I'm not sure that's a perfect solution; if a pair never upgrades, that needs to be known, too. Something better than what we have ought to be in place. Perhaps we can just have a set of checkboxes on the convention card roughly: "upgrades: rare, sometimes, frequent."

The appeal would have had substantial merit had N/S brought up this point. And N/S wouldn't have earned a PP.

Marques: The argument that 3♦ shows two places to play seems to be very self-serving. Like it was pointed out, not alerting 3♦ is a smoking gun to this fact. I imagine that a direct 3♦ by South shows better values than after Pass. But I'm just presuming. "Substantial merit" sounds a bit generous to NS.

Meiracker: North has UI and when 3 players passed 3♦, Pass is a LA. Totally agree with the TD and AC

Wildavsky: I do not understand these rulings. Didn't East give MI with her incorrect explanation? Had she announced the range correctly South would have explained 2♦ as "hearts or spades" and there would be no further difficulty.

One could argue that "13+ to 16" is effectively the same as "14 to 16", since players are in general free to use their judgment to upgrade and downgrade, but no such argument seems to have been made here.

Had East announced the range accurately I would agree with the TD and AC rulings.

Woolsey: North has the UI that South thinks the 2♦ bid shows diamonds and a 4-card major. That UI clearly makes bidding 3♥ more attractive than passing 3♦, since North knows from the UI that South's 3♦ call is based on a misunderstanding. As the poll and bridge logic indicates, passing 3♦ is not only a LA, it is the correct bridge bid. The ruling is clearly correct. The only thing I don't understand is what merit the Committee found for this appeal.

Subject of Appeal: Misinformation	Case: N13
--	------------------

Event Spingold Knockout Teams	Event DIC Matt Smith
Date 08/16/2015	Session 1 st Session, Finals


Auction

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♠
Pass	2♣ ¹	Pass	2♠
Pass	2NT ²	Pass	3♥ ³
Pass	4♠	Pass	4NT ⁵
Pass	5♥ ⁵	Dbl	6♣
Pass	6♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: 2+ ♣, Game Forcing
2: Relay
3: 6+ ♠
4: Keycard
5: Two Keys, no ♠Q

Hand Record

Board	2	N	Pierre Zimmermann
Dealer	E	♠ A6	
		♥ J982	
Vul	N/S	♦ Q97	
		♣ AJ52	
W	Alfredo Versace		
♠	1094		
♥	7654		
♦	1052		
♣	1073	E	Lorenzo Lauria
		♠	J5
		♥	AQ103
		♦	J643
		♣	Q64
		S	Franck Multon
		♠	KQ8732
		♥	K
		♦	AK8
		♣	K98

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
6♣ by S	Made 7	N/S +1460	♥ 5

Facts Determined at the Table

The Director was summoned at the conclusion of play of the hand. When the bidding tray returned to the North/East side of the screen following the 3♥ call, East asked for an explanation of the Alerted bid. North wrote "6♠=3♥" on his pad. East took this to mean that South held six spades and three hearts. He tried to clarify this verbally upon receiving the note, but did not receive any additional explanation. The VuGraph operator did not notice the incident and could not provide any evidence. East felt they were damaged by the incorrect explanation.

Additional Factors Determined Away from the Table

Eight players were polled as to their interpretation of the notation North had provided East. Most understood it to mean that the 3♥ call showed that South held six spades. Those who were unsure said they would have asked for additional clarification. One of the players was asked about the play of the ♥10 to the first trick, and believed it to be a good play.

Director Ruling

Based upon the player poll and Law 40B4, the Director ruled that the table result would stand. East was not damaged by misinformation but rather by his own misunderstanding.

Director's Ruling	6♣ by S, Made 7, N/S +1460
--------------------------	-----------------------------------

The Appeal

East/West appealed the ruling, and all players, as well as the E/W team captain attended the Committee. The screening Director noted that the TD staff had applied the spirit of the ACBL regulation that "Players who, by experience or expertise, recognize that their opponents have neglected to Alert a special agreement will be expected to protect themselves."

East believed he had been informed that South showed six spades and three hearts. He presumed the South hand was something like:

♠ KQxxxx
♥ K76
♦ A
♣ Kxx

with or without the ♠10.

He played the ♥10 in order to make it more difficult for declarer to read the distribution. East also noted that the E/W partnership rarely Double cuebids because they have found that it tends to provide an advantage to the opponents and that he did so here only because he knew that declarer held three hearts. He explained that he had asked about the auction twice. East then asked the Committee rhetorically how many times they were expected to ask their opponent to repeat information that had already been given.

North explained that, in response to East's question about the 3♥ bid, he wrote "6♠", then in an attempt to clarify added the "= 3♥". He noted that, in the N/S methods, the 2♣ bidder cannot hold as many as five hearts, so it would not make sense for South to be able to show three hearts. North explained that all of the communications with his screen mate were written, as his partner (properly) objects whenever he gives an oral explanation.

South suggested that with the hand East was playing him to hold, with 15 HCP, he would not have been strong enough to use Blackwood over 4♠. On the S/W side of the screen, South had written the explanation "3♥ = 6♠".

6♠ could be made with any trick one play, by ruffing out the ♥Q10. The likelihood of this was a separate matter and would depend on whether East chose to Double 5♥.

Committee Findings

The Committee was shown the explanation written by North in a "blind preview" before seeing the deal and before the players arrived. Some members judged that it likely meant that the 3♥ call showed six spades, others that it showed six spades and three hearts.

2⊕ After Resilite at least 3
5+4, 11+H, 64 = 20
↓
No 4 Clubs

After hearing the testimony and deliberating, a 3-2 majority of the AC members judged that North had provided accurate information, and that if it was ambiguous, East needed to request a written clarification. While East was clearly convinced within his own mind, he needed to do more to protect himself in order to receive redress. If there was no MI, there could be no reason to adjust the score, so the AC upheld the Director's ruling.

The appeal was found to have substantial merit.

Committee Decision	6♠ by S, Made 7, N/S +1460
---------------------------	-----------------------------------

Committee Members

Chair	Gail Greenberg
Member	Danny Sprung
Member	Chris Moll
Member	Jan Jansma
Member	Kit Woolsey

Commentary

Goldsmith: Tough call. I don't have any special insight here. North's handwriting is pretty awful, and the reversed equality is misleading, but the particular misunderstanding is a little bit of a stretch, too. All in all, I think the ruling preserves equity, as a high heart is a likely lead had there been no Double.

Did the note really say "2♣ after hesitate at least 3"?

Marques: It's surprising how often players fail to protect themselves in this type of situation. At the table, East knew that what he presumed to be the meaning of the written note was odd. Very much so that, according to him, he asked North two times about the auction. If he didn't get a very clear answer, he should have called the TD at that time. The results of the poll turn out to be very damaging for E/W's case. Faced with the fact that none of the eight players polled misinterpreted the written note as East did and that those that were not sure asked for additional clarification, I'm surprised that the AC decision was so close.

Meiracker: Eight players asked about the notation and almost all of them thinks it means 6 spades. The TD and the AC made the right decision.

Wildavsky: Most experts, especially those who follow the typographical conventions promoted by The Bridge World magazine, would assume that "6♠=3♥" means six spades and three hearts, especially when the "no 4 Club" annotation is added as it seems to be an attempt to clarify the partial distribution already noted. Most of us, if we wanted to convey that the 3♥ call showed 6♠, would write something like "3♥ -> 6♠" or perhaps "3♥ = 6♠" - the order does make a difference.

Given the Double of 5♥, it seems likely to me that declarer would have made the contract even if East had played the ♥A at trick one. However, East's testimony implied that, given an accurate explanation, he would not have Doubled 5♥.

The testimony also shows that East did attempt to clarify the explanation, to no avail. He ought to have called the TD, but players can be reluctant to do so.

All told I make this one too close to call.

Woolsey: I was on the Committee, so I had first-hand view of the evidence. When I first saw what had been written, I thought it meant that the call showed 6 spades and 3 hearts. If one is trying to show that the 3♥ bid just shows 6 spades, the normal way to do this is to write 3♥ = 6♠. The way it was actually written was backwards, and that was what created the confusion. East was clearly convinced that the explanation was 6 spades and 3 hearts, as otherwise his play at trick 1 would have been absurd. I believe it is the responsibility of the alerting player to make sure his explanation is unambiguous, and I don't think that North did so.

Subject of Appeal:	Misinformation	Case:	R1
---------------------------	----------------	--------------	----

Event	Grand National Teams, Flight B	Event DIC	Ken Van Cleve
Date	08/05/2015	Session	Qualifying Swiss, Match 2


Auction

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

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: Strong, Artificial, Forcing
2: Explained - Natural, Strong
3: 5 -8 HCP, Natural

Hand Record

Board	17	N	2100 MPS		
Dealer	N	♠ 3	♥ 743		
Vul	None	♦ KQ976	♣ J743		
W	2230 MPS			E	2000 MPS
♠ 2				♠ AJ9765	
♥ J102				♥ 9865	
♦ J8				♦ 104	
♣ AKQ10862			♣ 9		
		S	1900 MPS		
		♠ KQ1084			
		♥ AKQ			
		♦ A532			
		♣ 5			

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
2♠ by S	Made 2	N/S +110	♣ A

Facts Determined at the Table

The Director was called at the end of the hand. South asked about the 1NT overcall at his turn and was told it was natural and strong. He likely suspected this was not the actual agreement but did not seek further clarification. Both opponent convention cards were marked "DONT v. strong 1♣", with the actual agreement being a one suited hand.

Director Ruling

Law 40B4 states that, "a side that is damaged as a consequence of its opponents' failure to provide disclosure of a call or play as these Laws require is entitled to an adjusted score." While N/S received misinformation, it was their lack of understanding about 2♠ that caused the damage. South clearly intended 2♠ as forcing holding Axxx of diamonds; North chose not to bid again. This was the source of damage, therefore no adjustment.

Director's Ruling	2♠ by S, Made 2, N/S +110
--------------------------	----------------------------------

The Appeal

N/S appealed the Director's ruling. All players attended the review. N/S confirmed that 1♣ promised 16+ HCP. The Reviewer confirmed what the table Director saw on the E/W convention cards. Both East and West said that by prior agreement the notation of "DONT" meant 1NT promised a one-suiter. East said she simply forgot the agreement. There was no mention by East of the required point count for what she described as a strong 1NT overcall.

N/S said the explanation prevented them from bidding a making game. When asked what they thought of the explanation of 1NT, they said they were suspicious of it. When asked why, if they were suspicious, they did not investigate further by looking at a convention card, North said they thought it would be rude to do so after hearing East answer a

direct question about it. South said they didn't believe they had to investigate further even in light of their doubts about the information they were given. They said they thought they only needed to investigate further if the answer was ambiguous, and this answer was not.

N/S were asked about their agreements regarding whether 2♠ was forcing. South said he believed it was; North obviously thought it was not. They said that the ostensibly unusual meaning of the 1NT bid caused them to have a misunderstanding that would not have occurred if they were given correct information. When asked if a rebid by opener in a different but analogous auction would be forcing (1♣-1♠-2♦-P-2♥), they did not seem to have a firm agreement. They did mention that the auction was different than the one presented to them at the table since the proposed auction would have a cuebid available as a force.

N/S were concerned that East's failure to bid at their turn was evidence that they were not sure of the agreement they described. East said they did not bid since they were not sure whether transfers applied or not, and did not want to risk an accident.

Panel Findings

The Panel considered whether the damage to N/S was a consequence of the misinformation or mainly the result of a N/S bidding misunderstanding. Three Precision players were polled. One with 2700 points said he would have bid 3♣ with the North hand over 2♠. When asked if 2♠ was forcing to him, he said he was not sure since the N/S methods were not his own. An 1800 point player said he was very suspicious of the explanation of 1NT as strong. He thought 2♠ was probably not forcing, but also said the N/S methods were not his own. A third player with 200 points thought 2♠ was forcing, and said he believed the explanation of 1NT given at the table. All polled players said they would have an agreement about whether a new suit bid in this situation was forcing in their own partnerships. An expert expressed the same opinion when asked.

Although the Panel had some sympathy with what happened to N/S, it believed the results of the polling indicated that the damage was the result of not having an agreement about whether 2♠ was forcing more than a result of the misinformation. Law 40B4 was not satisfied, so the Director's ruling was upheld.

Panel Decision	2♠ by S, Made 2, N/S +110
-----------------------	----------------------------------

Panel Members

Reviewer	Matt Smith
Member	Harry Falk
Member	Jeanne van den Meiracker

Commentary

Goldsmith: I agree. There is no reason to believe that if the correct explanation were given that the auction would have been different. This appeal had no merit.

Marques: Just like the Panel, I to have a lot of sympathy for N/S on this one. It seems that N/S "know by instinct" that 1NT is not natural strong but something else. They could have checked on the convention card of the opponents. If 1NT is alerted as a one-suiter, probably North would bid over 2♠ so it would seem that the mistaken explanation caused the damage.

However, passing over 2♠ is, IMHO, a serious error. I agree with the Panel's decision through 40B4, and I understand the rationale for not awarding a split score, but I wouldn't be shocked with a decision to adjust against EW's score if the Panel's opinion would be that even if NS were mostly to blame because of their lack of agreement about the forcing nature of 2♠, E/W's mistaken explanation was the primary cause of the problem.

Meiracker: I was part of the Panel, nothing to add.

Wildavsky: E/W seem to have profited from providing MI. Further, East's Pass with six good spades suggests that he was not confident he had given a correct explanation.

N/S were damaged by their own misunderstanding since even if the explanation were accurate it would often be a psyche. I would have looked for a way to rule against both sides.

Woolsey: I agree with the ruling. While it is true that N/S got the wrong explanation they both got the same explanation. South thought his 2♠ call was forcing, but North didn't think so. The misunderstanding was not a function of the MI. There is no reason to believe that N-S wouldn't have had the same problem had they received the correct explanation, since again they would have each had the same information.

Subject of Appeal: Misinformation	Case: R2
--	-----------------

Event Grand National Teams, Flight C	Event DIC Ken Van Cleve
Date 08/06/2015	Session Round of 16, First Session


Auction

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

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: 11-15 HCP, could be short
2: Explained as Majors
3: Explained as ♦ Raise

Hand Record

Board 7	N	440 MPS	
Dealer S	♠ 10	♥ A952	
Vul Both	♦ AJ1072	♣ Q109	
W	200 MPS s		E
♠ 852			♠ AKQJ97
♥ KJ64			♥ 8
♦ KQ9			♦ 854
♣ KJ5			♣ 764
	S	450 MPS	
	♠ 643		
	♥ Q1073		
	♦ 63		
	♣ A832		

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
5♦ by W	Down 4	N/S +400	♠ 10

Facts Determined at the Table

The Director was summoned at the conclusion of play of the hand. North/South did not have a clear agreement about 2♦ over a Precision 1♦ opening. Therefore, the explanation that 2♦ showed the majors was misinformation

Director Ruling

Law 40B4 states that for a score to be adjusted the damage must be a consequence of the misinformation; here the damage was a result of the E/W bidding misunderstanding. Law 40B4 was not satisfied, so the Director did not adjust the score.

Director's Ruling	5♦ by W, Down 4, N/S +400
--------------------------	----------------------------------

The Appeal

E/W appealed the Director's ruling, and all of the players attended the review. N/S said they had not firmed up any agreements about whether 2♦ in this situation should be Michaels or not since they had not encountered this kind of 1♦ opening often before.

E/W said they believed the damage to them was the result of the erroneous explanation of the 2♦ bid. East bid 2♠ and only asked about the meaning of 2♦ after he did so (at his LHO's turn to call). West explained that he believed his partner's 2♠ bid showed a diamond raise; that his partner's 3♠ bid was probably a stopper ask for 3NT; and that 4♠ showed a spade void. Neither East nor West told the Reviewer they did not believe the Michaels explanation.

Panel Findings

The Panel considered whether the damage to E/W was a consequence of the misinformation or mainly a result of its own bidding misunderstanding. First of all, the Panel noted that E/W were not entitled to an alert to 2♦ if it was Michaels in this auction. East bid 2♠ intending it as natural apparently before he knew 2♦ was Michaels, and he made no subsequent attempt to call the Director for relief if he believed he was misinformed at the point he made that choice. The fact that he did not follow correct procedure by asking about the 2♦ bid at LHO's turn actually gave him a chance to recover before it was too late. The path to the E/W misunderstanding was therefore initially completely unrelated to any misinformation. All subsequent actions and misunderstandings flowed from that. In addition to the first misunderstanding about the 2♠ bid, E/W had two more bidding misunderstandings thereafter.

The Panel was therefore of the opinion that the damage to E/W was not primarily a consequence of any misinformation and upheld the Director's ruling. Polling players did not seem to be a useful exercise in this case. It was noted that East had unauthorized information from his partner's explanation of 2♠ as a diamond raise, but that point became irrelevant to the ruling given the table result. As well, the unauthorized information North received from his partner's explanation of his bid as the majors did not seem to play a part in the outcome.

Panel Decision	5♦ by W, Down 4, N/S +400
-----------------------	----------------------------------

Panel Members

Reviewer	Matt Smith
Member	Kevin Perkins
Member	Jeanne van den Meiracker

Commentary

Goldsmith: Was 2♦ alerted? If so, East has a reasonable presumption that 2♦ was natural. Nothing says it was alerted, however, so we can assume it was not.

I'm not sure about the details of the ruling, but I think the E/W damage was self-inflicted. East's not passing 3NT is so silly that certainly E/W gets to keep their score. The only question was whether the N/S MI contributed enough to the problem. I'm OK with judging that it didn't, as there was no explanation before East bid 2♠, and 3NT on a heart lead is as good a spot as any after that.

Marques: Very similar to the previous case. If 2♦ was explained as natural, E/W would not be in the position that they ended up in, so again some sympathy here (though much less). E/W seem to be inexperienced, and that for sure helped, but a good decision by the TD and the Panel.

Meiracker: Nothing to add. I was part of the Panel.

Wildavsky: These rulings look right to me.

Woolsey: This is not right. While it is true that E/W had a misunderstanding, the misunderstanding was caused directly by the mis-explanation. Had West received the correct explanation that the 2♦ call was natural, West would never have misinterpreted the 2♠ bid. It was the mis-explanation which in the E/W partnership caused the mix-up.

Subject of Appeal:	Disputed Claim	Case:	R3
---------------------------	----------------	--------------	----


Event	1 st Friday AX Pairs	Event DIC	Terry Lavender
Date	08/07/2015	Session	Evening

Auction

West	North	East	South
N/A			

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

Hand Record

Board	19	N	110 MPS		
Dealer	S	♠	KQ8		
		♥	J1052		
Vul	E/W	♦	QJ94		
		♣	J8		
W	4460 MPS			E	5850 MPS
♠	63			♠	1095
♥	AQ763			♥	K4
♦	AK53			♦	62
♣	97			♣	AKQ653
		S	200+ MPS		
		♠	AJ742		
		♥	98		
		♦	1087		
		♣	1042		

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
4♥ by W			

Facts Determined at the Table

The Declarer claimed after trick nine, having lost two tricks previously. They had won trick nine in hand, and made the statement, "I have the rest of the tricks." The opponents objected and called the Director. The remaining cards were:

♠ —	♠ —	♠ —
♥ 7		♥ —
♦ 5		♦ —
♣ 9 7	♣ J 8	♣ A K Q 6
	♠ 7	
	♥ —	
	♦ —	
	♣ 10 4 2	

Director Ruling

The table Director ruled that declarer would play Dummy's clubs from the top, discarding their losing diamond on the third round while North ruffed. Declarer would then win the last trick with their remaining trump. The score was adjudicated as 4♥ by West, making 4, E/W +620.

Director's Ruling	4♥ by W, Made 4, E/W +620
--------------------------	---------------------------

The Appeal

North/South appealed the ruling and were the only players to attend the review. North said that after they had called the Director, West had expressed confusion about what the problem was. East said, "There's another trump out," to which West replied "No, there's not!" To N/S this indicated clear evidence that West did not have a count on the hand. They argued that, since West had gotten confused about the outstanding trump, they might well have led their last trump first or thought their remaining diamond was high. Had declarer played either of those cards, the defense would have gotten two tricks and set 4♥.

Panel Findings

The Panel decided it was unlikely that West would have led another trump, given that 1) their statement clearly indicated they thought the trump were all gone; 2) if there was another trump it was unlikely that the ♥7 was high enough to pick up any outstanding trump. The Panel judged that while West might have thought their diamond was good, it fell below the standard of "careless or inferior" specified in the footnote to Law 70 to require declarer to play a possibly good diamond with the ♠AKQ available. Thus, the Panel allowed the Director's ruling of E/W +620 to stand. Because the problem presented by East's statement and West's reply were not addressed by the table Director, the Panel deemed the appeal to have merit.

Panel Decision	4♥ by W, Made 4, E/W +620
-----------------------	----------------------------------

Panel Members

Reviewer	Eric Bell
Member	Ken Van Cleve
Member	Jenni Carmichael

Commentary

Goldsmith: West didn't say his hand was good, just that he had the remaining tricks, presumably three high clubs and a trump, so playing the losing diamond isn't an issue, but playing the winning trump is not irrational if there are no other trumps out. L70A says that we are to adjust as equitably as possible, so while declarer's playing his last trump is not an irrational play and thus can be required by L70D, L70A's general objective should overrule L70D, and let us rule 4♥ making. The appeal had merit.

The Directors ought to try very hard to get the bidding, particularly in disputed claims.

Marques: At the table, it was established beyond any doubt that the declarer was completely convinced that there were no more trumps out. From his point of view, declarer has four sure winners: ♥7, ♠A, ♠K, ♠Q, so I agree with the Panel that West would never lead the ♦5. However, I don't think that West would ever entertain in his mind item 2) of the Panel's reasoning, regarding the possibility of an outstanding trump. He "knows" that there are no more trumps out. Therefore, I don't think that it is irrational to lead the ♥7 first, and if that is the case declarer would finish down one. Unless there is some regulation stating that declarer is deemed to cash his side winners first and keep the trump for last, I would say that declarer should be down one, and if there is such a regulation I would use this case to suggest scrapping it.

Meiracker: In claims, as a TD when in doubt, I almost always rule against the claimer. In this case, declarer knew for sure that there were no more trumps outside. 4♥, down one.

Wildavsky: Declarer thought he had one heart winner and three club winners. There's little chance he would have played a diamond, but I see no reason to play the clubs before cashing the heart. I would have ruled down two. Yes, playing clubs first would have been a safety play in case declarer had miscounted trump, but a player who thought he might have miscounted would not claim and if he did claim would specify "I'll play the top clubs."

Woolsey: I believe this is the right ruling. Declarer doesn't think there is another trump out. In his mind, he is cashing the clubs, discarding the diamond, and winning the last trick with his remaining trump. This is his natural and automatic sequence of plays, and there is no reason to think he would do anything different.

Subject of Appeal:	Misinformation	Case:	R4
---------------------------	----------------	--------------	----

Event	2 nd Thursday Fast Pairs	Event DIC	Charles MacCracken
Date	08/11/2015	Session	First


Auction

West	North	East	South
	1♥	Pass	1NT ¹
Dbl	3♥ ²	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: Forcing
2: Alerted – Very Good Hand

Hand Record

Board	1	N	4130 MPS	E	7550 MPS
Dealer	N	♠ 8	KQJ10653	♠ J972	
Vul	None	♥	AQ32	♥ 7	
		♦	3	♦ 10876	
		♣		♣ K842	
W	7250 MPS				
♠	AK105	S	6940 MPS		
♥	A9	♠	Q643		
♦	K54	♥	842		
♣	AJ109	♦	J9		
		♣	Q765		

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
3♥ by N	Made 3	N/S +140	♠ 2

Facts Determined at the Table

East/West called the Director at the end of play and stated they had been misinformed. The North hand was not nearly as strong as they had been led to believe. They had been told that the 3♥ rebid showed a very good hand, not quite as strong as a 2♣ opener. If West had known the North hand could have been this weak they would have Doubled again.

Director Ruling

The table result stands. The North hand is a 4/5 loser hand, less than a 2♣ opener, but a very good hand, thus E/W had not been misinformed.

Director's Ruling	3♥ by N, Made 3, N/S +140
--------------------------	----------------------------------

The Appeal

All four players attended the review. North/South had these agreements.

- 1) An opening 2♦ bid is 18-19 HCP, with no singleton or void.
- 2) They have two ways of showing a standard 1M-1NT-3M type hand, with shortness.
 - a. 1♥-1NT-2NT-3?-3♥ shows a weaker version of a standard 3♥ rebid.
 - b. 1♥-1NT-3♥ shows the top end of their range.

North judged that the trick taking power of this hand put it in the upper range.

E/W said they were told North would have at least 15-16 HCP. If West had known the HCP could be lowered with compensating tricks, he would have reopened with a Double. N/S did not dispute that South's explanation had included 15-16 HCP.

Panel Findings

Six of West's peers were polled. They were given a precise explanation of the N/S agreements, and all Doubled again. They were then given the explanation given at the table.

Three said they would still Double but were less optimistic about the hand. Two said they didn't care about the explanation. One peer actually changed the call to a Pass.

Based on this input, the Panel decided that MI was present, and that E/W had been damaged by the MI. Three peers were polled about South's action if West had reopened with a Double, and East had bid 3♣. Two would have passed, citing ♠Qxxx as useless on offense, but valuable on defense. The Panel adjusted the contract to 3♣ by East, making 3, E/W +140.

Panel Decision

3♣ by E, Made 3, E/W +140

Panel Members

Reviewer	Gary Zeiger
Member	David Metcalf
Member	Kevin Perkins

Commentary

Goldsmith: Doesn't N/S get the worst result at all probable, and E/W get the best result likely? The writeup didn't establish that E/W +140 meets both those criteria. In particular, while it might be at all probable that E/W will make 3♣, I'm not sure it is likely.

Marques: I would love to know the details of the poll before passing an opinion, namely the order in which players were asked, but even using only the information on the report, it seems to me that Double is a vast favorite on West's cards, and I would tend to rule that passing is not a logical alternative.

This is one more example, like NABC case 10 in this casebook, of the difficulty establishing if a borderline minority action is a logical alternative or not. One in six sounds much more like not a LA than like a LA. That's the reason why the finer details of the poll are very important to make a final judgment on that. If Pass is not a LA, score stands.

Also, South was a bit careless creating the impression that North's hand had to have 15-16 HCP, but I don't think that it makes any difference. West seems experienced enough, judging from his masterpoints total, to know better. I'm with the TD on this one.

Meiracker: I agree with the TD, 3♥ was described as a good hand and that is what North has, so no MI.

Wildavsky: I prefer the TD's ruling to the Panel's. It is not clear to me from the write-up when or whether E/W were told that North promised at least 15 HCP. North is entitled to evaluate his hand according to his judgment. He held 4 losers, not "4/5". With a better hand he'd have forced to game.

Woolsey: I do not agree with the Panel. The 3♥ call was described as a good hand, and that's what North has. What makes his hand good is the playing strength, not the high cards, but it is still a good hand. Add in the king of diamonds, and North would virtually have game in his own hand. Even if the agreement is that the 3♥ call shows at least 15-16 HCP, North is allowed to upgrade. There was no MI here.

Subject of Appeal:	Tempo/Unauthorized Information	Case:	R5
---------------------------	--------------------------------	--------------	----

Event	Mini-Spangold II	Event DIC	Terry Lavender
Date	08/12/2015	Session	Second Session, Quarterfinals


Auction

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	1NT ¹	Db1 ²
Pass	Pass	2♣	Db1
2♦	Db1 ³	Pass	2♠
Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: Both Minors
2: Support Double, no Alert
3: Break in Tempo

Hand Record

Board	5	N	680 MPS		
Dealer	N	♠ A10864			
		♥ Q54			
Vul	N/S	♦ QJ63			
		♣ 2			
W	200 MPS			E	260 MPS
♠ K53				♠ J9	
♥ 10986				♥ 2	
♦ K97				♦ A10842	
♣ 974				♣ KQ863	
		S	1130 MPS		
		♠ Q72			
		♥ AKJ73			
		♦ 5			
		♣ AJ105			

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
4♠ by N	Made 4	N/S +620	♣ K

Facts Determined at the Table

The Director was summoned at the end of the auction. South thought their Double showed three spades, a convention that would have been alerted had North recognized it. Further, there was an agreed hesitation before North Doubled 2♦. Both of these were sources of unauthorized information to South. The lack of an Alert of the Double suggested that North did not recognize it as showing three spades. The out-of-tempo Double of 2♦ suggested doubt about whether defending 2♦X was correct.

Director Ruling

As South was in possession of UI that demonstrably suggested 2♠ might be more successful than passing, and since Pass was deemed to be a logical alternative to bidding 2♠, the contract and result were adjusted to 2♦X by West, making two, E/W +180, per Laws 16B1, 12C1e, and 73C.

Director's Ruling	2♦X by W, Made 2, E/W +180
--------------------------	-----------------------------------

The Appeal

The North/South players appealed the Director's ruling. All four players attended the hearing and agreed to the facts. When N/S were asked what staff had gotten wrong in the ruling, South asserted that they would never have passed 2♦X. South was reminded that the Law restricted their options after they were in possession of UI, but South offered no other argument. South was asked specifically why they bid 2♠ to play in a potential 4-3 fit, since their partner would likely have competed in spades if their partnership had an eight-card spade fit. Their only comment was that they would never Pass. E/W did not contribute substantially to the hearing as they indicated they believed the ruling to be correct.

Panel Findings

The Panel concluded that the Director's ruling was correct, with the caveat that there was no evidence of polling by the Director. As such, they instructed the screener to conduct a poll to ascertain what this player's peers would do in this situation.

The screener found five players with between 200 and 800 masterpoints. They were given the hand as a bidding problem. All five opened 1♥. All five either chose a support Double as their initial action or were familiar enough with support Doubles that they chose it when they learned it to be a method used by this partnership. Two of the five bid 2♠, one bid 2♥, and two passed 2♦X. Passing was therefore deemed to be a logical alternative, and the Director's ruling was upheld.

While the appeal did not have much merit, no Appeal without Merit Warning was issued as the Director did not do any polling. Had those facts been presented, the appellants might well have understood the ruling and not chosen to appeal.

Panel Decision	2♦X by W, Made 2, E/W +180
-----------------------	-----------------------------------

Panel Members

Reviewer	Matt Koltnow
Member	Bernie Gorkin
Member	Mike Roberts

Commentary

Goldsmith: Did anyone establish whether N/S were playing support Doubles? It probably doesn't matter much, but if E/W claimed MI, then it would.

I don't think there's any chance East would come to 8 tricks in 2♦X. He'll probably end up with 6.

South's pull is definitely illegal, and his argument was a demand for an AWMW. The argument that there was no Director's polling is specious; an appellant has to have an argument why the ruling is wrong. "I would never Pass," is not such an argument, so N/S ought to get an AWMW. With only the slow Double as a source of UI, pulling to 2♠ is semi-reasonable. With the failure to alert the support Double as UI as well, bidding 2♠ is egregious, and South needs a PP to get him to learn about the rules of bridge.

Marques: Even if the decision was correct, the TD should definitely have polled players on this one. A great approach by the Panel: "Why do you think the TD ruling is wrong?" 100% with the Panel on this one and if it wasn't for the fact that no polling was made initially, I too would fail to see any merit on this appeal.

Meiracker: If the TD had polled players and then explain the result of the poll to N/S, there would probably have been no appeal. I agree with the TD and Panel.

Wildavsky: Once South has Doubled 2♠ for penalties it must be logical for him to sit for partner's Double of 2♦, especially since as far as he knows his side has no eight-card fit. Yes, the TD ought to have taken a poll, but I still see no merit to this appeal.

Woolsey: First of all, according to the published alert chart only Doubles which have highly unusual or unexpected meanings are Alertable. A support Double certainly isn't unusual or unexpected. Therefore, the Double is not Alertable, so South does not have any UI from failure to alert. That part of the discussion is just plain wrong.

It is true that the BIT does suggest that bidding is better than passing. The question is whether or not passing the Double of 2♦ is a LA. In my mind, it is not. Passing would not be on my radar. I understand that the poll indicates that it is a LA, but in this instance, I think the results of the poll are so wrong that I would overrule the poll results and let the table result stand.

Subject of Appeal:	Disputed Claim	Case:	R6
---------------------------	----------------	--------------	----


Event	Young LM Pairs	Event DIC	Mike Roberts
Date	08/09/2015	Session	First Final

Auction

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

Hand Record

Board	3	N	970 MPS		
Dealer	S	♠	K65		
		♥	AK97		
Vul	E/W	♦	74		
		♣	Q1086		
W	630 MPS			E	1120 MPS
♠	1073			♠	J98
♥	QJ10			♥	43
♦	KQ652			♦	A103
♣	K9			♣	AJ743
		S	1000 MPS		
		♠	AQ42		
		♥	8652		
		♦	J98		
		♣	52		

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
2♥ by S			♠ 7

Facts Determined at the Table

The Director was summoned at Trick Nine. The Declarer had claimed, with East on lead. They made the statement that they were "taking the top two spades then crossruffing". The remaining cards at this point were:

	♠ K 6	
	♥ 9	
	♦ —	
	♣ Q 8	
♠ 10 3		♠ 9 8
♥ —		♥ —
♦ K 5 2		♦ 10
♣ —		♣ A 7
	♠ Q 4 2	
	♥ 8	
	♦ 8	
	♣ —	

Director Ruling

The Director ruled that the defense would get one additional trick, resulting in the contract failing by one trick. If East were to exit with a spade, it would be inferior, not irrational, to ruff the 13th spade, according to Law 70D1

Director's Ruling	2♥ by S, Down 1, E/W +50
--------------------------	--------------------------

The Appeal

The line of play in 2♥ was as follows:

- Trick one: ♠7 led, won by South's ♠A
- Trick two: ♥A cashed
- Trick three: ♥K cashed
- Trick four: ♦4 led from dummy to South's ♦J and West's ♦Q
- Trick five: ♥Q cashed by West, East discarding the ♣3 (encouraging)
- Trick six: ♣K cashed
- Trick seven: ♣9, ♣10 from dummy, won by E with ♣J
- Trick eight: ♦A cashed by East

Declarer claimed after trick eight, in the position given above (with East on lead). South affirmed that they said they would take the two top spades [they said the AK, but clearly intended the KQ], and then crossruff. However, they argued, "The diamond is always a loser. It would be illogical to trump a spade when the 100% loser is better," even if they had not been bothering to count the spades.

Panel Findings

Clearly the claim was invalid, and at the time of the claim, declarer had not considered that they would need to trump twice in the dummy, with only one trump. It is simply a question of when declarer would "wake up", and whether they were allowed to count the spades while they were cashing them.

The Panel ruled it was more likely than not that declarer would have gotten this right had play continued, but Law 70D1 requires a higher standard - the Director shall impose a "normal" unsuccessful line of play on declarer, even if that line would qualify as "careless or inferior". Declarer's statement started with cashing the spade winners. If their original intent was to trump the third spade, they might (carelessly) not pay close attention to the spade count. After that, if declarer were still not to wake up, ruffing a spade is a normal line of play within the definitions of 70D1.

The Panel decided that this was a close decision, and, even though the appeal did not bring anything new beyond the Director's decision, they believed it was worth of closer examination. As such, the appeal was found to have merit.

Panel Decision

2♥ by S, Down 1, E/W +50

Panel Members

Reviewer	David Metcalf
Member	Eric Bell
Member	Matt Koltnow

Commentary

Goldsmith: Declarer claimed four tricks. He gets four tricks, because some normal lines do not take five.

Marques: A very competent and thorough gathering of the facts. We are basically judging if three cards from the end after cashing the two top spades, declarer would fail to see that he's one trump short for a complete crossruff.

As the Panel said, it is very close. I would have gone the other way, accepting the argument of declarer, but it's a judgment call. Ruffing the spade is, IMHO, less than inferior or careless play.

Meiracker: As in case R3, when declarer makes a doubtful or incomplete claim, he never mentioned for example if the spades are 3-3, then the result 2♥ down 1 is a good decision by the Panel.

Wildavsky: I see no merit here.

Woolsey: Declarer had clearly miscounted his winners. He does not get a reprieve from that. With his statement, on a spade return the play could easily go Queen of Spades, King of Spades, club ruff, heart ruff, and he loses the last trick to the Ace of Clubs. There is no reason to think declarer would wake up and know the long spade is good, nor that he would need it. Good ruling.

Subject of Appeal:	Disputed Claim	Case:	R7
---------------------------	----------------	--------------	----


Event	10K Pairs	Event DIC	Ken Horwedel
Date	08/09/2015	Session	First Final

Auction

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
3♦	Dbl	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

Hand Record

Board	14	N	8000 MPS		
Dealer	E	♠	KQ84		
		♥	AQ32		
Vul	None	♦	8		
		♣	A953		
W	6000 MPS			E	7000 MPS
♠	75			♠	J10932
♥	864			♥	K
♦	AKQ10653			♦	J4
♣	2			♣	KJ1074
		S	1800 MPS		
		♠	A6		
		♥	J10975		
		♦	972		
		♣	Q86		

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
4♥ by S	Down 1	E/W +50	♦ A

Facts Determined at the Table

Declarer claimed after playing the ♥A, dropping the king, without stating a line of play. East asked his partner about an outstanding trump. They scored the board as down one and put the cards away. After East/West left the table, North then called the Director. North reconstructed Declarer's and Dummy's hands and stated that his partner had claimed with a trump out. The Director initially ruled that E/W got a trick. North later explained that his partner had just dropped the ♥K, right before showing her hand. When asked later why they had not said anything about any outstanding trump, South said that their hearts were all high, and they just did not say anything about pulling the last trump.

Director Ruling

After confirming the play up to the point of the claim, the Director ruled that declarer was able to continue drawing trump. Law 70A states that Directors should be as equitable as possible to both sides, and the ACBL Tech File guidelines for Claims say that a safety check with a high trump is considered a normal line of play. The result was changed to 4♥ by South, making 4, N/S +420.

Director's Ruling	4♥ by S, Made 4, N/S +420
--------------------------	---------------------------

The Appeal

The East/West players appealed the Director's ruling, and North, South, and West appeared at the screening session. All confirmed that play had gone ♦A, followed by the ♣2 to the King. A Club was returned and trumped by West. The ♦K was led and trumped in Dummy, and then the ♥A was led, dropping the King. Declarer then claimed without stating a line of play (with a trump outstanding in the West hand).

At the table, East asked their partner if they had a trump (after a pause, according to East; immediately, according to North). When they said they did, the North player slammed his cards back into the board and conceded down one. South said nothing.

According to North, after East/West left the table for the next round, South asked their partner why they had to lose another trick, claiming that they were aware that there was another trump outstanding. At this point, North called the Director and explained the situation. South remained silent.

At screening, when South was asked why they had not said anything, South shrugged, and repeated that they just said nothing.

Panel Findings

Law 70A states that a doubtful point to a claim shall be resolved against the claimer, and Law 70C postulates that an outstanding trump cannot be drawn if "it is at all likely" that the claimer, at the time of his claim, was unaware that a trump remained in an opponent's hand. However, the timing of a claim is often indicative of the state of declarer's mind at the time.

For example, when declarer starts drawing trump, learns that they break and can be drawn successfully, then claims, it can be assumed that declarer's intent was to finish drawing trump. Here, the claim was precipitated not by the trump breaking, but by the relevant honor falling. The Panel, despite serious concerns about declarer's lack of a statement at any point, decided that declarer had to be aware of the outstanding trump, and it did not meet the requirements of Law 70C2 that "it is at all likely that claimer ... was unaware that a trump remained in an opponent's hand." Declarer's claim was accepted, and the result of ten tricks by declarer was upheld.

While the ruling matched that of the table Director, the Committee's reasoning did not. If the Director's ruling was based on the idea that declarer was allowed a "safety check" in trump, then that would be a valid basis for appeal. The laws do mandate a high bar regarding claims with an outstanding trump that was not mentioned by declarer, and the Panel believed that this decision was close. Thus, the appeal was found to have merit.

Panel Decision

4♥ by S, Made 4, N/S +420

Committee Members

Reviewer	David Metcalf
Member	Eric Bell
Member	Matt Koltnow

Commentary

Goldsmith: Yes, lurker checks are normal lines of play for the purpose of L70D1, but it does not matter, since all that has to be demonstrated is that there exists any normal line of play that will allow the opponents to score their trump. Lurker checks are definitely not the only normal line of play; that is, if one is available, declarer is not expected to choose it.

L70C2 requires that it is at all likely that the claimer is unaware that a trump remained in an opponent's hand, and here it is pretty clear that he was aware of it. It is odd that South didn't say, "draw the last trump," and if I were at the table, I might have judged that South was unaware that there was another trump left, because one was used to ruff, and he may have thought the remaining ones were 1-1 instead of 2-1. If the table Director judged that, I would not overrule him, and plenty of normal lines allow West to score his trump. If the Director judged that he was aware of the outstanding trump, then the ruling is correct.

Marques: Good reasoning and decision by the Panel. Nothing to add.

Meiracker: Good decision by the TD and Panel. When the declarer played the ace and the king dropped, he didn't forget the remaining trumps, he just counted 10 tricks.

Wildavsky: Certainly, the appeal had merit. It could have, and perhaps should have, gone the other way. A declarer who thought all the trump were out would have proceeded exactly as this declarer did.

Woolsey: If this had happened in an expert game, the defenders would have been putting their cards back in the board as soon as declarer leaned forward. There would have been no need for declarer to say anything. That is the case here. Once the king of hearts dropped declarer knew he had the rest. Very good ruling by the Panel.

Subject of Appeal:	Played Card	Case:	R8
---------------------------	-------------	--------------	----


Event	2 nd Saturday Flight A Pairs	Event DIC	Candace Kuschner
Date	08/15/2015	Session	First

Auction

West	North	East	South
N/A			

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

Hand Record

Board	21	N	24,270 MPS	
Dealer	N	♠ J4 ♥ 102 ♦ AK632 ♣ 10875		
Vul	N/S			
W	2540 MPS			E 1820 MPS s
♠ AK5 ♥ QJ943 ♦ 85 ♣ QJ2				♠ 732 ♥ 876 ♦ J74 ♣ 9643
		S	4950 MPS	
		♠ Q10986 ♥ AK5 ♦ Q109 ♣ AK		

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
3NT by S	Down 1	E/W +100	N/A

Facts Determined at the Table

The Director was summoned with four cards remaining in the play. Declarer was on lead and held the ♥5 and the ♦Q109. Dummy had the ♦AK63. According to the defenders, the declarer led the ♥5 and then tried to replace it with the ♦9. Declarer stated that he actually played the two cards simultaneously and that he intended to play the diamond. The table Director received no statement from the dummy. When the table Director arrived at the table, the only card on the table was the ♥5.

Director Ruling

Pursuant to Law 45C2, the declarer must play a card from his hand if it is touching or nearly touching the table; or maintained in such position as to indicate that it has been played. Although it was clear that it was not declarer's intent to play the heart, in the absence of any evidence that the diamond and heart were played simultaneously, the heart was the played card. Therefore, the result of 3NT by South, Down 1, E/W +100, stood.

Director's Ruling	3NT by S, Down 1, E/W +100
--------------------------	-----------------------------------

The Appeal

The North/South players appealed the Director's ruling, and both pairs were consulted by the Reviewer. Since there was no statement from the dummy in the table Director's fact statement, the Reviewer asked the dummy whether he had a statement regarding the four-card ending. He did, but his statement was consistent with the defenders: that the declarer played the ♥5 and quickly tried to replace it with the diamond. The Reviewer then followed up with the declarer,

who said he agreed with the dummy that the cards were not played simultaneously, but that he accidentally played the heart first and quickly tried to replace it with the diamond.

The Reviewer asked each player to demonstrate what happened. While the demonstrations were not identical, they were substantially similar. In each demonstration, the heart was played and quickly replaced by the diamond. There was not one demonstration in which the cards were played simultaneously. Declarer asked if his intent matters. The Reviewer cited the relevant rule, read it to him and indicated that there was no statement regarding intent in Law 45C2.

Panel Findings

At the time the notice of appeal was provided, the only issue appeared to be whether the diamond and heart were played simultaneously. Based on the evidence the table Director had at the time, he determined that the heart was the sole card played and that there was no simultaneous play of the heart and the diamond. By the time the Reviewer had collected the facts, there was general agreement among all four players (based on their statements and their demonstrations) that only the heart was played and the diamond was not played simultaneously with the heart. Therefore, the table Director correctly ascertained the facts and applied Law 45C2A correctly. As a result, the Panel upheld the table Director's ruling.

The Panel considered whether the appeal had merit. The declarer abandoned his original statement regarding simultaneous play and ultimately agreed with the facts as described by the defenders. Based on the declarer's last question to the Reviewer regarding intent, the Reviewer inferred that the intent argument was his only basis for the appeal. Based on the table Director's write-up, that issue was raised by the declarer to the table Director, and the table Director's write-up suggests that the intent argument was responded to completely and accurately. Therefore, there was nothing remaining to the appeal that had merit. Thus, an Appeal without Merit Warning was issued to South.

Panel Decision	3NT by S, Down 1, E/W +100
-----------------------	-----------------------------------

Panel Members

Reviewer	Scott Humphrey
Member	Matt Smith
Member	Gary Zeiger

Commentary

Goldsmith: The only issue is the AWMW. The writeup isn't clear whether the table Director covered the question of intent or the Reviewer did. I think it tries to imply that the question was asked of the table Director and answered then, and if so, there's no question about an AWMW's being appropriate. If it was asked and not answered, then I'd be OK with the appeal. If it was not asked, then he gets an AWMW, since he just needed to ask and find out that his appeal was baseless.

Marques: No further comments. A good decision overall.

Meiracker: A good decision, nothing to add.

Wildavsky: I agree with the AWMW.

Woolsey: This is just a question of fact, not bridge law. The Director made the factual determination that the card was played, and the Director was better placed to make this determination than the Panel or any of the commentators. There was nothing to appeal.

Subject of Appeal:	Tempo/Unauthorized Information	Case:	R9
---------------------------	--------------------------------	--------------	----

Event	Sunday Fast Pairs	Event DIC	Charlie MacCracken
Date	08/16/2015	Session	First Session


Auction

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

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: 15 -17 HCP
2: Natural & Forcing
3: Different Interpretations
4: Different Interpretations
5: 0 or 3 Key Cards
6: Break in Tempo

Hand Record

Board	13	N	5300 MPS		
Dealer	N	♠ AQ63			
		♥ A6			
		♦ J1084			
Vul	Both	♣ AQ8			
W	1130 MPS			E	540 MPS
♠	9854			♠	1072
♥	9754			♥	K32
♦	75			♦	K3
♣	1097			♣	K6543
		S	6170 MPS		
		♠	KJ		
		♥	QJ108		
		♦	AQ962		
		♣	J2		

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
6♦ by S	Made 6	N/S +1370	♣ 10

Facts Determined at the Table

The Director was called to the table at the end of the hand. The heart bids had been interpreted differently by the North/South pair. North believed 3♥ was a control cuebid, and 4♥ was Keycard for diamonds, while South thought North was showing three hearts with 3♥ and raised to game. There was an agreed break in tempo prior to the 5♦ bid, but North maintained that with three Aces, a maximum hand and four trumps, he should go on to six.

Additional Factors Determined Away from the Table

In the presence of East/West, the Director gave the hand to a Flight A player. The player who was polled stated that with three Key Cards, he felt obligated to continue to six (with zero, he would Pass).

Director Ruling

Based upon the expert opinion, and pursuant to Law 16, the Director ruled that North made his bid using only authorized information. Accordingly, the table result stood.

Director's Ruling	6♦ by S, Made 6, N/S +1370
--------------------------	----------------------------

The Appeal

E/W disagreed with the analysis by the player who was polled. They both maintained that there should be no doubt that South knew North had three Key Cards and that South is the one who was in the position to know whether to

carry on to six. North maintained his previous position: that he was never planning to stop below six holding three Aces, a maximum and four trumps.

Panel Findings

Since North had the extraneous information (BIT by South), and the issue is whether Pass was a logical alternative to bidding 6♦, the Reviewer gave North's hand to three Flight A players. Given the meaning of 3♦, they all agreed with North's 3♥ cue bid in support of diamonds. Those who were polled were told that 4♥ was RKC and that 4NT showed 0 or 3 key cards. When told that South responded 5♦, all three players immediately and unequivocally passed.

The Reviewer further inquired as to why they would not continue since they had three key cards. All three players pointed out that South has to know North has three key cards since he cue bid 3♥ immediately over 3♦ (thereby eliminating the prospect that North could have zero). One player said he bid it as strongly as he possibly can and he must trust his partner. Another player noted that South may be off one Key card and some side Kings. Without any Kings, five may be all that South can make. The Reviewer asked those polled if South breaks tempo before bidding 5♦, whether they could infer anything from the hesitation. All three players inferred that South was considering a jump to 6♦.

Based on the polling, the Panel concluded that Pass was a logical alternative to North's raise of 6♦. Furthermore, South's hesitation suggested that bidding 6♦ may be a better contract. Pursuant to Law 16B1(a), North may not choose among logical alternatives one suggested by the unauthorized information. Therefore, the Panel adjusted the result to 5♦ by the South, making 6, N/S +620.

Panel Decision	5♦ by S, Made 6, N/S +620
-----------------------	----------------------------------

Committee Members

Reviewer	Scott Humphrey
Member	Kevin Perkins
Member	Eric Bell

Commentary

Goldsmith: There's no way N/S can be off two key cards. If South had something like KJ KQJx Qxxxx Kx, he would have passed 4NT, not bid 5♦. 5♦ is an impossible bid, one which never will get made if North's understanding of the auction is correct. So, North has the inference, not from the BIT, but from the auction, that something is wrong. Probably what's wrong is that 4♥ wasn't meant as Kickback. Since he knows 3NT is playable, he cannot sensibly Pass 5♦ at matchpoints. He probably ought to bid 5♠, hoping partner bids 5NT, so that he can Pass. If 11 tricks are there, he'll manage an average. I don't know what South will do over 5♠, probably bid 6♦. Alternatively, North might just bid 6♦, going for a good result, since he knows there is a diamond fit, and he has no idea about key cards.

North did not work this out. The polled players did not work it out. The Directors didn't think of it. If North had made that point, I'd let him keep his +1370. It's hard to argue that passing 5♦ is a LA when it's a clear blunder, but North didn't realize that it was, and North's peers didn't either, so I guess I'm OK with the decision.

Marques: A "poll" should never be conducted with "one" player, and this case is a good example why. Good decision from the Panel.

Meiracker: Very good job by the Panel and it emphasized the fact that polling is necessary in cases like this.

Wildavsky: Good work by the Panel in what was, in the end, a run-of-the-mill hesitation Blackwood case. I am astounded that the TD considered "one" a sufficient sample size for his poll.

Woolsey: This is as classic a hesitation Blackwood situation as there can be. North showed his 3 keycards, South huddled and signed off, and North bid on. It doesn't matter that the reason for South's huddle was that he was on a different page. North has a mandatory Pass.

This should have been an appeal without merit, except that due to a terrible ruling by the Director the wrong side was appealing. Fortunately, the Panel got it right.

Subject of Appeal:	Misinformation	Case:	R10
---------------------------	----------------	--------------	-----

Event	10K Swiss Teams	Event DIC	Harry Falk
Date	08/16/2015	Session	Second Final


Auction

West	North	East	South
		1♠	Pass
2♠	2NT ¹	4♠	Dbf
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: Explained as two suits

Hand Record

Board	18	N	7710 MPS		
Dealer	E	♠	J9		
		♥	J53		
Vul	N/S	♦	K976543		
		♣	7		
W	8480 MPS			E	9950 MPS
♠	9432			♠	AKQ85
♥	K109			♥	A642
♦	J102			♦	8
♣	Q1042			♣	AJ5
		S	450 MPS		
		♠	1076		
		♥	Q87		
		♦	AQ		
		♣	K9863		

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
4♠X by E	Down 1	N/S +100	♥ 7

Facts Determined at the Table

The Director was called by East/West at the end of the hand, as it had become apparent that North's hand did not conform to the explanation given by South. The Heart lead was won by East, capturing the Jack. Declarer led a Diamond, losing to South's Queen, who then led the Ace, ruffed by Declarer in hand. A Heart was led, successfully finessing South's Queen. Declarer next finessed in Clubs, losing to South, who lead back a Club, ruffed by North. North then led a Diamond, Declarer pitching a Club, ruffed by South. Declarer then won the rest of the tricks.

Director Ruling

When the Director arrived, North/South dominated the conversation with the Director, insisting that North had sorted their hand improperly, and thought they had both red suits. The Director accepted this, and ruled that there had been a mistaken bid, and not misinformation, and therefore, per Law 75C, the table result was allowed to stand.

Director's Ruling	4♠X by E, Down 1, N/S +100
--------------------------	----------------------------

The Appeal

East/West were a foreign pair, and there were language issues. They tried to tell the table Director that North had insisted that her 2NT bid did not show two suits, but showed a one suited hand, weaker than a direct bid. The table Director would not address this, merely saying that North had misbid, and so there was no MI. They were told they could fill out a player memo. They wanted to appeal the ruling, and finally were directed to the Reviewer.

Panel Findings

When this issue was finally addressed, the event was over, and the North/South pair was no longer present. The issue of whether or not they had the agreement of 2NT showing two suits, one suit, or no agreement was not addressed properly at the table.

Attempts to contact them were initially unsuccessful, and East/West deserved redress if there was MI, so an initial decision was made to adjust the score to 4♣X making. This was the likely result if East had been given the explanation of no agreement, as East would not assume during the play that North had both minors.

Attempts to contact North/South finally proved successful, and after conversations with North and South separately, the actual N/S agreement was determined to indeed be a two suited hand. In light of this, the table ruling of no adjustment was upheld.

Panel Decision	4♣X by E, Down 1, N/S +100
-----------------------	-----------------------------------

Panel Members

Reviewer	Kevin Perkins
-----------------	---------------

Commentary

Goldsmith: I do not accept a one Director Panel. If ACs are not to be made available, at least three Directors must discuss the appeal. If they did, their names are to be listed.

Regardless of MI, East butchered the play so badly that E/W are going to keep their result. When you go down in a contract that's cold for an overtrick, and you have no sane reason for it, you don't get redress. If there really was MI, East needs to connect it to his bad result. I don't see how North's having two suits has anything to do with East's forgetting to draw trump, so I'd let both sides keep the table result.

Of course, if there was no MI, none of this is relevant.

Marques: Foreign pair, language issues. The writeup is not kind to the way this was handled by the table TD. The final decision is correct, in light of the N/S agreements, but E/W should never have had such a hard time getting their case through.

Meiracker: The Panel finally determined that N/S's agreement for 2NT showed a 2 suiter, so North misbid, no adjustment.

Wildavsky: E/W were damaged by declarer's inexplicable failure to draw trump. I see no reason to adjust the score regardless of whether N/S provided correct information. Fortunately, the Panel was able to reach the N/S pair and so avoid a miscarriage of justice.

As an aside, I don't understand what is meant by "North/South dominated the conversation with the Director." The TD has a responsibility to hear from both sides. What is relevant is whether or not he gave E/W their say.

Woolsey: The only issue here is the partnership agreement about the 2NT call. Apparently, the Panel determined, by whatever means, that the agreement was that it showed 2 suits, and that North had simply misbid. That ends the discussion.