

1994 Fall NABC Appeals Casebook



2020 Editor's Note:

The 1993-1995 NABC Appeals Committee Decisions casebooks, compiled by John Blubaugh, have not been published electronically previously. The documents in question only existed in hard copy form. The ACBL would like to thank Denise Raggo for transcribing the text of the originals into an electronic format, without which this document would not be possible.

ACBL Headquarters
June, 2020

1994 NABC Appeals Chairman's Introduction:

Once again, we are presenting a casebook that is considerably better than our previous efforts. The biggest improvement is the documentation by the Chairmen. This makes it much easier to determine the Committee's reasoning for reaching their decision. The dissenting opinions also clarify the issues the Committee members were trying to resolve.

I want to thank the Committee members who spent many hours in reaching these decisions. Most players had long since retired for the evening while these issues were still being discussed. There were many Committee members who were not needed because of the light case load but were devoted enough to make themselves available on a regular basis in case their services were required. It takes a very large group of volunteers to proficiently handle an unpredictable number of cases that may be brought to us.

I also want to thank the commentators who have volunteered their time in order to improve the entire process. They make it much easier for readers to discern which decisions were not good.

It is well worth noting that this invaluable reference material would not exist in its present form if it were not for the efforts of John Blubaugh. He has continued to improve the casebook and he has urged others to make suggestions and contributions that will insure this progress in future editions. I am very grateful for his continuous energy in this area.

Alan Le Bendig
Co-Chairman, NABC Appeals Committee

1994 NABC Appeals Casebook Editor's Forward:

The NABC Appeals Casebook is growing in popularity and quality. A huge thank you is owed Frank Jewitt III of New York, NY, and Linda Weinstein of Pinehurst, NC, for their proof-reading services. Kate Sides at the ACBL has been responsible for getting this casebook out in a timely fashion. She has had to work long hours collating materials, assembling the casebook and getting it to the next NABC (sometimes with only a day or two to accomplish all of this).

Gary Blaiss of the ACBL has been very supportive and has offered several constructive ideas for improving the book. Alan LeBendig and Peggy Sutherlin have always been enthusiastic backers of the project since I first proposed it and have provided every assistance in making it successful.

Finally, and possibly most importantly, the ACBL Board of Directors has been extremely cooperative in providing the funds and allowing the casebook to be available to the general public.

John Blubaugh
NABC Appeals Administrator
Editor, Tournament Appeals Decisions

Our Expert Commentators:

Richard Colker of Wheaton, MD, is a psychology professor and psychology research investigator. He has served as Recorder for ACBL District 6, Appeals chair for the Washington Bridge League, vice chair for the National Appeals Committee, and as a member of the National Ethical Oversight Committee. He has been a columnist for Washington BL Bulletin since 1988, and is a Member of IBPA.

Bobby Goldman was born in Philadelphia. He currently resides in Dallas with his wife Bettianne and his twelve year old son, Quinn. He is a Bridge Professional and Financial Analyst. His hobbies include tennis, volleyball, basketball and softball. While Bobby was a member of the original ACES from 1968 to 1974, he was a pioneer in writing computer programs that generate bridge practice hands and evaluate bidding probabilities. Bobby has won four World Championships and more than thirty National Championships.

Edgar Kaplan was born in New York, where he currently resides. He has been the editor and publisher of The Bridge World since 1967. He is a member of the ACBL Hall of Fame, is one of the world's great players and writers, and is regarded as the world's greatest authority on the laws of duplicate and rubber bridge. Edgar is in constant demand as a commentator for WBF Championships and NABC Pendergraph presentations for his expert analysis and delightful wit. Among his numerous National Championships he is proudest of his 1983 Miami Reisinger victory when Ozzie Jacoby, 80, was on his team.

Alan LeBendig was born in Cleveland. He currently resides in Los Angeles with his longtime companion Suzanne Trull and his son, Mark. He is the co-owner of the Barrington Bridge Club. His hobbies include playing Blackjack and surfing the Internet. Alan has been CoChairman of the National Appeals Committee since 1988. He is proudest of his second place finish in the 1993 Washington Life Master's Pairs and winning the 1993 Seattle North American Swiss Teams.

Jeff Meckstroth was born in Springfield, Ohio. He currently resides in Tampa, Florida with his wife Shirlee and his two sons, Matt and Rob. He is a Bridge Professional who enjoys golf and movies in his spare time. Every year his name can be found near the top of the Barry Crane Top 500 list. Jeff is a Grand Life Master in both the WBF and ACBL. He has won four world titles (his first at age 25 in 1981) and numerous National Championships.

Michael Rosenberg was born in New York where he has resided since 1978. He is a stock options trader. His mother, father and sister reside in Scotland where he grew up. Widely regarded as the expert's expert, Michael won the Rosenblum KO and was second in the Open Pairs in the 1994 Albuquerque World Bridge Championships. He was the ACBL player of the year in 1994. His hobbies include tennis and music. He believes the bridge accomplishment he will be proudest of is still in the future. Michael is also a leading spokesman for ethical bridge play and for policies that encourage higher standards.

Peggy Sutherlin was born in Dallas. She currently resides in San Francisco with John, her husband of twenty-nine years. She has been a flight attendant for the past 35 years with American Airlines. Her main hobby is genealogy. Peggy has been Co-Chairman of the National Appeals Committee since 1990, and is a member of the ACBL Laws Commission. She is a WBF World Master, finishing second in the World Mixed Pairs in 1982, fourth in the 1987 Venice Cup, and has won several National Championships. She has served as a contributing editor to The Official Encyclopedia of Bridge.

Dave Treadwell was born in Belleville, New Jersey and currently resides in Wilmington, Delaware. He is a retired Chemical Engineer, a graduate of MIT, and was employed by DuPont for more than 40 years where his responsibilities included the introduction of Teflon to the marketplace. He has three grown children, three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. His hobbies include blackjack. The bridge accomplishment he is proudest of is breaking the 20,000 masterpoint barrier. He believes bridge can be competitive and intellectual, but above all can be and must be fun.

Howard Weinstein was born in Minneapolis. He is a graduate of the University of Minnesota. He currently resides in Chicago where he is a stock options trader at the CBOE. His brother, sister and parents all reside in Minneapolis. His parents both play bridge and his father is a Life Master. Howard is a sports enthusiast and enjoys playing golf. He is a member of the ACBL Ethical Oversight Committee and has been a National Appeals Committee member since 1987. He has won three National Championships, and is proudest of his 1993 Kansas City Vanderbilt win.

Bobby Wolff was born in San Antonio, and is a graduate of Trinity University. He currently resides in Dallas. His father, mother, brother and wives all played bridge. Bobby is a member of the ACBL Hall of Fame as well as a Grand Life Master in both the WBF and the ACBL. He is one of the world's greatest players and has won ten World Titles and numerous National Championships. He served as the 1987 ACBL president and the 1992-1994 WBF president. He has served as tournament recorder at NABCs, and is the author of the ACBL active ethics program.

Subject of Appeal:	Tempo	Event:	Life Master Pairs	Case:	1
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Auction

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

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: Break in Tempo

Hand Record

Board		N	
Dealer	W	♠ 7	
Vul	None	♥ A7	
		♦ AJ842	
		♣ AK876	
W			
♠	Q10962		
♥	J542		
♦	KQ106		
♣	(void)		
		S	
		♠	AJ53
		♥	Q96
		♦	9
		♣	QJ942

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
6♣ by N	Made 6	N/S +920	

Facts

South hesitated before bidding 3NT.

Director Ruling

The Director ruled that a break in tempo had occurred and a Pass of 3NT was a logical alternative. The contract was changed to 3NT by south, making three, N/S +400.

Director's Ruling	3NT by S, Made 3, N/S +400
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Committee Ruling

The Committee ruled that the table result, 6♣ by North, making six, N/S +920, was allowed to stand. The Committee majority believed the admitted huddle by the 3NT bidder did not influence North's to bid 4♦. The North hand was rich in controls and playing strength with the probability of a singleton diamond in South's hand. A 5♣ contract might have been far safer than 3NT and there was the possibility of a lay down 6♣. It was, the majority believed, the hand rather than the hesitation that made a further bid by North the only logical alternative.

Dissenting opinion from Committee member Jeff Meckstroth: Meckstroth pointed out that when South was asked what he would have bid over 2♣ if he had one less club and one more diamond, he responded that he would still have bid 3♣. Perhaps with this hand he might have bid 3NT quickly, as slam was much less likely. Meckstroth believed the hesitation might have suggested the 4♦ bid and he also thought that a Pass of 3NT was a logical alternative.

Committee Members

Chair	David Treadwell
Member	Mike Aliotta
Member	Bart Bramley
Member	Bobby Goldman
Member	Jeff Meckstroth

Commentary

Colker: I agree with Jeff. South would clearly have bid the same way holding a doubleton diamond and one fewer club -- and might easily have made the 3NT bid much more quickly. I'd also like to know the length of the break in tempo. In situations like this, Committees should not rule on the basis of their belief in the testimony of the offender(s) -- in essence banking on their character judgment skills. Rather, the cards, and the auction, should speak for themselves. The issue here is not whether the huddle did influence North's decision to bid over 3NT, only whether it could have. North's bid must be deemed clear-cut (in the absence of a huddle) for the Committee to consider allowing it to stand. Here, I don't believe it is. Opposite a hand like ♠KQxx ♥Qxx ♦xx ♣QJxx, 3NT is the last contract likely to score well. 5♣ is risky, 4NT is awful, and 4♠, while safe, won't be worth many matchpoints if 3NT makes. Clearly, passing 3NT was a logical alternative.

Goldman: Four members of the Committee thought, as a bidding problem, it was correct for North to bid over 3NT. (The one who did not had jump shifted to 3♠ at the table.) These four members also voted to allow a North player, who has received extraneous information from the break in tempo, to bid over 3NT. There was no serious issue either that the huddle was more likely to convey constructive interest as opposed to signoff (4♣) consideration.

This is obviously a controversial and important case. The key element becomes how strict the restriction on a player's options in a constructive auction should be. Pinpointing a likelihood (%) of a player's peers taking a particular action is difficult, but I think it is fair to say that over 50% but less than 90% of the player's peers would bid. I'll further admit that this falls short of the standards we have been setting. But I think there are many reasons not to forbid this 4♦ bid.

The pair involved was a first time partnership. Tempo irregularities are less revealing in new partnerships than in long established ones. Any long established partnership is capable of picking up as much information in one or two seconds of flickers as a new partnership does with a long huddle. My guess is that over 50% of close slam decision auctions throughout the playing room contain as much useful extraneous information as this one. Another major factor in many appeals (not in this case) is that some people complain a lot and some never do at all. Another factor is some people think faster or are so experienced they understand situations quicker than others.

If we stay with the pre-existing trend in constructive auctions, not only are we going to have large caseloads, but the rewards will go to the complainers, the smooth experienced partnerships, and the quick witted. I don't find that to be the proper balance.

Some solutions: Keep records of incidents of complaints and of questionable actions. Don't reward non-offenders with score adjustments (or at least not full ones) when normal actions (consistent with the auction) are taken that may have been surer by a huddle. These thoughts are referring to constructive auctions. Get the emphasis on eliminating fast auctions. Fast auctions are never necessary. When the fast auctions are eliminated, then slower ones will become less pronounced.

Kaplan: This case is extremely close. I hold two contradictory opinions: (1) The 3♥ bid could be a try for either 3NT or 6♣. When it is a slam try, North is committed to bid over 3NT; (2) Despite this, many players of less than scrupulous ethics would pass a prompt and obviously uninterested 3NT partner. In real life, I would have to hear North before I decided. The Committee heard him, while I didn't, so I'll go along with them.

LeBendig: I wholeheartedly agree with Jeff on this case. The agreed hesitation made it crystal clear that bidding again could not be wrong. I have the utmost respect for this Committee but I cannot believe they felt a Pass on 3NT was not a logical alternative no matter how it is defined. There is plenty of evidence in the write-up and in these comments to make it clear that others did more than "seriously consider" a pass.

Meckstroth: I think you already have my opinion here. I'll add that even if South's answer had been 2NT, I'd still favor not allowing the result to stand. Passing 3NT is clearly a logical alternative. That is precisely how the bidding went at the table of one of the other Committee members!

Rosenberg: I agree with Meckstroth. North's action is far from clear-cut, especially at matchpoints. South's 3NT is exactly the type of bid that experts should attempt to make in tempo. South had a chance to consider this possibility in the time between his 3♣ bid and North's 3♥ bid. What is more disturbing is that I heard that South publicly made more than one disparaging remark about the East/West pair because they called the Director. I also heard that the Committee preferred not to address this, regarding it as a Conduct and Ethics matter. If the Committee was not prepared to address the issue,

it should have insisted on a Conduct and Ethics hearing. This sort of behavior should not be tolerated, not only because it can be intimidating, but also because there is simply no place for it in our game.

Sutherlin: I strongly disagree with this decision. 3NT was certainly a logical (and probably the most commonly played) contract. It was far from clear to bid 4♦ as a slam try and South's huddle before bidding 3NT certainly made it easier. We simply cannot allow tempo breaks to assist in reaching the maximum contract. It's easy to see that 6♣ is the best contract but bidding it at the table is another matter. If South had the ♥KQ instead of the ♠AJ or one more diamond spot rather than a heart or club spot, then 3NT would have been right. The huddle made it safe for North to go in.

Treadwell: North can be almost certain that South will have some sort of a problem after his 3♥ bid, regardless of his holding, just trying to figure out what North is up to. In this situation, the hesitation doesn't convey any information beyond the fact that South is thinking the problem through. Would a fast 3NT by South have deterred North from bidding on? The Committee majority did not think so.

Weinstein: I agree with Meckstroth's dissenting opinion. Although it may well have been more logical to continue bidding with North's hand, it was hardly clear. There are plenty of hands where 3NT was the best spot and South was unlikely to hold any of them after the break in tempo. Pass was certainly a logical alternative and the huddle suggested bidding, therefore, the contract should have been reverted to 3NT.

Wolff: What an awful decision!! Holding ♠KQTx, South would have bid a prompt 3NT. Until we can take North to Committee for passing a prompt or fairly prompt 3NT, we cannot allow North to take out a slow 3NT. At my table, Lew Stansby (playing with Gaylor Kastle) passed 3NT on the same sequence. Anyone saying that Pass is not a logical alternative at matchpoints reverts us to where we started when dealing with tempo problems. One terrible decision like this tends to give the "take advantage" guys enough hope to continue weaving their spell, I believe we set examples, we stay consistent, the players bid in tempo, and bridge benefits.

Subject of Appeal:	Tempo	Event:	Women's Swiss Teams	Case:	2
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Auction

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

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: Break in Tempo

Hand Record

Board		N	
Dealer	S	♠ AQJ8	
		♥ Q863	
Vul	N/S	♦ 1097	
		♣ J10	
W			
♠ 42			
♥ AJ1094			
♦ J432			E
♣ 85			♠ 6
			♥ K752
			♦ AK85
			♣ A732
		S	
		♠ K109753	
		♥ (void)	
		♦ Q6	
		♣ KQ964	

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
5♥ by E	Down 2	N/S +100	

Facts

East believed she had the final bid in the auction. After some thought, she started to put her bid cards back in the box. At that point, she was made aware that the auction was not over and passed. West then bid 5♥.

Director Ruling

The Director allowed the table result, 5♥ by East, down two, N/S +100, to stand.

Director's Ruling	5♥ by E, Down 2, N/S +100
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Committee Ruling

The Committee felt that the 5♥ bid might have been influenced by East's hesitation. The Committee ruled unanimously to change the contract to 4♠ by South, making four, N/S +620.

Committee Members

Chair	Howard Chandross
Member	Robert Gookin
Member	Jim Linhart

Commentary

Colker: I agree with the ruling, but I would have pushed for a procedural penalty for West's bid after East's hesitation. If a bid of this sort was ever blatant, this is it!

Goldman: I have serious doubts about this case. Does West think she can make at least 2♥? Yes! So a good sacrifice exists. From West's prospective can 4♠ be beaten? Unknown! Does the huddle decrease the probability of beating 4♠, as opposed to a quick or in-tempo pass? No! The bidder may have been thinking of Doubling. I would need to hear the testimony, but I lean toward allowing 5♥.

Kaplan: I disagree. On the vulnerability, West knew she must have a cheap save. Her only worry was that 4♠ might go down, this was unlikely when her partner failed to Double. East's hesitation did not suggest that West save, but that she Pass.

LeBendig: I agree that Pass was a logical alternative. However, I totally disagree that any hesitation by East suggested that 5♥ was going to be successful. Once West failed to bid 3♥, it was almost impossible that East could have been considering 5♥. If anything, it suggested that East wanted to Double. The pass over 3♣ was reasonable given that North/South were not in game. The vulnerability and scoring suggested that 5♥ was the right bid. I believe the Director should have ruled in favor of North/South and forced East/West to appeal.

Meckstroth: The Committee made the correct ruling.

Rosenberg: The Committee made a good ruling, but why did the Director not routinely rule for the non-offending side? This is important.

Sutherlin: I would have penalized West for taking blatant advantage of East's break in tempo and would not have allowed 5♥.

Treadwell: Once West failed to bid 3♥ at his third turn to bid, he cannot be allowed to bid 5♥ after partner hesitated before passing 4♠, since Pass was a logical alternative.

Weinstein: I agree with the Committee. It was unlikely, because West had two little spades, that her partner could have been considering anything other than saving.

Wolff: I agree with the Committee's decision.

Subject of Appeal:	Tempo	Event:	Flight A Pairs	Case:	3
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Auction

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

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: Alerted, Forcing
2: Break in Tempo
3: Break in Tempo

Hand Record

Board		N			
Dealer		S			
Vul		None			
W				E	
♠	10963			♠	A85
♥	KQ74			♥	J85
♦	3			♦	K974
♣	Q1065			♣	K97
		S			
		♠	K		
		♥	A10963		
		♦	A1052		
		♣	843		

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
3♦ by N	Made 4	N/S +130	

Facts

South hesitated before bidding 2♥ and North broke tempo before bidding 2♠. North/South insisted they reached this contract by using their system, not by the hesitations.

Director Ruling

The Director determined that there had been a break in tempo and the score was changed to Average Plus for East/West, Average Minus for North/South. North-South filed the appeal.

Director's Ruling	N/S: AVE- E/W: AVE+
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Committee Ruling

The Committee found that there were two breaks in tempo by North/South. The Committee felt that many pairs would play 3♦ using a forcing notrump system. However, North/South's tempo problems made it much easier to investigate playing a major suit and escaping to 3♦. The Committee ruled that Pass was a logical alternative to bidding over 2♥. The Committee decided that a bridge result should be determined and the contract was changed to 2♥. The Committee determined that, with the best defense, 2♥ should fail one trick. The North/South score was changed to 2♥ by South, down one, E/W +50, or Average Minus, whichever was worse.

Committee Members

Chair	Mary Hardy
Member	Martin Caley
Member	Michael Huston
Member	Bruce Reeve
Member	Jim Linhart

Commentary

Colker: Even if North/South were playing weak two-bids (so that South couldn't hold a good six-card heart suit), and even if South hadn't hesitated before 2♥ (making North's bid over 2♥ more attractive), North's 2♠ bid would be arguable. But with the break in tempo, in a Flight A event, it is inexcusable. Looking at this and the previous case I wonder if we've dispensed with issuing procedural penalties for blatant tempo infractions? Could these cases be interpreted as exemplifying "inappropriate leniency?" Hmm, I guess I know an appeals guideline I'm in favor of.

Goldman: I like the 2♥ ruling. I don't understand the average-plus, average-minus part of the ruling.

Kaplan: I agree with the Committee ruling.

Meckstroth: It was correct to rule that 2♥ was the final contract.

Rosenberg: The Committee made a good ruling, although it is possible to go down two in 2♥.

Treadwell: If South had not passed as dealer, the Committee ruling is pretty clear-cut. But South had passed as dealer! What kind of hand could South have that would play well in hearts opposite North's lone deuce and not have opened either 2♥ or 3♥? I think North is entitled to use bridge judgment and strive for a better spot despite the break in tempo by South.

Weinstein: I agree with the Committee. If there was no dispute of the facts, I believe the appeal lacked merit. Indeed, given the Average Plus/Average Minus ruling, perhaps East/West should have appealed as the Committee's ruling attests. I would not have disagreed with a further one-quarter board penalty against North/South.

Wolff: The Committee made a good decision.

Subject of Appeal:	Tempo	Event:	Flight A Pairs	Case:	4
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Auction

West	North	East	South
		3♠	Pass
Pass ¹	Pass		

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: Break in Tempo

Hand Record

Board		N		
Dealer	E	♠ 5		
		♥ A876		
Vul	N/S	♦ Q872		
		♣ KQJ10		
W				E
♠ 104				♠ KJ87632
♥ J95				♥ 10
♦ A43				♦ J965
♣ A8754				♣ 2
		S		
		♠ AQ9		
		♥ KQ432		
		♦ K10		
		♣ 963		

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
3♠ by E	Down 2	N/S +100	

Facts

West hesitated before passing 3♠. West claimed he was trying to decide whether to make a sacrifice or not. He was not sure that East/West could make anything. West stated that he didn't worry about his actions influencing an opponent, only his partner. West felt that his opponents could certainly deduce that he was considering saving.

Director Ruling

The Director ruled that North/South were damaged by West's break in tempo and the score was changed to Average Plus for North/South and Average Minus for East/West.

Director's Ruling	N/S: AVE+ E/W: AVE-
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Committee Ruling

The Committee unanimously determined that West had hesitated at least a full minute before passing. The East/West pair had between 1200 and 1500 masterpoints and the Committee found them to be experienced players. The Committee felt that West should have known that a long hesitation in this auction would give an erroneous impression to his opponents. The Committee believed that a score adjustment was proper under Law 73F2. The Director ruling of Average Plus for North/South and Average Minus for East/West was confirmed.

Committee Members

Chair	Ralph Cohen
Member	Ralph Buchalter
Member	Nell Cahn

Commentary

Colker: North's hand is so perfect for balancing he might have done so even with West's huddle. I'm inclined to rule as the Committee did for East/West, but to award North/South only the better of the result at the table or Average (rather than Average Plus). By my interpretation of the Laws, when a non-offender has contributed to his own poor result to some minor degree, he is entitled only to the protection of average. If we had been an equal contributor, he would be entitled to no protection. This was a Flight A event.

Goldman: I have no problem with the East/West penalty. I do have a problem with the North/South adjustment on a routine reopening Double.

Kaplan: I agree with the adjustment. I might have tacked on a penalty.

LeBendig: I feel there should have been a penalty for East/West. It only takes one of these penalties to make sure a player doesn't do it again. Once the word spreads that this is our policy, others will be more careful. I tend to believe North's failure to take a normal action caused the bad result. Depending on North's experience level, I might feel the table result was earned. The adjustment to East/West was clear.

Meckstroth: It was correct to adjust the score. In this type of situation, if a player is considering a psyche or a tactical bid, it must be made in tempo.

Rosenberg: I would have to hear the testimony in this case to make a decision. However, from what I see, I would prefer +600 for North-South.

Treadwell: A good ruling. The documentation does not indicate whether East gave a skip bid warning before his 3♠ opening. If he did, this would have given his partner, as well as South, ample time to consider his action and would have made his subsequent hesitation even a more flagrant violation.

Weinstein: The Committee made a good ruling. West could also have been recorded for his lengthy huddle.

Wolff: I agree with the general theme of the Committee, but not with the specific ruling. Since North had a clear balance, he should not have been allowed to Pass and either call the Director or bring this case to a Committee except to have East/West disciplined. Therefore, North/South should score +100, but East/West should be penalized three-quarters of a board for very poor ethics. Everything good happens then, North/South are not rewarded for poor bridge (or a double shot), East/West are penalized for abominable conduct, and the North/South field is not penalized for an offense over which they had no control.

Subject of Appeal:	Tempo	Event:	Mixed Pairs	Case:	5
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Auction

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

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: Alerted, Spades & another suit
2: Alerted, three spades
3: Break in Tempo

Hand Record

Board		N			
Dealer	E	♠	A105		
Vul	E/W	♥	K3		
		♦	10763		
		♣	Q762		
W				E	
♠	864			♠	Q9
♥	1076542			♥	AJ98
♦	K9			♦	AJ85
♣	103			♣	KJ4
		S			
		♠	KJ732		
		♥	Q		
		♦	Q42		
		♣	A985		

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
3♥ by W	Made 3	E/W +140	

Facts

East asked several questions after the 2♠ bid and then took another twenty seconds or more to Pass. North/South felt that Pass was a logical alternative for West after the break in tempo. West maintained she always intended to bid hearts, she was just waiting to see what suits North/South showed.

Director Ruling

The Director ruled that Pass was a logical alternative and the result was changed to Average Plus for North/South and Average Minus for East/West.

Director's Ruling	N/S: AVE+ E/W: AVE-
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Committee Ruling

The Committee discovered that East/West were inexperienced players (East had less than 100 masterpoints and West had 240 masterpoints) and explained to West that she should have bid her heart suit at the two level when she had the opportunity. It was pointed out to East that he really had no reason to ask questions or break tempo, he had already described his hand with the 1NT opening bid and he put an extra burden on his partner with the hesitation. The Committee felt that Pass was a logical alternative for West, and confirmed the Director ruling of Average Plus for North/South and Average Minus for East/West.

Committee Members

Chair	John Blubaugh
Member	Miles Adkins
Member	Ed Lazarus

Commentary

Colker: I agree completely with the Committee's ruling. In this case the inexperience of the East/West pair make education, and not a procedural penalty, the indicated action.

Kaplan: I agree with the Committee although it is close.

LeBendig: This was a good ruling but the adjustment should have been to whatever the Committee determined the result of a 2♠ contract would have been. I'm curious about South's stated agreement that 2♠ guaranteed three spades.

Meckstroth: It was a correct decision to make an adjustment.

Rosenberg: Why shouldn't the result for North-South be +140?

Sutherlin: The case was not as clear as it might appear. Many inexperienced players bid slowly because they don't know what to bid and, like West here, fail to bid when they should. However, if tempo violators are to get the worst of it, then West should be forced to pass North's 2♠.

Weinstein: The Committee properly disallowed the 3♥ bid. The Committee might have tried to determine a result for 2♠.

Wolff: I agree with the Committee's decision.

Subject of Appeal:	Tempo	Event:	Fast Open Pairs	Case:	6
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Auction

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

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: Alerted, Explained as Lebensohl, Break in Tempo
2: Forced
3: Signoff, 7 HCP or less

Hand Record

Board		N			
Dealer	W	♠	AQ75		
Vul	None	♥	Q3		
		♦	AK92		
		♣	KJ8		
W				E	
♠	1094			♠	J862
♥	AK1076			♥	94
♦	104			♦	Q6
♣	763			♣	Q10952
		S			
		♠	K3		
		♥	J852		
		♦	J8753		
		♣	A4		

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

Facts

South hesitated before bidding 2NT, signed off in 3♦, and North bid on.

Director Ruling

The Director ruled that there no damage and the table result of 3NT by South, making five, N/S +460, stood.

Director's Ruling	3NT by S, Made 5, N/S +460
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Committee Ruling

North/South were Flight A players who didn't appear before the Committee, so the Committee had no opportunity to ask the pair questions. The Director stated before the Committee that South confirmed there was a huddle before bidding 2NT. The Committee decided that North knew it was safe to bid over 3♦ since the break in tempo suggested South didn't have a true negative response to the Lebensohl auction. The Committee changed the contract to 3♦ by South, making four, N/S+130. The Committee believed that most East/West defenders would score the ♦Q uppercute when West continued a heart after cashing the ♥AK.

Committee Members

Chair	Peggy Sutherlin
Member	George Dawkins
Member	Bruce Reeve

Commentary

Colker: Again, I agree with the ruling, but why no procedural penalty? Did the Committee at least consider one? While the North hand is pretty good, South's not having bid a major and the likelihood that any crucial finesses are offside make moving over 3♦ risky, except after a huddle! Then, you know you have safety. The more I think about it, the more this looks like a clear procedural penalty situation.

Kaplan: I agree with the Committee.

LeBendig: This was a good Committee decision. It would also have been good if the Director had ruled in the same fashion and forced North/South to appeal (if they dared).

Meckstroth: I'm not sure about this case. Couldn't the problem be something like: ♠Jxx ♥xxxx ♦xxxx ♣xx? Wouldn't the question be whether or not to bid 2♠?

Rosenberg: The Committee made another good ruling, but why did the Director not routinely rule for the non-offending side? This is especially true on this case because the whole case is odorous.

Weinstein: The Committee made a good ruling.

Wolff: The Committee made the correct ruling.

Subject of Appeal:	Tempo	Event:	Flight A Swiss Teams	Case:	7
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Auction

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

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: RKC Blackwood for ♦
2: Break in Tempo

Hand Record

Board		N		
Dealer		W	♠ K1097	
Vul		N/S	♥ 76543	
			♦ KQ5	
			♣ 6	
W				E
♠ AQJ654				♠ (void)
♥ AK				♥ 2
♦ 9863				♦ AJ107
♣ 3		S		
			♠ 832	
			♥ QJ1098	
			♦ 42	
			♣ 754	

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
6NTXX by E	Made 6	E/W +1660	

Facts

North-South believed that West pulled the Double of 6♦ to 6♠ because of East's long hesitation before passing 6♦X.

Director Ruling

The Director did not believe that passing 6♦X was a logical alternative for West. The result, 6NTXX by East, making six, E/W +1660, was allowed to stand.

Director's Ruling	6NTXX by E, Made 6, E/W +1660
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Committee Ruling

The Committee determined that unauthorized information suggested to West that bidding would be a winning action. However, the Committee also felt that passing 6♦X with the West hand was not a logical alternative. On this particular auction where West had so many high cards and controls, it seemed unlikely that the Double could be based on anything but a trump holding in diamonds. This was particularly true because West had four small diamonds and his partner had chosen, after the raise in diamonds, to play 6♣. West's original conversion to 6♦ was highly questionable, and once North Doubled (a terrible action sheepishly admitted by North), there was no way 6♦X would be left in. It was quite possible his partner held something like a singleton ♠K or perhaps two small spades. The Committee confirmed the Director ruling of 6NTXX by East, making six, E/W +1660.

Committee Members

Chair	Jan Cohen
Member	Martin Caley
Member	Ralph Cohen
Member	Mary Jane Farrell
Member	Doug Heron

Commentary

Colker: A good ruling. North should have received a penalty, from his partner, after the session.

Goldman: I agree with the Committee. It looks like East may have been thinking about a Redouble of 6♦. Did East's huddle aid West in making a good decision to run 6♠? Clearly, the answer is no. Then there should have been no score adjustment as everything else was coincidental.

Kaplan: I agree with the Committee.

LeBendig: I strongly believe the Committee made the right decision here. The Double tells me that passing did not rate to be the winning action. Since 6NT might have made, I have trouble imagining that Pass would have been correct since I would rate to go down on trump tricks.

Meckstroth: Wrong!! Passing 6♦ was nor a logical alternative? Look at the hand! 6♦ was cold, 6♠ had no play, and 6NT might be a huge disaster if East needed a club ruff to establish the suit. I feel very strongly that we must not allow the slow "question mark" Pass followed by an action. I can't think of any justification that would convince me that such an action was kosher.

Rosenberg: My first reaction was this ruling was reasonable if not correct. But after thinking it over, I disagree with the ruling. First, one of the players made a mistake during the auction. If East could not bid a forcing 3♣ over 2♣, then West should not have converted 6♣ to 6♦. If East could have bid 3♣ he should have. As it was, West knew that East could surmise that West had bad diamonds, since he did not bid 2♦ over 2♣. The important point is, if East had passed smoothly and comfortably over the Double and West had passed it out, and that was the winning action, would North/South have had any recourse? I don't think so. On this auction, I feel East must either bid or Pass smoothly if he wants to afford his side any chance at a different contract.

Treadwell: Another good ruling. North, by his own admission, made a terrible Double and got what he deserved. West had every reason to run from 6♦X, regardless of partner's tempo break.

Weinstein: I'm not quite convinced that Pass couldn't be considered a logical alternative, but I don't have any strong convictions about this.

Wolff: This case is similar to Case One. West should only have been allowed to remove 6♦ if passing was not a logical alternative. Again, how can anyone say he wouldn't have considered passing 6♦? Why should he have been advantaged by knowing his partner wanted to run? The animals shouldn't run the zoo. We are still playing a game where table ethics are important. North/South deserved -1660 and their Victory Point total should reflect it. East/West should have scored +1090 but they should have been penalized one or two Victory Points as a reminder of their responsibility.

Subject of Appeal:	Tempo	Event:	Flight B Swiss Teams	Case:	8
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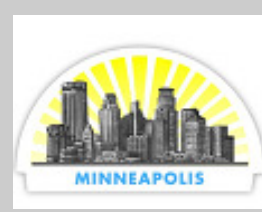
Auction

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

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: Break in Tempo

Hand Record

Board		N		
Dealer	N	♠ A3		
		♥ 53		
Vul	None	♦ A10752		
		♣ KQ73		
W				E
♠ 98764				♠ QJ102
♥ AJ7				♥ KQ109862
♦ 84				♦ Q
♣ 1086				♣ 2
		S		
		♠ K5		
		♥ 4		
		♦ KJ963		
		♣ AJ954		

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
5♦ by N	Made 6	N/S +420	

Facts

North checked East/West's convention card after the 2♥ bid and it was very difficult to make out. North thought the convention card said intermediate (which was checked but marked balancing). The East/West agreement was that 2♥ was preemptive. North stated to the Director that 3♦ was forcing and if North bid again, she was afraid she would get to game.

Director Ruling

The Director ruled that passing 3♥ was a logical alternative and the contract was changed to 3♥ by East, making three, E/W +140.

Director's Ruling	3♥ by E, Made 3, E/W +140
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Committee Ruling

North testified to the Committee that 3♦ was forcing but probably showed 10-11 HCP, certainly not 12 HCP. South claimed that she passed in case her partner wanted to Double 3♥. The Committee felt that passing 3♥ was not a logical alternative for North or players at the 600 masterpoint level. From North's point of view, 4♦ could have been cold or at worse on a finesse. The Committee restored the table result, 5♦ by North, making six, N/S +420.

Committee Members

Chair	Alan LeBendig
Member	Jim Linhart
Member	Gerald Gaer

Commentary

Colker: I agree with the Committee's ruling for several reasons. First, North's statement about 3♦ being forcing (is it even strongly emotional?) makes little sense. How could 3♦ be considered forcing any yet, by North's own admission, be limited to "10-11 hcp, certainly not 12 hcp?" Second, taking North's statement at face value, why would she pass 3♦? Because, she said, "if she bid again, she was afraid she would get to game." Yet, opposite hands such as ♠Kxx ♥xxx ♦KJ ♣Axx game is on a finesse which figures to work most of the time, and opposite hands such as ♠Kxx ♥xx ♦KJxxx ♣Axx or ♠xxx ♥Axx ♦Kxxx ♣Ax game is a virtual certainty (5♦ would make in both cases, unless diamonds were 3-0, and 3NT would make in the second case as well). Game figures to be no worse than on a finesse, so why be afraid to bid it? Since North's actions and thinking seem to defy logic, reason, and each other, if she could pass 3♦, she could pass 3♥. South's huddle over 3♥ had to make bidding more attractive to her. I would have ruled as the Director did: 3♥ making three for both sides.

Goldman: I disagree with the Committee's ruling. A partner of a player, who could bid 3♦ and pass 3♥ with the South hand, could certainly be expected to pass 3♥ with the North hand. Unless the Committee knew some unusual, unrevealed information, it is an easy reversal to 3♥.

Kaplan: I would accept the Committee's reasoning if I accepted North's statement that 3♦ was forcing. Was there any evidence supporting this? If not, I would ignore the self-serving testimony, and rule that passing 3♥ was a logical alternative (opposite a normal competitive raise).

LeBendig: I am well aware of how this decision is going to be viewed. I would feel the same if I came across it in the abstract. One thing we are supposed to do is make decisions within the different peer groups we deal with. The Committee took a good deal of time establishing the experience level of North-South. They had about 600 masterpoints and had taken seventeen years to get them. The discussion with North made no logical sense. She had already stated that 3♦ was forcing. We asked why she passed a forcing bid and she responded that she didn't want to get too high. When the Committee asked how strong this forcing bid was, she responded 10 to 11 HCP, certainly not 12 HCP. Why did she bid 4♦? Partner held five diamonds and it probably would make. It never occurred to her that there might have been some layouts where the opponents could bid 4♥ and make it. There was more evidence of their logic when we asked South why she passed 3♥. Her answer was that her partner may have wanted to make a Penalty Double. There was very little in this case that made sense (our decision might be included in that) but after hearing what we did, we firmly believed that Pass was not a logical alternative to a player of this level. It is sometimes difficult, but we must not subject novices to the same guidelines as more experienced players. Their reasoning is considerably different.

Meckstroth: I don't like what I see here from North/South. Some very bad habits here, like a slow Pass saying double or bid, perhaps. I'd be inclined to rule against North/South but with this level of player it is not clear. I don't feel this case was documented adequately. I don't really understand what this Committee was thinking.

Rosenberg: I disagree strongly with this Committee. The inexperienced North/South pair might well have used unauthorized information. North would need a singleton heart or a six-card diamond suit to bid.

Sutherlin: I would not have allowed North to bid 4♦. Either 3♦ was forcing or it was not. I'm sure South's pass of 3♥ was made with quite a long break in tempo. His partner supposedly passed a forcing bid, and he still couldn't bid over 3♥ (as Howie Weinstein often says, "Give me a break!").

Weinstein: Passing 3♥ by North was not a logical alternative for players with 600 masterpoints? It should be a logical alternative for players at any level. This was a terrible decision.

Subject of Appeal:	Misinformation	Event:	Continuous Pairs	Case:	9
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Auction

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

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: Alerted, Negative Double

Hand Record

Board		N		
Dealer	E	♠ Q6		
		♥ Q1076		
Vul	E/W	♦ J10973		
		♣ 107		
W				E
♠ K10754				♠ AJ982
♥ 82				♥ AJ954
♦ 865				♦ 4
♣ 984				♣ A3
		S		
		♠ 3		
		♥ K3		
		♦ AKQ2		
		♣ KQJ652		

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
4♠ by E	Made 4	E/W +620	

Facts

West's double was explained as negative. Before South made the opening lead, West explained that they played negative free bids and the Double was either negative or, if the Doubler bid again, game forcing. North/South believed that they had been given an improper explanation, that improper comments were made by West during the auction, and there was considerable joking during the play of the hand.

Director Ruling

The Director ruled that there was no damage, and the result of 4♠ by East, making four, E/W +620, stood.

Director's Ruling	4♠ by E, Made 4, E/W +620
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Committee Ruling

The Committee decided that East's explanation was inadequate but, in the Committee's opinion, this inadequate explanation did not affect the North/South result. However, since the Double is also used to create forcing auctions (because they use negative free bids) that may not include hearts, a one matchpoint procedural penalty was assessed against East/West and they were told to give more complete explanations in the future. The table result of 4♠ by East, making four, E/W +620, was allowed to stand.

Committee Members

Chair	David Treadwell
Member	Martin Caley
Member	Ed Lazarus

Commentary

Colker: Was West's "Negative" Double the tactical equivalent of bidding a forcing No Trump if South had passed 1♠, or was it a necessary systemic preliminary to showing a weak raise (i.e. would an immediate raise have shown a good/better hand)? If the latter then this infraction was more serious than the Committee's explanation and decision suggested. Because then even West's disclosure was inadequate. Otherwise, this was a good ruling.

Kaplan: This was an absurd appeal.

LeBendig: The procedural penalty was good because it will remind East/West to give more complete explanations in the future. It does bother me that North/South filed such a ridiculous appeal and it appears that nothing was even said to them.

Meckstroth: The ruling is acceptable. What improper comments were made during the auction? Was this the reason for the penalty or was it that East should have explained the negative free bid implications when he Alerted?

Rosenberg: I don't like the procedural penalty. If North/South did not have a good save, no Director or Committee would have heard about his hand. Why should East/West get a penalty only when North/South misbid? If there was damage, adjust the score. If there was no damage, leave the score alone.

Weinstein: I agree with the Committee. I would also have recorded West's "psyche" of the Negative Double, with correct explanations or not.

Wolff: This is an acceptable Flight B ruling, but not in a higher rated game.

Subject of Appeal:	Misinformation	Event:	Blue Ribbon Pairs	Case:	10
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Auction

West	North	East	South
2♠	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: Alerted, No outside feature

Hand Record

Board		N		
Dealer	W	♠ 75		
Vul	None	♥ AQ10953		
		♦ Q4		
		♣ Q75		
W				E
♠ QJ8632				♠ K94
♥ K4				♥ J2
♦ 932				♦ KJ7
♣ J8				♣ AK964
		S		
		♠ A10		
		♥ 876		
		♦ A10865		
		♣ 1032		

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
3♠ by W	Made 4	E/W +170	

Facts

Before making the opening lead, North inquired: "Does 3♠ deny a feature?" East replied that 3♠ did indeed deny a feature and West remained mute. North led the ♥A and continued hearts after South played the ♥6. North called the Director based on being given misinformation.

Director Ruling

The Director ruled that there was misinformation and North/South were injured by the misinformation. The Director adjusted the score to 3♠ by West, making three, E/W +140.

Director's Ruling	3♠ by W, Made 3, E/W +140
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Committee Ruling

The Committee report was provided by Chairperson, Bobby Goldman.

The Committee examined East/West's convention card and discovered that 2♠ showed 5-11 HCP, but was blank regarding responses and rebids. West claimed that the explanation given to North/South was correct. West maintained that he had "psyched" having no feature because of his weak hand. The East/West partnership had played together periodically for many years. The Committee restored the table result, 3♠ by West, making four, E/W +170.

Majority Opinion: The majority (Heron, Gookin, and Lawrence) felt that based on the East/West testimony there had been no violation of disclosure obligations. Further, if there had been a minor violation, North/South were experienced enough to realize there was a possibility of a side card being held by a weak hand. Additionally, a ruling against East/West would equate to calling them liars.

Minority Opinion: The minority (Goldman and Deas) believed that one of three possibilities actually occurred:

1. The one expressed by East/West (with Declarer having no obligation to correct the explanation)
2. The partnership had no agreement; in which case Dummy's explanation was at best his opinion and thus misinformation as to the partnership agreement (which Declarer should correct)

3. The agreement was that of most pairs; 3♠ showed all minimum hands, in which case Dummy's answer was incorrect and Declarer had a clear obligation to correct the explanation

The Committee had to decide between a misbid (intentional) or misexplanation. Proper procedure, when in doubt, is to rule "misinformation" unless compelling evidence exists to support "misbid." Self-serving statements, which we believe the Committee should tend to ignore, certainly fall short of compelling information. There were defensive prospects for one or two extra tricks (still possible after the lead of the ♥A) and we would have supported a ruling of -140 or -170 for North/South and +140 or -50 for East/West. We would also have considered +170 with a quarter board procedural penalty assessed to East/West.

Committee Members

Chair	Bobby Goldman
Member	Lynn Deas
Member	Robert Gookin
Member	Doug Heron
Member	Mike Lawrence

Commentary

Colker: If West psyched having no feature because of his weak hand, and if West/West were a long-standing (if only periodic) partnership, it is hard to believe that this type of situation hadn't occurred before, and that they didn't have at least an implicit agreement about it. The majority's statement that "North/South were experienced enough to realize there was a possibility of a side card being held by a weak hand" may very well be true, but the impact of this on the opening lead is questionable. Once the lead was made, the possibility of South holding ♥K6 and being unable to encourage, along with the chance that West was 6-2-4-1 (exactly) and could not get a pitch on a club, made a shift by North at trick two dangerous. Thus, the "minor violation" of disclosure obligations the majority recognized might have occurred was sufficient to have damaged North/South.

The minority view that "proper procedure, when in doubt, is to rule misinformation unless compelling evidence exists to support misbid" seems right, but there are some problems with this. It would seem that almost any time a player psyches and the opponents ask about the bid, the player would be foolish not to reveal his psyche since that would invite having the result overturned. This can't be right. The success of a bid cannot depend on whether the opponents ask a question about it! Law 75B states that "No player has the obligation to disclose to the opponents that he has violated an announced agreement." It doesn't qualify this by adding "as long as he can demonstrate beyond doubt that he has done so." Still, we can't allow players to simply claim "I psyched" every time their partner's explanation doesn't match their hand.

Committees must be free to judge whether a bid is likely to have been intended as a psyche at the time it was made. Such judgments must ignore self-serving statements from the player, and should not absolutely require written documentation, but should leave the determination up to whatever considerations the Committee feels are appropriate for the case at hand. Few partnerships have their agreements documented so thoroughly as to fix the psyche intent of any but a few bids to a Committee's satisfaction.

The key to the present case seems to be that both sides were right, and both sides were wrong. East/West seem to have had no special agreements about their methods after weak two-bids. If you return to the trump suit, you deny a feature. Isn't it just normal good bridge to conceal a feature when you have a terrible opening bid? Do you really need to teach the opponents bidding in the Blue Ribbon Pairs? Yet, it hardly seems too much to expect East to have said "yes, 3♠ normally denies a feature," or "yes, 3♠ denies a feature, but he can do whatever he thinks is right," just to cover all bases.

North/South, on the other hand, asked the simple question "Does 3♠ deny a feature?" and were told, in no uncertain terms, that it did. Opener then turned up with a feature, so it seemed there was misinformation. Still, we all know that what a bid says about a player's hand isn't necessarily what the player holds. Judgment can come into play, and weak two-bid situations like this aren't exactly rare. North had to know, playing in the Blue Ribbon Pairs, that a holding such as West's was a possibility, however unlikely.

All things considered, I would have given both sides a bit of the worst of it. I would have allowed the score obtained at the table to stand for both pairs, plus, I would have assessed a nominal procedural penalty (maybe 2-4 matchpoints on a 25 top) against East/West for a slightly careless explanation of their methods.

Kaplan: I agree with Goldman's dissent unless there was evidence to back-up the self-serving statements.

LeBendig: I firmly side with the minority opinion on this case. It is much too easy for West to stay mum and later claim that he psyched. Without very strong proof of that, we are to assume misexplanation as opposed to misbid. It is so easy to say "I psyched" or "I forgot" rather than admitting we felt a different agreement existed. The former of these statements is often self-serving and should be ignored unless there is conclusive evidence to the contrary. Once it is determined that there was misinformation, any adjustment that the Committee felt was appropriate would have been fine with me. This could have included a split decision in which North/South got no adjustment. East/West should have received a procedural penalty for not correcting the misinformation prior to the opening lead.

Meckstroth: It is sad to see a wrong ruling on this case. The minority opinion was right on target and clearly documented. The majority opinion is nothing more than rhetoric. First they say no violation, next they hedge their bet saying that if there was a violation it was minor and that North/South should have been able to deal with it, and finally they entrench with a statement about calling East/West liars if they rule against them. I'd like to see the majority address the points made by the minority! Perhaps that was done with their statement about calling East/West liars etc.?

Rosenberg: I strongly disagree with the majority opinion. West had nothing to be ashamed of, since the range for his bid was 5 to 11 HCP. He had no reason to psyche having no feature. It is clear to me that East/West had no agreement that showing a feature was mandatory regardless of his hand. Maybe if North had asked, "Does 3♣ absolutely deny a feature," East would have answered less definitively or West might have spoken up, but North should not be punished for not asking the perfect question. One thing is clear, East/West agreement subsequent to this hand was that showing a feature was not mandatory. In fact, they now absolutely can't deny a feature because they didn't have that agreement before this case was heard. North should not lose his opportunity to find the winning diamond lead because West failed to volunteer that holding a feature was still possible. Therefore, I would rule +50 to North/South.

Sutherlin: This was a most difficult case. What was the East/West agreement regarding the showing of a feature? When did they last discuss it and how firm was their agreement? The skill and experience level of North/South must also be considered. Their level of expertise should have suggested that there was no guarantee that the ♥A was a "safe" lead. The Committee's decision seems proper when all things are considered.

Treadwell: Yes, East/West probably did not disclose completely their partnership agreement about showing features after the 2NT bid; whether the agreement is explicit or implicit. But come on! This is the Blue Ribbon Pairs. I would be ashamed to call foul if I had led the ♥A in this position. The Committee majority was correct in allowing the table result of -170 to stand. I might have given East/West a small procedural penalty as a goad to being more forthright in the future.

Weinstein: I may not be entirely objective here, but I believe the minority opinion got it about right.

Wolff: This was a good and well-reasoned decision. Players should never be penalized for exercising their own bridge judgment.

Subject of Appeal:	Misinformation	Event:	Blue Ribbon Pairs	Case:	11
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Auction

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

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: Alerted, Bergen Raise

Hand Record

Board		N	
Dealer	S	♠ 10962	
		♥ J92	
Vul	N/S	♦ AK4	
		♣ J96	
W			
♠ 73			
♥ 3			
♦ J98762			
♣ K1043			
		S	
		♠ AKQ854	
		♥ A754	
		♦ Q3	
		♣ 5	
			E
			♠ J
			♥ KQ1086
			♦ 105
			♣ AQ872

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
4♠ by S	Made 5	N/S +650	

Facts

East, a visiting European player, asked about the meaning of the 3♣ bid and was told it showed four-card spade support and 6 to 9 high card points. East considered the club honors to be well placed and bid 3♥. East had a 3♠ bid available that would show five hearts and five clubs. East maintained this would have made it very simple to find their sacrifice if he had been informed that 3♣ did not show clubs.

Director Ruling

The Director ruled that there had been no misinformation given and the table result, 4♠ by South, making five, N/S +650, was allowed to stand.

Director's Ruling	4♠ by S, Made 5, E/W +650
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Committee Ruling

The Committee determined that East was told that 3♣ showed a four-card spade raise and East simply assumed (with no basis for the assumption) that it showed clubs also since that is the continental style he had been playing in Europe. The Committee allowed the table result, 4♠ by South, making five, N/S +650, to stand. The Committee would have considered this appeal to be substantially without merit if the appellant had not been a visitor who was unaccustomed to Bergen raises.

Committee Members

Chair	Robert Gookin
Member	Harvey Brody
Member	Doug Heron
Member	Richard Popper
Member	Bruce Reeve

Commentary

Colker: Deja vu all over again! As with Case Ten, North/South could (and should) have explicitly stated that 3♣ was artificial (i.e. said nothing about clubs) and showed four-card spade support and 6 to 9 HCP. On the other hand, what they did say should have been sufficient. And it would have been had East not been from the continent and unaccustomed to Bergen raises. This was a good ruling.

Goldman: This was a good ruling and the case was handled well by the Committee.

Kaplan: My sympathy is with the European. If the club bid was artificial, that should have been part of the explanation.

Meckstroth: The Committee ruled correctly.

Rosenberg: The Committee ruled properly. However, in an international event South would have had an obligation to ensure that East understood that 3♣ was artificial.

Sutherland: I believe that under the concept of "full disclosure," the 3♣ bid should have been more fully explained. The statement, "It says nothing about clubs," would have been appropriate. Therefore, there should have been no possibility of finding the appeal to be substantially without merit.

Weinstein: The Committee made a good ruling.

Wolff: I agree with the Committee, but South should have volunteered that 3♣ had nothing to do with clubs. With so many new methods floating around, Active Ethics should dictate making it as easy as possible for the opponents.

Subject of Appeal:	Misinformation	Event:	Blue Ribbon Pairs	Case:	12
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Auction

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

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: Alerted, ♦'s and a Major
2: Alerted, Cooperative & Penalty

Hand Record

Board		N			
Dealer	W	♠	K753		
		♥	QJ42		
Vul	Both	♦	A543		
		♣	7		
W				E	
♠	Q102			♠	J96
♥	AK3			♥	9
♦	K			♦	Q872
♣	QJ9854			♣	A10632
		S			
		♠	A84		
		♥	108765		
		♦	J1096		
		♣	K		

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
4♣X by W	Down 1	N/S +200	

Facts

East/West claimed that the explanation of the Double of 3♣ was inadequate, and with a proper explanation, West would have made the correct play. North/South agreed that the explanation was not complete.

Director Ruling

The Director ruled that the misinformation did not cause East/West's poor result and the table result, 4♣X by West, down one, N/S +200, was allowed to stand.

Director's Ruling	4♣X by W, Down 1, N/S +200
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Committee Ruling

The Committee awarded sixteen matchpoints (Average Plus) to East/West because they felt with a moral certainty that West would take the club finesse with the misinformation he was given, but, without the misinformation, the odds were fifty-fifty that he would get it right.

The North/South score was changed to -710, the result 4♣X making four. The Committee was reluctant to impose this penalty, most members felt it was too harsh as North/South were very forthright revealing the facts in the case and they agreed that the explanation was inadequate. However, the Committee felt that they were forced by the wording of the Law involved to give the offending side "the worst result at all possible."

Committee Members

Chair	Howard Chandross
Member	Gail Greenberg
Member	Beth Palmer
Member	Eric Rodwell
Member	Walt Walvick

Commentary

Colker: I agree with the ruling, as well as the moral certainty!

Goldman: I think letting the contract make about 60% of the time and go down 40% adjusted equity properly with the benefit of the doubt going to the non-offending side.

Kaplan: The Committee's respect for the Law is commendable, but why did they not feel obliged to give the innocent side, "the most favorable result that was likely?" Surely this requires the more favorable of two equally likely results, +710.

LeBendig: It would appear that Law 12C2 was properly assigned to the offending side. The same Law gives the non-offending side the most favorable result that was likely. In this case, I believe those results should have been +/- 710.

Meckstroth: It was correct to adjust the score.

Rosenberg: The Committee made a reasonable ruling.

Weinstein: The Committee made a good ruling in an unfortunate situation.

Wolff: I do not agree with the Committee. East/West should have been -200 and North/South should have scored -710. North/South's forthrightness should be commended but their explanation was woeful. We need to pressure players for better descriptions, particularly with the meaning of Doubles. I have a plan, to be described in the WBF Albuquerque Appeals Report, which classifies Doubles in an (I hope) intelligible way. Until the word is out, we need to demand more and penalize sloth. East/West, by finessing experienced normal playing luck since, in my opinion, Kx is the same likelihood as x. For a change, I don't feel strongly about this.

Subject of Appeal: Unauthorized Information	Event: Life Master Pairs	Case: 13
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Auction

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
2♦ ¹	Dbl	2♠ ²	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: Alerted, Weak Two in either Major
2: Alerted, Willing to Play 3♥ but reluctant to play 3♠

Hand Record

Board		N			
Dealer		E	♠ A10832 ♥ K82 ♦ 8 ♣ AQ92		
Vul		Both			
W				E	
♠ KQ974 ♥ AJ10 ♦ J74 ♣ J5	♠ 5 ♥ 97643 ♦ AK32 ♣ 1086				
S					
♠ J6 ♥ Q5 ♦ Q10965 ♣ K743					

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
2♠ by E	Down 3	N/S +300	

Facts

North/South stated that they would play East/West's suggested defense to the 2♦ opening bid. The Double showed a Takeout Double of spades. North Doubled without having ever consulted the suggested defense card he had agreed to play. South maintained that he heard the explanation of the 2♠ bid and could tell his partner had three or more spades from East's reluctance to play 3♠ but willingness to play 3♥.

Director Ruling

The Director determined that East-West were not damaged by unauthorized information and the score, 2♠ by East, down three, N/S +300, was allowed to stand..

Director's Ruling	2♠ by E, Down 3, N/S +300
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Committee Ruling

The Committee report was provided by Phil Warden.

The Committee felt that unauthorized information had been given and that it tended to make a Pass by South more likely to succeed. However, it was a question of degree. Other factors were:

1. South was entitled to know the general reliability of his partner
2. It was unclear what the meaning of North's Double might have been, both systemically, and from an individual partnership view
3. North was in the Pass-out seat and might bid again
4. A free 3♦ bid may have shown more

After more than an hour of debate, some Committee members wanted to let the table result stand. However, the Committee decided to assess a one-quarter board procedural penalty against North/South. One Committee member wanted the one-quarter board to be awarded to East/West as compensation. This was rejected by the Committee because North/South had agreed to follow the suggested defense and Passed. The Committee felt that +300 would have

been achieved anyway. The Committee agreed that East/West had handled the situation impeccably according to Law. But East/West did not provide adequate follow-up bids on the suggested defense card and this may have handicapped North/South somewhat. The Committee felt that playing similar systems with East/West's suggested defenses would not be advisable in pair games.

Committee Members

Chair	Jan Cohen
Member	Mary Jane Farrell
Member	Bruce Reeve
Member	Hugh Ross
Member	Phil Warden

Commentary

Colker: I have trouble with most of the stated factors that the Committee (apparently) used to reach their ruling. Factor one seems irrelevant. When could a player defend a bid which might have been based on unauthorized information by making an argument based on his knowledge of the "general reliability" of his partner? "Uh, I bid again after partner signed off over my Blackwood response because, umm, see, partner never figures out how many aces I have -- not because he huddled before signing off in 5♠."

Factor three is hard to buy. How many times must North bid his (likely) 15-17 HCP balanced hand and why should South take this risk (especially in light of the following)?

Factor four also seems to be quite a stretch. A good five-card holding and a second reasonable four-card holding in two suits partner has taken out for at the two level (even though South, very arguably, has only marginal high card values) makes bidding at the next level look pretty clear to me -- maybe even mandatory. If you also consider that 2NT (if it's for takeout) is available as a possible alternative to bidding 3♦, it's hard to see how South could have passed.

As for South's statement that he could "tell" that his partner had three or more spades, how was this possible? With a flat, weak hand containing three spades, would East really bid past the two level, vulnerable, especially opposite a third-seat opening that increases the likelihood of a five-card suit? I think South's "clairvoyance" was likely to have been based on an obvious and tangible source of information; and that's why the Committee was where it was, doing what it was doing.

I think North/South should have been forced to play a club partial making four (or maybe only three). They should then have been assessed a one-quarter board procedural penalty on top of that. I agree with the Committee that East/West handled the situation at the table well, but failed to provide adequate follow-up bids on their suggested defense card. Having them keep the result at the table (-300) seems eminently reasonable.

Kaplan: There is no indication in the Committee report that North/South committed any infraction that should be penalized. Perhaps Committee members felt that South should have bid 3♦, but players are entitled to disagree with the Committee's bridge judgment, even when the player (what impertinence!) proves to be correct.

LeBendig: This was a reasonable decision in a very difficult case. North/South were guilty of misinformation since they agreed what their defense methods were and did not use those methods. It sounds like South was in possession of unauthorized information since his partner had not looked at the suggested defenses and he was aware that his partner did not know what they were. This should make it much easier to not bid 3♦. I'm not suggesting that in this case we should force 3♦ but it is an issue to discuss. I think we need guidelines in this entire area.

Meckstroth: A good ruling. I'm not sure I agree with points one and two. North's action was clearly improper and should have been sanctioned. I feel that a player who is using the opponents' defenses has an obligation to look at the defense sheet whenever the bid arises even if he has a bad hand. I also suggest the opponents present defenses when the bid arises.

Rosenberg: The Committee made a reasonable ruling.

Sutherlin: I disagree with the Committee's decision to penalize North/South one-quarter board. Forcing South to bid 3♦ would have been a deep position. North got lucky when he failed to bid in accordance with his partnership's agreements. North/South did nothing unethical or improper other than make a bad bid. Bad bids don't always lead to bad results. Also, South must have known something unusual had happened when he had only two spades and the auction died at 2♠.

Weinstein: This was a situation that occurs too frequently, when a pair agrees to play the suggested defense and only consult the suggested defense when there are no "easy" natural overcalls or takeout Doubles. There is considerable unauthorized information passed, yet there is usually sympathy for the offending pair who are at the mercy of the "weird" conventions. I play Multi so I'm not quite as sympathetic. North/South had a responsibility to provide an adequate defense, however any non-natural defense (even if best) or full follow-up defense could have created complications. A

standard recommended defense is hopefully on its way to alleviate this problem somewhat. As long as Multi is allowed in the event, the opponents have responsibility to deal with the convention ethically. Whether the conventions belong in non-knock-out events is another question.

Now, back to the Committee decision. I don't understand what factors one, two, or three were exactly supposed to mean or have to do with anything. Factor number four I understand, but I wouldn't consider unless South stated that was a factor in Passing. I would have awarded North/South an Average Minus and would have assessed the one-quarter board penalty for using the unauthorized information that was created by North's failure to look at the opponents defenses. South may have had a somewhat valid excuse for passing 2♠, but it was completely self-serving and irrelevant after the unauthorized information. I wouldn't disagree with giving East/West Average Plus, but North/South might have gone right (though I don't believe it) and East/West sort of got what they deserved for offering a non-natural suggested defense.

Wolff: I agree with the Committee that +300 for North/South seems right. However, I think that:

1. East/West were playing a convention that required providing suggested defenses.
2. The opponents agreed to play the provided defenses, but because they did not perform up to ethical standards of how these defenses should have been played, East/West claimed damage.
3. Until there is information disseminated on what these ethical standards are, East/West must bear the worst of it. Perhaps this pair can write-up and distribute what is right and wrong.

Subject of Appeal: Unauthorized Information	Event: North American Swiss Teams	Case: 14
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Auction

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

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: Alerted, One suited hand
2: Alerted, Transfer to Spades
3: Alerted, Maximum NT bid with three spades

Hand Record

Board		N	
Dealer	N	♠ K65	
		♥ KQ4	
Vul	N/S	♦ KQ	
		♣ A10432	
W			
♠ A43			
♥ A10653			
♦ J32			
♣ 96			
		S	
		♠ J102	
		♥ J9872	
		♦ 86	
		♣ Q75	
			E
			♠ Q987
			♥ (void)
			♦ A109754
			♣ KJ8

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
2NT by N	Down 3	E/W +300	

Facts

South claimed that she thought she had pulled the 2♦ card from her bid box and realized her error almost immediately. East/West felt that South took advantage of the Alert procedure. 2NT is normally played as a good three card raise of the suit shown. If South had bid 3♥, West would have doubled for down three, -800.

Director Ruling

The Director ruled that East/West were not damaged by the unauthorized information and the result, +2NT by North, down three, E/W +300, was allowed to stand.

Director's Ruling	2NT by N, Down 3, E/W +300
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Committee Ruling

South stated in Committee that she thought she had pulled the 2♦ card from her bid box and realized her error almost at once. However, West had already passed and North had Alerted the 2♥ bid as a Jacoby Transfer to spades. North-South's agreement was that both 2♦ and 2♥ were transfer bids. West asked North to explain the 2♥ bid by South. North explained that 2♥ was a transfer to spades.

The Committee felt that South's statement as to when she realized her error was self-serving. She may have been made aware of her error by North's explanation of the Alert. The Committee did not feel that North/South had committed an infraction for which the penalty is (per Law 12C2) "the most unfavorable result that was at all probable". Nor did the Committee feel that East/West were entitled to "the most favorable result that was at all possible."

The Committee was unable to determine what the final contract might have been. The contract was changed to 3♥X by South, down two, E/W +500.

Committee Members

Chair	Howard Chandross
Member	Jerry Clerkin
Member	Michael Rosenberg

Commentary

Colker: When a player pulls the wrong card from their bid box, just as when they utter the wrong bid, they are usually permitted to replace it with the correct one without penalty, provided that it is clearly a change of an inadvertent call, or technical error, rather than a change of mind, or intent. I can see no evidence in the present case that suggests that South's 2♥ call was either inadvertent, or a technical error. If South realized her error "almost immediately," as she claimed, why didn't she say something, or give some indication to that effect, at the time?

Why did the Director rule in favor of North/South (the offenders) in this situation? Isn't it more or less routine to rule for the non-offenders? Is there something that we haven't been told, or did the Directors simply err? Maybe the Directors, thinking that the (apparently) poor result of +300 would be adequate compensation for the non-offenders, just let the result stand, a sort of "lazy" ruling. (Perhaps this was easier than trying to figure out what the final contract would have been, and maybe ending up assigning a score that wasn't as favorable to the non-offenders as the one achieved at the table.)

With poor hope of an outside entry to the South hand in No Trump, and a "guaranteed" fit for spades (given that North's 2NT bid showed this), it is hard to believe that South would voluntarily Pass 2NT unless she had (unauthorized) information that she couldn't safely return to 3♥ (because North would correct to spades or even bid game!). And the Committee was completely correct in stating that South's testimony, that she knew her bid was an error immediately, was self-serving and that she may have been made aware of her mistake by North's explanation of the Alert.

However, I do not agree with the Committee's statement that North/South had not committed any infraction when she passed North's 2NT bid. This alone is worthy of a healthy procedural penalty, apart from any adjustment to the bridge result, and this penalty should have been assessed automatically, regardless of the Committee's willingness to believe South's testimony, or to empathize with her. The adjustment of North/South's score to -500 (+500 to East/West), while not unreasonable, does seem somewhat lenient. North/South could easily have gone three (as East/West contended) or reached the four level for an even worse result. However, the Committee's failure to assess a procedural penalty against South for her blatant infraction was the more serious problem.

Goldman: I would have to have a member of this Committee to judge the statements accurately, but the actual result, down three, seems equitable.

Kaplan: I agree with the ruling.

Meckstroth: This ruling seems appropriate to me. It was a bit tricky to adjust. I completely agree with the Committee's assessment of South's statement.

Rosenberg: I served on this nightmare case. I was not happy with our ruling, but the alternative (presuming South had made a mechanical error and presuming she might have been made aware of this by partner's use of the word spades) was to say that South should be forced to retransfer with 3♦. North would take this as showing spades and diamonds and would bid at least 4♠ and might make a slam try. That might mean a penalty of about 2000 to East/West. The testimony made me believe this was a mechanical error, but when South failed to correct this in a timely fashion some adjustment was in order. I look to the other commentators for guidance on this case.

Sutherlin: The key to this hand is why did South wake up and realize there had been a misunderstanding. If it was because of the Alert procedure, then East/West are entitled to some protection and redress. Determining what that should be was difficult for the Committee. I believe their decision was certainly reasonable.

Weinstein: Arguably, North-South would have ended up in 4♠X when North took South's 3♥ bid as a retransfer to spades. West wouldn't have known to Double 3♥ for penalties, but might have doubled for lead directing purposes. Since I have no feeling whether the Committee should have been more harsh or liberal, I guess I agree with the Committee's decision.

Wolff: I agree that +300 for East/West should stand. This is another case of normal playing luck.

Subject of Appeal: Unauthorized Information	Event: Mixed Pairs	Case: 15
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Auction

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

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: Alerted, Artificial, 16+ HCP
2: Alerted, 15+ HCP

Hand Record

Board		N	
Dealer	E	♠ A1062	
		♥ KQ6	
Vul	Both	♦ K3	
		♣ KQ97	
W			
♠ J9875			
♥ 952			
♦ 9752			
♣ 4		E	
		♠ KQ	
		♥ 108743	
		♦ J104	
		♣ 865	
		S	
		♠ 43	
		♥ AJ	
		♦ AQ86	
		♣ AJ1032	

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
6NT by N	Made 6	N/S +1440	

Facts

North/South had an agreement that 3♣ was Minor Suit Stayman. This was not Alerted by North. 4NT was Roman Keycard Blackwood and South responded giving the keycard response for spades (5♣ showed three keycards). At this point, West started asking questions and South called the Director and they walked away from the table. When South returned to the table, the auction proceeded and North bid 6NT. West felt that there had been a conventional breakdown and South should not be allowed to give a keycard response to a suit that was bid conventionally. West believed that South should have been forced to give a straight Blackwood response to 4NT (5♠ showing three aces). North would have interpreted this as keycard in support of spades and probably would have passed 5♠ thinking he was missing two keycards. North/South maintained that they always gave keycard responses to the last suit bid in the auction unless they had bid and raised a suit.

Director Ruling

The Director determined that East-West had not been damaged and the table result, 6NT by North, making six, N/S +1440, was allowed to stand.

Director's Ruling	6NT by N, Made 6, N/S +1440
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Committee Ruling

West, an experienced Flight A player, pleaded his case asking for the contract to be reverted to 5♣. The Committee believed there was no reason for West to be asking questions in the middle of the inexperienced North/South's Roman Keycard Blackwood auction with his one high card point. If these questions had caused North/South to misplay the hand, West might have been penalized for asking such questions. North/South convinced the Committee that their keycard agreement was as stated. The Committee admonished South for calling the Director and leaving the table bringing to the attention of everyone at the table (including her partner) that something had gone wrong in the auction. While the Committee believed that North/South had a very poor agreement, the table result, 6NT by North, making six,

N/S +1440, was allowed to stand because the Committee believed North would always bid a slam after South's Big Club opening bid and they were adequately punished for their breakdown by missing the club grand slam. The Committee felt the appeal was substantially without merit but with the confusion caused by South calling the Director and leaving the table, the Committee decided not to give West a procedural penalty.

Committee Members

Chair	John Blubaugh
Member	Miles Adkins
Member	Ed Lazarus

Commentary

Colker: I agree with the Committee's ruling, but West's contention (and subsequent appeal) are so odious that I would have voted to assess a procedural penalty anyhow -- with a great deal of satisfaction.

Goldman: A good ruling, I agree with the Committee.

Kaplan: I agree with the Committee.

LeBendig: There is no amount of confusion that could have occurred at the table that would convince me that this appeal was not substantially without merit. East/West earned a penalty at least for that reason. The questions during the auction are another issue that might deserve some discussion.

Meckstroth: It was acceptable to allow the result to stand but I believe South and West should both have received procedural penalties. South's 5♣ bid was using unauthorized information (partner's failure to Alert 3♠). West's questions, in my opinion, were clearly improper.

Rosenberg: The Committee made a good ruling.

Treadwell: If West was indeed an experienced Flight A player as the report stated, then his questioning of South's 5♣ bid in the middle of a live auction is highly reprehensible. It smacks of badgering. True, South did not handle the situation properly due to inexperience. But then, for West to try to get the contract rolled back after the hand is over is a bit too much. The Committee did well in letting the table result stand and admonishing South about leaving the table. However, the Committee should have assessed a severe procedural penalty to East/West for West's improper questioning and for appealing a case without substantial merit.

Weinstein: I agree with the Committee and I like the Committee decision report.

Closing Comments

Colker: Looking at the present group of cases, a serious problem is the failure of many Committees to assess appropriate procedural penalties for serious (and often blatant) ethical infractions. These should be assessed regardless of whether any "intent" was involved, or whether the Committee "believed" the offenders, or had empathy for them.

On a more positive note, I find no instances in the present casebook of Committees making what I have previously referred to as "split rulings." What I meant by that term was the assigning of a bridge result to the offending side by averaging the result at the table with a poorer one (often, the least favorable outcome that was at all probable), thus giving the offenders a better result, over the long run, than they could expect to obtain by consistently doing the right and responsible thing at the table. I am heartened to find that this procedure may well be on its way to being eliminated, and hope that its absence is not simply a reflection of the light case load in Minneapolis providing little opportunity for instances for it to occur.

I am still awaiting League action on revising the present Alert procedure. Much Committee work is due largely, if not entirely, to its inadequacies.

We need to resolve the issue, discussed in Cast Twenty-Four from the San Diego (1994) casebook over the distinction between psyches, misbids, and misexplanations. How can Committees deal with certain infractions with respect to the possible assessment of procedural penalties when the Laws seem to say one thing, and ACBL Regulations something else, about what Committees have the right to do?

According to Edgar Kaplan, the Laws entitle players to fail to understand, or fail to discuss, or to forget their methods. Thus, no bridge (matchpoint or IMP) penalties may be assessed against players for committing such acts. Any penalties must be outside the Laws, disciplinary in nature rather than procedural. These would include the convention in question, requiring them to play a standard card, or barring them from playing for some specified period of time.

On the other hand, ACBL Regulations require players to know their methods, in what situations those methods apply, and what the common follow-up bids mean. Failure to do so is considered disruptive, is viewed as demonstrating disregard for the opponents and the game, and can be dealt with by assessing disciplinary penalties. Law 91 gives Directors the power to "assess disciplinary penalties in points." Law 93 further gives Committees the right to "exercise all powers assigned by these Laws to the Director: (but they can't overrule the Director on a point of law or regulations, or on exercising his disciplinary powers). If Directors can assess disciplinary penalties in points, then it would seem that Committees can also. (Of course, whether such assessments are desirable is open to debate. The answer may well depend on the exact nature of the situation at issue.)

Few would disagree that the Laws must be interpreted properly, according to their intent, but where can a Committee find definitive information about such intent? At present this is impossible, and as a result Committees charged with (potentially) deciding national events get ambiguous answers, or no answers, to their questions. Kaplan says that if these Committees improperly assess procedural penalties, by whatever standard that is determined, the National Laws Commission will reverse the ruling (and possibly the match). This state of affairs is both offensive and intolerable.

Another issue of concern is Committees of one. (Case One from the 1994 San Diego casebook is an example.) The many casebooks now on record show that even experienced, expert Committee people can have honest and profound disagreements about the correct ruling on a hand. Only through the deliberation process, by Committee members exchanging ideas and thrashing out the issues, can we hope to achieve reasonable, intelligent, and comprehensive appeal decisions with any degree of consistency and reliability.

Although correct decisions can certainly be reached by Committees of one, they strike me as being time bombs waiting to explode. Worse than that, our continued use of them sets an uncomfortable precedent for potential misuse. Their appearance in these pages might easily be misinterpreted as an endorsement of their use at Regional or Sectional tournaments, or (even more likely) at other games where competent, experienced Committee people might be hard to come by. Some organizations might even be tempted to adopt the procedure simply to save the expense, or inconvenience, of using normal sized (3-5 person) Committees. Even more dangerous is that some areas might allow a local individual who is commonly perceived as being knowledgeable in appeals matters to single-handedly take over the adjudication process, thinking that this will ensure uniformly good rulings. Unfortunately, nothing is likely to be further from the truth.

It has been suggested that perhaps we could issue warnings, such as are found on cigarette packs (WARNING: The National Appeals Committee has determined that this procedure is dangerous to your appeal rulings), which accompany certain TV programming showing activities which children might try to emulate (CAUTION: Do not try this yourself, at your own games, without an expert from the NABC Appeals Committee present), or which are displayed on commercials showing dangerous car driving stunts (WARNING: Do not try this at home with your own appeal cases. Our adjudications are performed by experts, using carefully screened cases, with special expert advisors available). Unfortunately, none of these would adequately deal with the potential dangers inherent in the widespread adoption of this one-man adjudication procedure. I strongly recommend that we officially eliminate it from all cases at NABCs, even for secondary events, and that we discourage its use in all other situations. Three inexperienced Committee people are better than one pseudo-expert, and five are even better than three. What little we might lose in inconvenience, we will more than make up for by avoiding future problems resulting from its use, and by avoiding the perception that we endorse its use by them.

Kaplan: In general, I see continual progress in Committee judgments.

LeBendig: Overall, I feel our process has continued to improve. The Chairmen have greatly enhanced their documentation of the cases which makes it much easier to judge the final decisions. It is important to understand that we will never totally agree on whether most decisions were right or wrong. Master Solvers, a popular series featured in The Bridge World, would not exist if all experts agreed that there was only one correct action in a given situation. We can continue to do everything possible to insure that we approach every problem in a uniform fashion.

I am hopeful that the small number of cases was not because of the low attendance but rather an increased awareness of how the process works and some small fear of how a bad appeal might be viewed. Since we anticipate three large NABCs in 1995, we should discover whether or not I'm correct.

Meckstroth: The Minneapolis decisions are a definite improvement over the San Diego rulings. There were only three terrible rulings this time, Case One, Case Seven, and Case Ten. I am hopeful we can continue to improve the process. I echo Bobby Goldman's request in the San Diego casebook for all expert players to serve at least twice at every NABC. We need good people on these Committees. I also feel strongly about the documentation issue. There is terrific improvement here! I believe we should also include the names of appellants in the write-ups. At least those of Flight A caliber and up. Why not? Is it to protect the guilty? I am convinced this would have an extremely positive effect on the system. Players would naturally be more careful when in ethically sensitive area. It seems like it would eliminate a fair number of questionable appeals as well. If one adheres to the Active Ethics concept, they have nothing to fear. Those who do not, need to be educated or in some cases, reformed.

Rosenberg: Although I disagreed with some of the rulings, the Committees did a good job on the whole. There were no rulings that made me ill. I was disturbed by the fact that the Directors were ruling for the offending side too often. This must change. The offending side often feels (unjustifiably) accused of something improper. It is better for the accuser to be a Director, rather than an opponent.

Treadwell: The small number of appeals in Minneapolis may be due in part to the low attendance factor, but other factors may have contributed. Most important of these is the greater dissemination of information about how the appeals process works, primarily through Alan LeBendig's column in the Bulletin and through the Appeals Casebook edited by John Blubaugh. Perhaps players are learning more about what constitutes acceptable practice in tempo and misinformation situations and not only tend to avoid unacceptable practices but are also less inclined to "try to win in Committee what they could not win at the table." Of course, the greater realization that procedural penalties are rather frequently given for appeals cases judged to be substantially without merit dampens the ardor of an appellant in a marginal situation. Although I believe it is reasonable to require money to be posted in NABC+ cases, I doubt if this has had a bearing on the number of appeals.

The quality of the rulings continues to be quite good. I don't agree with all of the rulings (I probably never will) but none seem absurd. I think the chairmen have a way to go documenting cases, and I include myself in this. Some cases are straight-forward and require minimal prose; others require a lengthy write-up to convey accurately all relevant facts and the Committee's reasoning from these facts to their ruling.

Weinstein: Although it was a light load, it seemed as if the Committees did an excellent job, though I disagreed with a few decisions, and very strongly disagreed with one. It appears that I have a broader definition of what constitutes a logical alternative than many other Committee members hold. If Committees are unwilling to live under a strict definition of a logical alternative, then the old 75% guidelines should be reinstated. Except for one, each Committee decision I didn't like involved allowing someone to make a bid that could have been suggested by unauthorized information when I thought a logical alternative bid was available. I would like to see more consistency among Committees in the definition of a logical alternative,