

APPEAL	Non NABC+ THIRTEEN
Subject	Unauthorized Information (UI)- Tempo
DIC	Bernie Gorkin
Event	Flight AX Pairs
Session	Second
Date	July 21, 2006

BD#	30
VUL	None
DLR	East

James Dressler	
♠	A 7
♥	J 7
♦	Q J T 7 6
♣	A T 8 5

Don Mamula		Summer 2006 Chicago, Illinois	Linda Mamula	
♠	9 5 4		♠	J 8 2
♥	K 9 6 3		♥	8 5 4 2
♦	K 3 2		♦	9 5 4
♣	Q 4 3		♣	K 7 6
		David Langer		
		♠	K Q T 6 3	
		♥	A Q T	
		♦	A 8	
		♣	J 9 2	

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

Final Contract	3NT by North
Opening Lead	♦9
Table Result	3NT by N making 5, N/S +460
Director Ruling	2♠ by S making 5, N/S +200
Panel Ruling	2♠ by S making 5, N/S +200

(1)	Forcing.
(2)	Break in Tempo (BIT)

The Facts: A BIT was acknowledged but the length was disputed. 2NT instead of 2♣ would have been 11/12 HCP. South stated that the 2NT bid over 2♠ shows 16/17 HCP and is a standard bid. They play 12-14 HCP 1NT openings.

The Ruling: Eight players with about 2,000 masterpoints (MP) and six players in the "A" category were polled. Three of the eight 2,000 MP players passed 2♠ and two thought a pass reasonable. Four of the "A" player passed 2♠. Pass was therefore determined to be to be logical alternative and 2NT was determined to be demonstrably suggested by the BIT. Therefore, in accordance with 12A2, 16A2 and 73, the table result was adjusted to 2♠ by South making five, N/S +200.

The Appeal: N/S said that their system called for South to show 16/17 HCP by 2NT over partner's two-level sign-off after a forcing NT bid and response (N/S play weak one notrump openings of 12-14 HCP). As such, South claimed North's BIT, which was not long but was noticeable, had no influence on his decision to bid 2NT. His system required him to do so with the hand he held. An immediate 2NT over 1NT would have shown 18/19 HCP.

West felt the hesitation was longer than N/S did. However, as a distinct BIT was acknowledged by N/S, the length of the hesitation was not examined in depth.

The Decision: N/S claim to be much better bridge players than their masterpoint holding would indicate. Except for an illness, they would have been teammates on a team in the 0-5000 Spingold that had reached the semi-final stage by Friday.

Many players of different masterpoint holdings and skill level (2,000 to 10,000 masterpoints and experts) were asked about this auction and the systemic requirement to bid 2NT after 2♠ (playing 12-14 HCP 1NT openings). The opinions were almost evenly split between 2NT being a judgment call and a systemic requirement. All were asked for an opinion of what call to make over 2♠. Clearly there was a group who played weak notrumps that required a hand with a good 16 or bad 17HCP to bid 2NT over the 2♠ sign-off. Others felt the decision was a judgment call.

N/S said they had system notes to demonstrate their position that 2NT was required systemically. They did not have the notes with them, but South said he would bring them the following day. However, when contacted on Saturday, South said he "had not gone to his office to get them when he had gone home Friday night." South admitted that this failing made it hard to allow his 2NT bid to stand.

Based on this, more players were asked if the 2NT was suggested by the BIT. There was player agreement that pass was a logical alternative and, while the slow 2♠ bid could either show a weak hand with two spades and four clubs or a good hand considering bidding 2NT, the latter seemed more likely suggested by the hesitation. North said he would need six hearts or diamonds to bid 2♦ or 2♥, though South felt five cards in a red suit would be sufficient length to be able to bid that suit after 2♣. 2NT was found to be demonstrably suggested by the BIT. Pass was determined to be a less successful logical alternative. Therefore, the director's ruling was upheld. See laws 16A2 and 12C2.

The appeal was determined to have merit as N/S' contention about systemic requirements were mentioned by several players.

The Committee: Peter Marcus (Reviewer), Ron Johnston and Gary Zeiger.

Players Consulted: Several players with 2,000; 5,000 and 10,000 masterpoints and experts.

Commentary:

Gerard Yeah, they were so much better than we think. North produced a signoff auction on a hand that his system required him to treat as a game force. It could have been even worse - how would you feel if you had to deal with a 2♦ rebid over that ridiculous 1NT response? Plus I want to see South make his "standard" 2NT bid over a lightning fast 2♠ by North. It is a common trait of lesser players to claim that their methods are "standard," especially when they involve the denial of judgment.

Goldsmith I thought 2NT was totally automatic, so I took my own poll. I got 17 responses; half passed, and half bid 2NT. So it seems as if the panel got it right.
Since 2NT shows roughly 16-17 here regardless of the range of the opening notrump, the system issues are really irrelevant. Routinely ignore statements that bidding versus passing is systemically required in a constructive auction.
I'd not award an appeal without merit warning (AWMW), because I can easily see a South thinking, "yeah, so I have UI. Probably that suggests bidding over passing. But 2NT is so obvious that nothing else is reasonable." In fact, some of the panelists in my poll replied thusly. Interestingly, some others replied that passing was automatic and bidding is unreasonable.

Polisner The analysis of UI should be performed in a specific sequence.

1. Was there an unmistakable BIT? In this case, yes, so go to step 2.
2. Did the BIT demonstrably suggest bidding (as opposed to passing)? Whether or not there is a logical alternative (LA) should not even be considered until and unless this question is answered in the affirmative. North could have been thinking of several possible bids:
 - a. Pass
 - b. 2♠
 - c. 3♠
 - d. 2NT

I think that it is a close question as to bidding 2NT. At IMPs, I would suggest that it is routine to bid 2NT; however, at MPs, it is not so clear. I am not a weak notrumper so am not totally familiar with the implications of the prior auction. Since two of the other three possible actions do suggest bidding 2NT, I would agree with the decision.

Rigal Here the offenders knew their case was predicated on producing notes, and they did not do so. I believe an AWMW is appropriate to encourage others to understand that, in future, it is not right to waste the panel's time like this.
Nice decision by the panel by the way, and correct procedure followed too.

Smith I agree that the BIT is more likely to suggest strength than weakness in this auction, so it "demonstrably suggested" that South not pass. I am glad to see that the table director conducted his own poll before giving a ruling, and I think that poll and the subsequent thorough investigation by the panel makes this ruling correct. I agree that no AWMW was appropriate.

Wildavsky I was fortunate enough to be given this hand as a bidding problem. I passed. The N/S notrump range is not relevant since the same situation would be faced by a pair who chose, as many do, not to open 1NT when holding a five-card major.
N/S could not win this appeal without notes to back up their assertion that bidding is mandatory in their methods. Since they supplied none I see no merit to the appeal.

Wolff I mildly disagree with the decision, but this would be example # 2 of the panel thinking exactly like the table director. It seems that both bodies cite the same authority and since I don't believe that this type of authority should be conclusive I resist parroting. What has E/W done (except be the Board of Governors leaders) to deserve a top. Why not E/W minus 460, but NS plus 200 if it is deemed that the BIT influenced the action.
I don't happen to think (although I like the Mamulas a lot) that they should bring this kind of action to these kinds of players since it is a close call. An argument against me might be how can I judge why someone else is calling the director or why I am against the two authorities having similar backgrounds. Well my answer would be that very visible people should be reticent about pressing their advantage and on certain matters we need some different viewpoints from different backgrounds.