

## Final Comments

- Goldsmith** I don't know why starting with summer 2006 that NABC appeals have dropped precipitously. I hope it's because directors are doing a better job ruling at the table, but since quite a few good director's rulings get appealed, that's probably not it. It's impressive that regional appeals followed the pattern in Hawaii; that suggests that this effect has nothing to do with the NAC or with director's panels. If anyone knows why this is happening, please tell me.
- The new policy of having a non-member of the appeals committee (AC) scribe has its value. Before that, we saw a lot of really awful write-ups. (E.g. see the first few from Atlanta.) This is a way to maintain a reasonable minimum standard. But, the name of the scribe needs to be stated, and the AC chair ought to get to review it before publication. He can waive that right, of course, but he ought to have it. As things stand, we are putting words into other people's mouths without their ability to rebut them. I think that's unfair.
- Polisner** In my too many years as part of the NABC appeals process, this group of cases could (should) have resulted in one appeal which would have been (and should have been) a new and never to be duplicated record. Other than the director failing to inform the players of the basis of the ruling in Non-NABC+ Three, the table directors did an excellent job.
- Wildavsky** First of all, kudos to the TDs. The significant drop in caseload over the past few years must be a sign that TD rulings are improving. Here there were no outright bad TD rulings, though I have to wonder about Case NABC+ 4. If we assume that the rulings that were not appealed were also correct then the TDs went an entire tournament without a clearly incorrect ruling – that's wonderful.
- With the tiny number of appeals the statistics for each NABC don't tell us as much as they once did. I continue to maintain them at <http://tameware.com/adam/bridge/laws>.
- The trend towards fewer appeals will spur renewed calls for elimination of appeals committees. I would counter that it argues for their continuation. The fewer committees we have the fewer resources they require and the less their expense. Meanwhile committees increase trust in the process. Were all appeals handled by TD panels, I would be skeptical upon learning that no rulings had been overturned. Review by players improves transparency and over time has resulted in substantially improved rulings overall. That said I always hate to see cases where an AC worsens a TD ruling, as I think they did in Case NABC+ 1. I do have a couple of suggestions for improving matters.

**Wildavsky (continued)**

First of all I think the chair of an AC should always look for an opportunity to conduct a blind preview. To do so he takes a single hand and gives the auction to the AC members with no UI, asking them what action they would take and what others they would seriously consider. In this case two blind previews were available, one for the North hand and one for the South hand. When I've chaired ACs I have often regretted my failure to start with a blind preview. It's amazing how much it can clarify matters.

Secondly, I recommend use of additional paper forms as part of the appeals process. In other fields I've noticed that forms can enhance compliance with established procedures. I suggest that we create a form to be used for every UI case, every MI case, and every score adjusted using law 12C2. The UI form would look something like this:

=====

Use this form for all law 16 - Unauthorized Information (UI) cases

1. Was UI available?

Yes  No

List the action that created the UI:

2. Were there any logical alternatives to the actions taken by the player who had UI available?

Yes  No

List them here:

3. Did the UI demonstrably suggest the action taken over any logical alternatives that would have been less successful?

Yes  No

4. Were the non-offenders damaged as a result?

Yes  No

5. If the answers to questions 1 through 4 were "Yes" then adjust the score according to law 12C2, using the form provided for that purpose.

=====

**Wildavsky (continued)**

This would help keep TDs, ACs, and panels on track, and would help reduce the number of illegal rulings. It would also help in explaining rulings to the players and for the TD to explain his ruling to the AC or panel. I've seen other proposals such as flowcharts with similar aims, but I expect that forms that have to be physically filled in will be substantially more effective.

It turns out that I have been anticipated. The English Bridge Union includes a section like this as part of their appeal form. You can see a copy here:

<http://tinyurl.com/ahay7>

A form would not eliminate poor rulings, but it would be a start and I predict it would produce a measurable improvement. It certainly seems worth an experiment. If anyone tries it in a local jurisdiction please let me know how well it works.