

APPEAL	NABC+ TWO
Subject	Unauthorized Information (UI)
DIC	Henry Cukoff
Event	Von Zedtwitz Life Master Pairs
Session	First Qualifying
Date	July 18, 2008

BD#	19
VUL	E/W
DLR	South

Eric Greco	
♠	A T 3
♥	A 8
♦	A T 8 4
♣	J T 9 6

Jon Bartlett		Summer 2008 Las Vegas, NV	Hank Gagnon	
♠	8 4		♠	K Q J 7 5 2
♥	J 7 5 4 3		♥	Q T 9
♦	K Q		♦	9 5 3
♣	K 5 4 2		♣	Q

Geoff Hampson	
♠	9 6
♥	K 6 2
♦	J 7 6 2
♣	A 8 7 3

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

Final Contract	3♥ West
Opening Lead	♣J
Table Result	Down 1, E/W -100
Director Ruling	3♠ by E, down 2, E/W -200
Committee Ruling	3♠ by E, down 2, E/W -200

(1)	13+ to 16.
(2)	Explained as two-suited for majors.

The Facts: Before the opening lead, East explained that 2♣ showed one or two majors. This was determined to be the actual agreement.

The Ruling: The UI from the misexplanation demonstrably suggested pass. 3♠ was judged to be a logical alternative. Therefore, in accordance with Law 16A2 and Law 12C2, the result was adjusted to 3♠ by East down two, E/W minus 200.

The Appeal: West, the only player to attend the hearing, stated that in their (the appealing side's) system, 2♦ shows a preference for hearts and 2♥ prefers spades, 2♠ and 3♥ are at least five-card suits with tolerance for partner to correct. Therefore, 3♥ had to be a decent contract. Also, the opponents misdefended 3♥. If they had switched to trumps this would be minus 300.

The Decision: There clearly was UI. The appealing pair had no documentation of their agreement and without such an agreement West could have been expecting partner to pass or correct. Were the agreement in effect, 3♠ would also have been a decent contract. The UI demonstrably suggested passing and 3♠ was a logical alternative in either case, so the committee chose to adjust the score. What were the likely and at all probable results had East bid 3♠? If West continued to believe that 2♣ shows both majors then 3♠ would be forcing and the auction would continue. The committee judged that the unusual 3♠ bid would almost certainly wake West up enough that he would recall the actual agreement and pass. As far as the result in 3♠, down one, two, or three were all possible. The committee judged that down two was both the most favorable result likely for N/S and the most unfavorable result at all probable for E/W.

As for the defense to 3♥, the committee found that a trump switch was far from clear. The defense was not close to being so egregiously poor as to deny N/S their right to redress. The committee adjusted the score for both sides to 3♠ by West down two, E/W minus 200, as the director had.

The committee found that the appeal had substantial merit.

The Committee: Aaron Silverstein (Chair), Dick Budd, Fred King, Ed Lazarus and Michael Rosenberg.

Commentary:

Goldsmith Huh? Seems to me that the UI demonstrably (and it's not close) suggests bidding 3♠ over passing 3♥. Partner thinks you have hearts and you don't--how can that suggest passing instead of correcting to your long suit? Am I missing something? If West were 4-4 in the majors and East had corrected 3♥ to 3♠ and averted a disaster, wouldn't we all think his action was an egregious misuse of UI?

The only reason I can think of that 3♠ might be counter-indicated by the UI is that partner might bid again. But he's a passed hand and has already jumped; he can't have more to say. Much more likely is that it'll help him wake up to his error. And even if partner bids again, the scoring is matchpoints; 3♥ rates to be a terrible spot and worth almost no matchpoints. Taking a chance to try to get a normal result (if spades makes 9 tricks) provides great matchpoint odds.

Polisner Even though East was put in a difficult position by the UI, he should have bid 3♠ if that was what he would have bid absent West's erroneous explanation as pass or correct seems the only practical way to play the method employed by E/W.

- Rigal** Strongly disagree. It is not enough to say that E/W had an accident so let's rule against them. Yes, East was in possession of UI but who can say what action was going to work out best for him? I'm sure if bidding 3♠ had worked out he would have had that taken away from him too! To my mind East did his ethical best and N/S deserved their minus 100 for the misdefense. If N/S were given an opportunity for a better result, than they could have managed against 3♠. They deserve no special treatment.
- Smith** This case is interesting. At first glance, it seems obvious that East should make the call he apparently would have made (3♠) without the UI. But, some have pointed out that if East had bid 3♠ we might be criticizing him for using UI to his advantage. If he illegally knows that his partner thinks he has both majors, might it not be safer to bid 3♠ knowing partner may have jumped to 3♥ without more than a four-card heart suit and tolerance for spades?
- Wildavsky** This is the toughest case I've seen in a while. When I first read it I overlooked the fact that "The UI demonstrably suggested passing" is not obvious. The appeals committee (AC) ought to have demonstrated it. One could argue that the UI demonstrably suggested bidding, since 3♥ could have been a 4-3 fit in which case 3♠ would almost certainly play better than 3♥. An alternative argument is that 3♥ suggested passing, since if partner thinks 2♣ was Landy, he'll treat 3♠ as forcing and a four-level contract will likely be disastrous. The AC ruling seems inconsistent. If the committee thought 3♠ likely to end the auction then 3♠ was demonstrably suggested and the AC ought not adjust the score at all. If the committee judged 3♠ unlikely to end the auction then pass was demonstrably suggested and the score for both sides ought to have been adjusted to NS minus 300 or minus 800. While I find this one too close to call, I don't think the director and AC rulings can be correct.
- Wolff** Another ridiculous ruling, but probably involving different circumstances. E/W's descriptions of what they were playing rang true (only a guess), but N/S, a well-known pair, really screwed up the defense. From South's viewpoint, partner, for him to have a 13+-16 NT, must have both major suit aces and not the AK of diamonds since he didn't lead one so the defense is very easy to beat 3 hearts three tricks (300). Totally egregious defense, but sometimes committee's are in awe of well-known players and fall victim to their personalities rather than the bridge involved. If the committee found fault with the descriptions, perhaps a small match point penalty (1 to 3 points) could be given which would not accrue to the undeserving N/S pair. I hope that this committee can now see things objectively and change their preparation or whatever it will take for them not to rule so badly.