

APPEAL	NABC+ FOUR
Subject	Unauthorized Information (UI) - Tempo
DIC	Henry Cukoff
Event	Von Zedtwitz Life Master Pairs
Session	First Final
Date	July 20, 2008

BD#	<b>1</b>
VUL	<b>None</b>
DLR	<b>North</b>

<b>Jerry Gaer</b>	
♠	Q 7
♥	A K 9 7 6
♦	Q T 5
♣	A J 7

<b>George Jacobs</b>		<b>Summer 2008 Las Vegas, NV</b>	<b>Norberto Bocchi</b>	
♠	A J 9 5 4 2		♠	K 8 6 3
♥	Q T 2		♥	J 2
♦	J 7		♦	9 8 2
♣	8 2		♣	T 9 6 5

<b>Harvey Brody</b>	
♠	T
♥	8 5 3
♦	A K 6 4 3
♣	K Q 4 3

West	North	East	South
	1♥	Pass	2♦
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥
3♠	4♣	Pass	4♦
Pass	4♥	Pass	4♠
Pass	4NT <sup>1</sup>	Pass	5♥ <sup>2</sup>
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Final Contract	<b>5♥ by North</b>
Opening Lead	<b>♠3</b>
Table Result	<b>Making 5, N/S +450</b>
Director Ruling	<b>6♥ N, down 1, N/S -50</b>
Committee Ruling	<b>6♦ N, down 1, N/S -50</b>

(1)	Roman Keycard Blackwood (RKCB).
(2)	Break in tempo (BIT) – both sides agree it was short – E/W say 6-7 seconds.

**The Facts:** The director was called after the play of the hand. Both sides agreed to a short BIT after the 4NT bid and before making the 5♥ bid.

**The Ruling:** The director judged that the BIT before bidding 5♥ demonstrably suggested passing over a logical alternative of bidding slam when N/S held all the key cards (except the trump queen). Therefore, in accordance with Laws 16 and 12C2, the score was changed to 6♥ by N/S minus 50.

**The Appeal:** Only the North player attended the hearing. He said he passed the 5♥ response because he was worried that the opponents would lead a spade and, with the loss to the ♥Q, he would lose a spade and a trump. South's auction showed exactly three-card heart support since with four or more hearts South would use other methods.

**The Decision:** The committee discussed South's showing a better hand than he actually held by having continued beyond 4♥, and North's skidding to a stop after apparently finding the spade and diamond aces in South's hand. Playing South to have the doubleton ace of spades would present a problem in 6♥ if the trump queen scored. The spade lead should not present a problem in 6♦, however, due to the spade queen in the North hand. Give South a typical holding such as, Ax/Jxx/AKJxx/Qxx, with which he would proceed past 4♥. Were the ♣K favorably placed 6♦ would be a good contract, perhaps better than 5♥.

The committee determined that the pause, short though it was, was a BIT and provided UI to North, that the UI suggested doubt about the RKCB response, and that such doubt demonstrably suggested Pass over 6♦.

In accordance with Laws 16 and 12C2 the committee adjusted the result for both sides to 6♦ by South, down one, N/S minus 50.

The appeal was deemed to have merit.

**The Committee:** Bob Schwartz (Chair), Dick Budd, Gail Greenberg, Ed Lazarus, and Jeff Roman.

### **Commentary:**

**Goldsmith** Good ruling. Was there discussion about giving N/S a procedural penalty (PP) for abuse of UI? Probably it was subconscious, but players with that much experience are expected to be more careful.

**Polisner** Appalling ruling and decision! Many pairs use six key cards in this auction (which apparently was what South was thinking about). What information was conveyed to North by 6-7 seconds before responding to Blackwood? South would have no reason to lie about his key cards. I suggest that no member of the committee would have responded faster than 6-7 seconds. The table result should have been retained and the committee should apologize to N/S.

**Rigal** I can't see what the grounds are for the director ruling or the committee decision here. The law tells us only to adjust when a break in tempo (BIT) demonstrably suggests one action over another. Here the BIT (if there was one – I'm not convinced) does not demonstrably suggest one action over another – maybe there is a spade void in South, maybe some doubt as to what trumps are? I'd have let the table result stand, though I do not argue with the initial director decision if it was believed that there may have been an infraction and some doubt as to what it pointed to.

**Smith** If ever a hand exists where partner's RKCB response guarantees all the aces yet a player might consider signing off at the five-level, I guess this is it. But I can't help thinking that the huddle before 5♥ combined with the possible doubt about which trump suit was in play might have had at least a subconscious effect on North. In any case, the committee came up with a compelling case for its decision.

**Wildavsky** I don't agree that a pause of 6-7 seconds is a break in tempo on this auction, but this is a judgment call. I've made enough Blackwood mistakes that I always count my key cards twice, and one could argue that a faster response would convey the UI that South took 4N as Blackwood for hearts rather than something more esoteric. If UI was available it's not clear what it demonstrably suggests, though I would buy the argument that since a fast call would tend to show a simple RKCB response a slow call makes some other hand more likely. This was a close case that could have gone either way.

**Wolff** In relatively close situations, the emphasis should be to keep the table result (here 5♥ making) and if deemed a tempo violation given a procedural penalty to the offenders (perhaps three match points) which is fairer to the parties, but even more importantly to the field (PTF, protect the field).