

2014 Spring NABC

Appeals Casebook



2014 Spring NABC Appeals Casebook Dallas, Texas

Foreward

The appeal hearings and commentary descriptions are now being compiled and edited by the American Contract Bridge League. They are published on the ACBL web page. This internet publication is intended to be a tool to help improve the abilities of those serving on Appeals Committees and Tournament Directors and to communicate decisions and the process to arrive at those decisions to the membership at large.

A total of eleven (11) cases were heard.

Six (6) cases were from unrestricted (by masterpoints) North American Bridge Championship Events and were heard by a Committee of peers. The names of the players involved are included.

Five (5) cases were from all other events and were heard by Panels (Committees) of Tournament Directors. The names of the players involved are included when the event from which the appeal came was a Flight A/X event or was the top bracket of a bracketed knockout event. When the names of the players are not used, the player's masterpoint total is included.

The cases are first presented without commentary. After the official Panel of commentators has had an opportunity to provide their commentary and any corrections to the cases, the commentary is added, corrections made and the internet publication is finalized.

Everyone involved in this process is due praise for their efforts. Special thanks to the NABC Appeals Committee and the Tournament Directors serving on the Committees and Panels, the case scribes, and commentators. Without their considerable contribution of time and effort, this publication would not exist.

ACBL Headquarters
Horn Lake, MS

Abbreviations used in this casebook:

AI	Authorized Information
AWMW	Appeal Without Merit Warning
BIT	Break in Tempo
CoC	Conditions of Contest
LA	Logical Alternative
MI	Misinformation
NOS	Non-Offending Side
OS	Offending Side
PP	Procedural Penalty
TD	Tournament Director
UI	Unauthorized Information

Expert Panel

Jeff Goldsmith is an American bridge player originally from Schenectady, NY, currently residing in California. He graduated from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Caltech and works as a software engineer, focusing on computer graphics and animation and internet programming, all with a heavy mathematical perspective. He created computer animation for JPL for several years including the movie about Voyager's encountering Neptune. He ice dances and plays many other games, particularly German board games. Goldsmith is an ACBL Platinum Life Master and serves on the ACBL Competitions & Conventions Committee.

Rui Marques was born in 1962 and grew up in Portugal. He is Chemical Engineer, with a M.Sc. in Applied Mathematics and a Ph.D. in Chemometrics. Married to Connie Goldberg, he currently splits his time between Philadelphia (U.S.A.) and Cascais (Portugal). Having started as a Tournament Director in 1989, he directed his first international championship in 1992. He has been the Assistant Chief TD for the WBF since 2011, Chief TD for the EBL since 2015, Sports Personality of the Year in Portugal in 2016. He also is a Lecturer and Group Leader in the EBL International Tournament Directors Courses. He joined the ACBL Tournament Director Staff in 2017.

Jeanne van den Meiracker became a Director in 1988 because her club in Amsterdam with more than 200 members needed more Directors and she loved the job immediately. She took the International Tournament Directors course in Amsterdam in 1993, along with seventy-six other TDs from all over Europe, including Rui Marques. They both passed the exams, and she started working in the EBL as a TD. In 1996, she started directing for the WBF and was promoted to Chief Tournament Director in 2004. She also served on the WBF Laws commission from 2004 to 2010. In 2012, she and her husband Huub Bertens moved to the USA, and she joined the ACBL Tournament Director Staff. She enjoys the ACBL work, but it is completely different from working in the EBL and WBF

Adam Wildavsky was born in Ohio and grew up in Berkeley and Oakland, CA and London, England. A graduate of MIT, he is a retired software engineer and now spends winters in Keystone, CO and much of the rest of the year in New York City. Mr. Wildavsky has won numerous national championships including the Blue Ribbon Pairs twice, the Reisinger BAM Teams once, and the USBF Open Team Trials twice. He won a bronze medal for the USA in the 2003 Bermuda Bowl and represented Switzerland in the 2012 World Bridge Games. Mr. Wildavsky is a member of the WBF Executive Council, vice-chair of the ACBL National Laws Commission, a member of the WBF Laws Committee, and a former chairman of the ACBL National Appeals Committee. His interest in the laws is informed by his study of Objectivism, the philosophy of Ayn Rand.

Kit Woolsey is a world-class bridge and backgammon player, analyst, and writer, born in Washington, DC. He graduated from Oberlin College in 1964 and earned a master's degree in mathematics from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He is a three time World Champion, and hold more than a dozen NABC titles. His most recent major victory was winning the Cavendish Invitational Pairs in 2011. He was elected to the ACBL Hall of Fame in 2005 and lives in Kensington, CA. He has been one of the Panelists on *The Bridge World* Master Solvers Club since 1984. He also serves on the ACBL Competitions & Convention Committee and the Bridge Integrity Task Force.



Subject of Appeal:	Tempo/Unauthorized Information	Case:	N1
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Event	Platinum Pairs	Event DIC	Terry Lavender
Date	03/22/2014	Session	First Semi-Final

Auction

West	North	East	South
			1♣
1♥	Dbl	4♥	Pass ¹
Pass	Dbl	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: Break in Tempo

Hand Record

Board	11	N	Frank Merblum		
Dealer	S	♠	KQ85		
		♥	987		
		♦	A97		
Vul	None	♣	1052		
W	John McCallister			E	Migry Zur Campanile
♠	J97			♠	643
♥	A5432			♥	KQJ106
♦	852			♦	J104
♣	KQ			♣	J4
		S	Alan Applebaum		
		♠	A102		
		♥	(void)		
		♦	KQ63		
		♣	A98763		

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
4♥X by W	Down 3	N/S +500	♣ 2

Facts Determined at the Table

The Director was summoned after the final pass. It was reported that prior to passing East's 4♥, South hesitated for 30 seconds and touched the bid cards inside of the bidding box.

Additional Factors Determined Away from the Table

The Director polled four players. One player said that North's double was "50-50," but after a hesitation, the likelihood of that double being successful reached nearly 100%. This player also questioned South's pass instead of bidding 5♣. Three other players who were polled passed.

Director Ruling

Based on the results of the poll and in accordance with Laws 16B and 12C, the Director ruled that pass was a logical alternative and adjusted the results to 4♥ by West, down three, N/S +150.

Director's Ruling	4♥ by W, Down 3, N/S +150
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The Appeal

North/South appealed the ruling. North, East and West attended the hearing. The screener asked North what basis he had for his appeal and informed him that the poll was unanimous in finding pass as a logical alternative. North was also told that the Panel included three national champions who would, themselves, pass.

North said that he believed doubling was obviously correct and that passing was not logical. He also said that he made the bid he would have made without the hesitation. Both sides concurred that the facts as presented were accurate. East-West provided little more than agreement with the Director's ruling.

Committee Findings

The 30-second hesitation and reaching for a bidding card constituted unauthorized information (UI). It was clear even to North that the UI demonstrably suggested that passing would have been less successful. The polled players and the Appeals Committee found pass to be a logical alternative; with most of the polled players and the Committee choosing pass. North's statement that he made the same bid he would have made without the UI is not a justification for his double since he has a Law 73 obligation to carefully avoid taking any advantage from that UI.

Accordingly, by use of Laws 73, 16 and 12, the correct adjustment is to remove the double and impose the same line of play and defense as occurred at the table: 4♥ by West, down three, N/S +150.

North is an experienced, high-level player and he should have known that he had no reasonable chance to win this appeal since he could present no flaw in the Director's legal analysis. He knew, too, from the poll that other high-level players would choose to pass. The Appeals Committee assigned North an Appeal without Merit Warning.

Committee Decision	4♥ by W, Down 3, N/S +150
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Committee Members

Chair	Michael Huston
Member	Ed Lazarus
Member	Ray Miller
Member	Craig Allen
Member	Marc Rabinowitz
Member	Chris Moll

Commentary

Goldsmith: This meets my criteria for a PP. Most, if not all would pass, so North should have known at the table that doubling was an infraction. He ought not break even. Otherwise, good, including the AWMW.

Marques: It is worth noting the misconception that North's arguments expose. When selecting an action, a player should not "ignore the BIT", but rather "not choose a call that could demonstrably have been suggested by the BIT". Apart from that, nothing else to add. Good ruling. Good AWMW.

Meiracker: Perfect ruling by the TD and AC. A real AWMW!

Wildavsky: The ruling looks straightforward, but the TD and the Committee needed to say that the UI demonstrably suggested Double over Pass. The AWMW warning seems harsh. North held two defensive tricks and his partner had presumably implied 2 1/2 when he opened the bidding. The hesitation was surely based on offensive values, not defensive ones.

In cases like this, Committees need to keep in mind that the standard for determining a LA is different from the one for determining whether the appeal had merit. The Committee was requested precisely to consider whether less successful actions were logical. That determination is different from saying that the appellant ought to have known that every Committee's judgement would be the same.

The write-up of the TD's poll concerns me. We poll players to inform the TD's decision - we do not delegate that decision to those polled. So we do not ask a player what he considers a logical alternative, but rather what call he would make and what others he seriously considered. And I see no point in even mentioning the South hand. South had no UI and was free to do as he judged best. The ACBL's polling guidelines can be found at <https://nabc.acbl.org/past-nabcs/#casebooks>

Rui's admonition is correct but incomplete, leaving out the qualifier "unless there is no logical alternative." His point, a valid one, concerned the first part but I know that TDs and Committees sometimes forget the second.

Woolsey: This one bothers me. The procedure was perfect. There was no dispute about the huddle, and the South hand itself indicates that there would be a huddle. There is no question that the UI suggests taking action vs. passing. The polling clearly indicates that pass is a LA. So, what's the problem?

The problem for me is that I would double in my sleep. Matchpoints, 9 HCP opposite an opening bid. No way I'm going to let the opponents play at the 4-level undoubted, particularly when we might have a fit in a higher ranking suit. Passing is just plain losing bridge. I am stunned that 3 out of 4 "experts" not only said that pass was a LA, they said it was their first choice.

Should the Committee be permitted to use their judgment to override the judgment of those polled? I think they should if they believe the poll is way off base. I don't know whether or not this Committee attempted to impose their own bridge judgment. However, were I on the Committee I would have voted to let the table result stand.

Subject of Appeal:	Break In Tempo	Case:	N2
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Event	Rockwell Mixed Pairs	Event DIC	Brian Russell
Date	03/25/2014	Session	Second Qualifying

Auction

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

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

Hand Record

Board	11	N	Amit Chakrabarti		
Dealer	S	♠	J1076		
		♥	108		
		♦	J872		
Vul	None	♣	AK7		
W	Linda Tipton			E	V. Jay Tipton
♠	984			♠	K
♥	Q62			♥	AK95
♦	A93			♦	KQ8
♣	10654			♣	Q9832
		S	Elizabeth Jankford		
		♠	AQ532		
		♥	J743		
		♦	1054		
		♣	J		

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
3NT by E	Made 4	E/W +430	♦ 4

Facts Determined at the Table

The Director was summoned at the conclusion of play of the next board. South explained that there had been a hesitation by Declarer at trick three. The play had gone low diamond to the Ace; low club to the Ace, ♠J to the King and Ace. Because of the delay in playing the King, South returned the ♦10 to the King. Declarer now led another club to the King, and North returned another Diamond; with Declarer taking the remainder of the tricks. North agreed with South that "there was a hitch." West said she did not notice a hesitation, but East admitted that there might have been one as he was "working out the club suit." No definitive time for the break in tempo was given, but the N/S felt it was longer than normal.

Director Ruling

Even with the lateness of the Director call, it was ruled that a break in tempo likely did occur. Based upon Law 73F, it was ruled that South had drawn a false inference from the hesitation. As the spades are blocked, per Law 12C1e, the most likely result of 3NT by East, down 2, N/S +100 was assigned to both pairs.

Director's Ruling	3NT by E, Down 2, N/S +100
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The Appeal

East/West appealed the ruling and all players attended the Committee meeting. West felt that there had not been a hesitation, however East did state that he was processing the information at the table as he was playing to the ♠J. While N/S were not in agreement on the length of the hesitation, both were in agreement that a noticeable one did occur. The Committee felt that there was a hesitation before the play of the ♠K.

Committee Findings

The Committee felt that the ruling by the Director that a hesitation had occurred which caused South to make a false inference was correct. Therefore, the result for E/W of 3NT by East, down 2, E/W -100 was confirmed.

However, the Committee was unanimous in the belief that North, based upon the bidding, had to realize that continuing spades was the defense's only option to defeat 3NT. North's failure to continue spades when in with the ♣K was felt to meet the criteria of Law 12C1b:

"If, subsequent to the irregularity, the non-offending side has contributed to its own damage by a serious error (unrelated to the infraction) or by a wild or gambling action, it does not receive relief in the adjustment for such part of the damage as is self inflicted."

Accordingly, the Committee adjusted the E/W score to 3NT by East, down 1, E/W -100, but ruled that N/S kept their table result of 3NT by East, made 4, N/S -430.

Committee Decision	N/S: 3NT by E, Made 4, N/S -430 E/W: 3NT by E, Down 2, E/W -100
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Committee Members

Chair	Michael Huston
Member	Craig Allen
Member	Tom Peters
Member	Patty Tucker
Member	Chris Moll
Member	Ray Miller

Commentary

Goldsmith: Did the possible illegal deception make the defense easier or more difficult? In general, I think it should not make any difference. Either ducking the ♠K or winning it and continuing spades will work, and those are the only rational defenses. These are tremendously easy defenses to find. But these defenders didn't find either. If we think that the BIT had some reason to cause them to go wrong (we might; they said so), then the fact that an event unlikely without the BIT occurred with the BIT suggests that there is a reasonable likelihood that the BIT caused it. In other words, East's BIT probably made finding the winning defense more difficult *for these opponents*.

I'd rule that there was, in fact, illegal deception, because it seems East could have known that it might discombobulate the defense. E/W get -100. But N/S's defense is ludicrous. They get to keep their self-inflicted poor result.

Marques: A nice example of the difference between consequent and subsequent damage. Good AC decision.

Meiracker: I totally agree with the TD, hesitation with a bare king is an example of Law 73D. I don't think this is an example of a serious error, so I don't agree with the decision of the AC. An example of a serious error is revoking or not cashing the setting trick against a slam.

Wildavsky: North knew from the auction that his partner held four or more spades, so there was no need to lead the jack and risk blocking the suit. But that occurred before the infraction so it is not relevant to the ruling. South knew from the auction, or should have known given North's pass of 1♠, that North held three or four spades so there could be no advantage to ducking the ♠K. North's failure to play a spade after winning his second club trick is simply mystifying.

The only question to my mind is whether the defender's errors subsequent to the infraction were serious in the sense envisioned by Law 12C1b. They seem serious enough to me that I concur with the AC's judgment here. The TD's judgment on the matter was also reasonable.

Woolsey: Personally, I doubt there was any real huddle about playing the king of spades. Players don't huddle in this situation. They play the king quickly and confidently, as if they have the suit stopped without a problem. However, the Director determined that there was a huddle, and there is no true basis for overriding this determination.

What did South supposedly infer from the huddle? If East had the 10 of spades, he would have the most routine and quickest cover in the world. That means that if East has any kind of problem, he can't have the 10 of spades. Thus, the supposed huddle is not a deterrent for South returning a spade. It makes the spade return trivial. If instead declarer had K10x of spades and had huddled before covering, that would be a true coffeehouse.

At least the Committee got it half right, punishing N/S for not knowing how to play bridge. However, I would have ruled that E/W keep the table result. They are allowed to profit from their opponents' stupidity, particularly when their actions make it easier for the opponents to find the right play and the opponents still get it wrong

Subject of Appeal: Break In Tempo	Case: N3
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Event Rockwell Mixed Pairs	Event DIC Brian Russell
Date 03/25/2014	Session Second Qualifying

Auction

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

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: Keycard for Diamonds
2: One keycard
3: Break in Tempo

Hand Record

Board 14	N	Elaine Wood		
Dealer E	♠ (void) ♥ AQJ3 ♦ QJ9874 ♣ K64			
Vul None				
W	Brenda Bryant		E	
♠	105432		♠	96
♥	75		♥	K10984
♦	A102		♦	3
♣	1082		♣	QJ953
		S	Neal Perlman	
		♠	AKQJ87	
		♥	62	
		♦	K65	
		♣	A7	

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

Facts Determined at the Table

The Director was summoned at the conclusion of the auction. East explained that there was a hesitation by South prior to bidding 5♠, estimated as more than 20 seconds. North and South agreed to a hesitation, but no more than twenty seconds. South had bid 5♠ to play. There had been another slight break in tempo before the 5NT bid as well.

Director Ruling

With both sides agreeing to the hesitation, the Director ruled that North had made use of the Unauthorized Information from the BIT to continue past 5♠ (Law 16B). The result was adjusted to 5♠ by South, down 1, E/W +50

Director's Ruling	5♠ by S, Down 1, E/W +50
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The Appeal

The North/South players appealed the Director's ruling, and they, along with East, attended the Committee.

North felt they had a good hand for their 2♦ bid, and believed that 5NT would have as good a chance of making as 5♠, with the advantage of scoring ten points more. They thought that if South had long, solid spades with other good values, they would have opened 2♣ rather than 1♠.

East suggested that 5♠ might easily be N/S's last making contract. As the Blackwood bidder, South was supposed to place the contract, and North was expected to accept that decision of where to play the hand. The break in tempo suggested that South was unsure of the final contract, and North acted on that.

Committee Findings

South broke tempo before bidding 5♠, and that BIT demonstrably suggested that 5♠ might not be the best contract. There are a number of possible reasons for the hesitation: not off two aces, unsure whether to play in spades or diamonds, or concern about a control in an unbid suit are common possibilities.

North's bid of 5NT would be wrong, not only opposite an extreme South hand such as AKQJxxxx-x-Kxx-x, but also opposite a more common hand such as AKQJxx-Kxx-Kxx-x. This is especially true since South bid No Trump first, leaving the ♣K exposed on opening lead. Thus, pass was a logical alternative to 5NT or some other higher bid (such as 6♦) suggested by the BIT.

Against 5♠, West might lead either a club or a heart, with the ♥7 perhaps a bit more attractive. With fewer hearts, it is slightly more likely to set up a trick that will cash for the defense.

Declarer, receiving the ♥7 for an opening lead, will want to take the finesse in case the king is onside. There are many possible holdings where the seven is low from the king (K107, K97, K87, K987, along with others depending upon the opponent lead agreements), and since Declarer cannot afford a Heart loser if spades divide 5-2 (30+% occurrence), the Committee judged it was likely that the finesse would be taken on a heart lead. Upon winning the ♥K, East would shift to a diamond, gaining a ruff to set 5♠ two tricks.

The Committee felt the chance of this happening to be both "at all probable" for the offending side and "likely" for the non-offending side. Therefore, the table result was changed to 5♠ by South, down 2, E/W +100. In addition, the Committee felt that N/S should have recognized that pass was a logical alternative following the BIT, especially since the opponents might have taken the first five or six club tricks against 5NT. Thus, they should not have appealed the Director's ruling. N/S were assigned an Appeal without Merit Warning.

Committee Decision	5♠ by S, Down 2, E/W +100
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Committee Members

Chair	Adam Wildavsky
Member	Douglas Doub
Member	Dave Caprera
Member	Marc Rabinowitz
Member	Ed Lazarus

Commentary

Goldsmith: Good. If South hadn't bid no trump first, there might have been quite a bit of merit to North's correcting to 5NT, an attempt to protect tenaces in both rounded suits, but that wasn't the case. I would have asked North why she bid 5NT. If she had said, "I thought we'd take the same number of tricks in no trump, and I thought it was important to protect my tenaces," showing that she didn't realize that partner would play no trump, I'd leave the ruling as it was. Otherwise, I'd give her a 1/4 board PP for use of Hesitation Blackwood. If she said, "we play 5NT as 'pick a slam,'" then I'd give her a 1/2 board PP and a lecture about blatant abuse of UI. If she said, "doesn't 5♠ require me to bid 5NT? Isn't that just normal Blackwood?" then I'd rule result stands, no use of UI.

Marques: Reasonable decision by the TD, in my humble opinion, improved by the AC. Good AWMW.

Meiracker: A reasonable decision from the TD and AC, but why were no players polled?

Wildavsky: I chaired this Committee. I have no reason to rethink our decision. 5NT was a reasonable choice in the absence of UI, but it could not be allowed here.

Woolsey: This is a classic hesitation Blackwood auction. Sure, North could argue that 5NT might be a better contract than 5♠ when South signs off there and two keycards are missing. But surprise, surprise, two keycards weren't missing, as North knew quite well from the BIT. It is clear to roll the contract back to 5♠.

I especially like that the Committee gave N/S, the appealing side, a worse result than the Director gave them. True justice.

Subject of Appeal: Break In Tempo	Case: N4
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Event	Rockwell Mixed Pairs	Event DIC	Brian Russell
Date	03/26/2014	Session	Second Final

Auction

West	North	East	South
1NT ¹	Pass	2♠ ²	Pass
3♣ ³	Pass	3♥ ⁴	Pass
3♠ ⁴	Pass	4♣ ⁵	Pass
4♥ ⁶	Pass	4NT ⁷	Pass
5♦ ⁸	Pass	5NT ⁹	Pass
6♠ ¹⁰	Pass	6NT ¹¹	Pass
7♣	Pass	Pass	Pass

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: 15-17 HCP
2: Minor Suit Stayman + HCP?
3: 16-17 HCP
4: Forcing
5: Set Trumps
6: Cuebid
7: Keycard Blackwood
8: Three Keycards
9: Grand Slam try
10: Looking for 7NT
11: Break in Tempo

Hand Record

Board	16	N	Malle Andrade		
Dealer	W	♠ J963	♥ K9		
Vul	E/W	♦ 108632	♣ 86		
W	Xiaopeng Wang			E	Wei Wang
♠	AK4			♠	Q5
♥	A763			♥	J10
♦	Q4			♦	AK95
♣	K973			♣	AQ1052
		S	Erez Hendelman		
		♠	10872		
		♥	Q8542		
		♦	J7		
		♣	J4		

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
7♣ by W	Made 7	E/W +2140	♣ 8

Facts Determined at the Table

The Director was summoned at the conclusion of the auction. There was an agreed hesitation of approximately one minute before the 6NT bid. East/West have complex methods, and West believed that 5NT was a Grand Slam Force. 3♥ & 3♠ were forcing bids, but no other description was provided. The pair was unable to provide system notes or documentation of the bids made in this auction, particularly the meaning of 5NT.

Additional Factors Determined Away from the Table

Five players were polled concerning the auction. Because of the nature of the agreements, the polled players were given the auction through 6NT with the explanations provided by E/W. None of the surveyed players bid over 6NT.

Director Ruling

Laws 73C & 16 prohibit a player from taking advantage of unauthorized information suggested by actions such as a hesitation. Given the results from the poll, the result on the board was adjusted to 6NT by W, making 6, E/W +1440.

Director's Ruling	6NT by W, Made 6, E/W +1440
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The Appeal

The East/West players appealed the Director's ruling, and they and their interpreter attended the Committee. They provided the Screening Director with more information about the systemic meanings of their auction. 2♠ was Minor Suit Stayman, but inquired about hand strength as well. 3♣ showed 16-17 HCP. 3♥ showed longer clubs than diamonds, and 3♠ was a cuebid. 4♣ suggested clubs as trump, unless opener bid 4♦ after this. 4♥ was another cuebid, confirming club support, and 4NT was Key Card for Clubs. 5♦ showed three keycards and 5NT announced that they held all the keycards and announced an interest in playing seven.

West had a superb hand in support of a minor two suiter with longer clubs. When East invited a grand slam, West was committed to accepting. At IMPs, they would have bid 7♣ directly, but at matchpoints, he thought he should suggest 7NT by cuebidding his ♠K on the way to 7♣.

East/West, while accomplished international players, were playing as partners for the first time. When asked by the Director how many players, assuming five familiar with the E/W system, would continue to 7♣. West was certain all five would. He also thought that East's values were insufficient for her grand slam try.

Committee Findings

West held an outstanding hand in support of a club-diamond two suiter. Every high card in the hand is a trick. Additionally, there is a fourth club and a ruffing value in diamonds. If East can invite a grand slam, then West must accept. Therefore, the Committee restored the result from play: 7♣ by W, made 7, E/W +2140.

Committee Decision	7♣ by W, Made 7, E/W +2140
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Committee Members

Chair	Douglas Doub
Member	Jay Apfelbaum
Member	Ray Miller
Member	Patty Tucker
Member	Chris Moll

Commentary

Goldsmith: I would have given a great argument as East. "When I went into the tank over 6♠, what do you think I was thinking about? Obviously, partner made a torture bid of 6♠. When one of us makes a grand slam try, and the other accepts by going beyond the safety level (6♣), we are playing a grand. Presumably, 6♠ is a choice between 7♣ and 7NT. But what's the difference between 6♦, 6♥, and 6♠? Please come up with a definitive answer in the next minute. You can't? Neither could I. Since I had no idea what partner's plan was, I refused to choose, and the only way to do that was to kick it back to him with 6NT. I agree that partner had UI. It showed that I had no idea how to make the decision 6♠ requested. But partner has two forms of AI to duplicate that, that he probably didn't know what 6♠ meant either, and that I refused to decide. So I think he had more than enough AI to be able to do what he wanted."

I'd like to see the details of the poll. Did the Director ask the polled players what 6♠ meant? Did the players understand the auction? I can't imagine they did. I admit that if I was between rounds and was given such a poll, I might get it wrong too, particularly when given it by a Director without time to think about it and with dubious or incorrect information about the early auction. This process needs some work.

I'm glad the Committee got it right, but their wording was wrong. It's not, "West must accept," but, "West already accepted."

Marques: Good AC decision. From the report, it sounds like E/W didn't fully explain their auction to the TD. I wonder if that was the reason for the initial adjustment by the TD. The facts being as reported, the TD could have got this one right without the need for a second poll

Meiracker: This is too difficult for me. The poll showed that nobody would bid over 6NT, but the system from E/W was not clear at that point. I like the ruling from the TD, because the argument from West that everybody would bid 7♣ if they knew the meaning of all the bids, doesn't mean anything.

Wildavsky: Reasonable rulings by both the TD and the AC. When in doubt the TD should rule in favor of the non-offenders.

Regarding Kit's concern, player Committees were not bound by polling results. There are a few reasons for this:

- 1) The AC members are chosen in large part for their bridge judgment.
- 2) Those polled may not have received a complete description of the pair's methods.
- 3) The pollees are typically not privy to an account of the player in question's reasoning.

That said, it is often useful for the AC chair to give the bidding problem to the other members of the Committee as a blind preview before they see the entire deal and before they know whether the concern is UI, MI, or something else.

Woolsey: I don't understand West's statement that he thought 5NT was a grand slam force. If so, how could he possibly bid? The footnotes say that it is a grand slam try, which is the way the world would play it after getting a RKC response.

I agree that West has a clear grand bid once East makes a grand try. From West's point of view, how much better could his hand be in the context of the auction?

However, one thing bothers me. The poll indicated that not only is passing 6NT a logical alternative, all the players polled did in fact pass. I think they are nuts. But why is the Committee now overriding such a clear polling result? Are we saying that polls are just guidelines, and the Committee is free to ignore them?

Subject of Appeal:	Break In Tempo	Case:	N5
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Event	Jacoby Open Swiss	Event DIC	Steve Bates
Date	03/29/2014	Session	Finals

Auction

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

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: Break in Tempo

Hand Record

Board	9	N	William Watson		
Dealer	N	♠ 8	♥ AJ10764		
Vul	E/W	♦ A72	♣ A73		
W	Michael White			E	Lewis Gamerman
♠	KQJ1063			♠	A75
♥	Q8			♥	K2
♦	Q109			♦	K653
♣	106			♣	J542
		S	Howard Liu		
		♠	942		
		♥	953		
		♦	J84		
		♣	KQ98		

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
3♥ by N	Made 4	N/S +170	♠ 5

Facts Determined at the Table

The Director was summoned at the conclusion of play of the hand. South had taken 30-45 seconds to bid 3♥. East stated that the hesitation deceived him into not competing to 3♠ in the pass out seat. North's double was not for penalties and showed general strength.

Additional Factors Determined Away from the Table

Three players were polled about what action they would take with the South hand over 2♠. It was unanimous that 3♥ was the only action that any of the players would consider, and none showed any hesitation in making the call.

Director Ruling

Per Law 73F, "if the Director determines that an innocent player draws an inference from a remark, mannerism, tempo, or the like of an opponent who has no demonstrable bridge reason for the action, and who could have known at the time of the action that the action could work to his benefit, the Director shall award an adjusted score." Based upon the results of the player poll, the Director ruled that South's hesitation had no demonstrable bridge reason, and adjusted the score to 3♠ by West, making 3, E/W +140.

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

The North/South players appealed the Director's ruling. They and West attended the Committee. South felt that his partner had shown a 1-6-3-3 pattern by his bidding sequence. He was running various hand possibilities through his mind to determine the likelihood that 4♥ might make. Possibilities included x-AKxxxx-Kxx-Axx or x-AJ10xxx-A10x-Axx. He eventually decided that the odds of game were not favorable. He felt his hand improved, holding three small spades opposite partner's presumed shortness.

East felt that South hesitated in a gamesmanship ploy to dissuade E/W from bidding a makeable 3♠ contract.

Committee Findings

While none of the Committee would have bid 4♥, they did feel the South had a rational argument for his thought process. Therefore, there was a demonstrable bridge reason for his tempo, so there was no infraction and the table result was restored.

Committee Decision	3♥ by N, Made 4, N/S +170
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Committee Members

Chair	Aaron Silverstein
Member	Jay Apfelbaum
Member	Chris Moll
Member	Patty Tucker
Member	Ray Miller

Commentary

Goldsmith: I agree with the AC, and furthermore, I don't buy East's claim. To make his claim at all convincing, he had to call the Director no later than when dummy appeared. If he really was going to bid 3♠ until dissuaded, why didn't he redouble?

If East really said that South intentionally hesitated in order to deceive, I'd give East a 1/4 board ZT penalty, too; I hope what he really said was more along the lines of, "South could have known...."

Marques: I'm a bit on my back foot on this one. South's hand did improve along the auction. However, the players that were polled by the TD did not consider a 4♥ bid. The AC members would not have bid 4♥, but would they consider 4♥ and think about it? I understand the AC decision but South's rationale sounds a bit self-serving and I am left with the feeling that the AC bought South's argument at face value and a bit too easily. A larger and more solid poll would have consolidated the AC's opinion (or negated it). I would definitely go with the results of the poll on this one.

Meiracker: The TD should have asked, at the moment he was called, why South took so long to bid 3♥. As a TD at the table, I have normally a good feeling if the player tells the truth. I don't believe that South hesitated because "he could have known that...."

Wildavsky: Both decisions were reasonable. South is not required to think as quickly as his peers, but he was the only player at the table who knew that the odds favored each side having nine trump and that his opponents would likely do well to continue bidding.

East's allegation, if accurately rendered, is out of line and irrelevant to the ruling. Law 73F, nicely cited here, does not require a finding of intent before we adjust the score, and that's a good thing since we cannot read player's minds.

Woolsey: I don't know what South was really thinking about after the double. I don't buy that he was considering bidding 4♥ on this crap after North bid all of 2♥. My guess is that he wasn't really thinking about anything -- he was just adding up the auction.

However, East draws any inference from South's manner at his own risk. If East gets it wrong, as he did, too bad for him. Next time he will learn to bid his cards, not his opponents. The Committee was 100% right in its conclusion, even if for the wrong reason.

Subject of Appeal: Misinformation	Case: N6
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Event Rockwell Mixed Pairs	Event DIC Brian Russell
Date 03/26/2014	Session Second Final

Auction

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

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

Hand Record

Board 8	N	Ronald DeHarpporte	
Dealer W	♠ A72		
	♥ 84		
	♦ 72		
Vul None	♣ KQ10974		
W	Wiley McMinn III		E Rosemary Kelley
♠ Q4			♠ K953
♥ 973			♥ KQ105
♦ A843			♦ KQ95
♣ A862			♣ 3
	S	Peg Waller	
	♠ J1086		
	♥ AJ62		
	♦ J106		
	♣ J5		

Final Contract 2♣X by N	Result of Play Down 1	Score E/W +100	Opening Lead ♥ Q
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Facts Determined at the Table

The Director was called at the end of the play. North had asked about leads and was told that East/West play standard honor leads, coded 9s and 10s, but North was not told that the queen could be from K-Q-10, which was marked on one of the convention cards. North did not look at the convention card and did not take a trick with the ♥J. West said that he thought queen from K-Q-T was standard and that there was no attempt to deceive.

Additional Factors Determined Away from the Table

East and West both had computer printed convention cards, but they were marked differently. East's had the queen circled from K-Q-10-9, while West's showed the king..

Director Ruling

The statement that East-West play standard honor leads was incorrect. Without this statement, North clearly would have played East for the K-Q of hearts and made 2♣ doubled. This score was assigned to East/West. The auction, however, made it clear that the lead could not be from shortness. North should have either looked at the opponent's card or asked further questions. Failure to do either denied North redress. Accordingly, the assigned results were 2♣ doubled by North, N/S -100 and E/W -180.

Director's Ruling	N/S: 2♣X by N, Down 1, N/S -100 E/W: 2♣X by N, Made 2, E/W -180
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The Appeal

North appealed the ruling and attended the hearing. He explained that he did not know what to make of the opening lead, but he could see that the opponents could make a diamond part score, likely 110 or 130. He decided to take a sure minus 100, which rated to be a good score, rather than risk minus 300, which would be a zero.

Committee Findings

The Appeals Committee quickly agreed with the Director's adjustment for East/West. North was misinformed. Per Law 12C1e(ii), for an offending side, the score assigned is the most unfavorable result that was at all probable had the irregularity not occurred. With the correct information, North-South would almost certainly have scored plus 180.

While Law 12C1e(i) grants the non-offenders "the most favorable result that was likely had the irregularity not occurred, there is an exception in Law 12C1b:

"If, subsequent to the irregularity, the non-offending side has contributed to its own damage by a serious error (unrelated to the infraction) or by a wild or gambling action, it does not receive relief in the adjustment for such part of the damage as is self inflicted."

The Appeals Committee disagreed with the Director when he asserted that North ought to have looked at the E/W convention card or queried further. North asked a question and received an unequivocal answer. He had no special duty to doubt it and further inquiries could have been perceived as harassment. Even had he looked at a convention card, there was only a 50% chance that he would have seen different information.

The Committee judged that the failure to take eight tricks was an error. While minus 100 rated to be a good score, plus 180 would be even better.

It was implausible that East had led the ♥Q from a holding of four to the queen, and even less likely that East held Q-x. That would mean that West had responded 1NT with five hearts to the king and that he had then doubled 2♣. It would also leave East with a distribution where she was unlikely to sit for the double.

Was this a "serious error" in the terms envisioned by Law 12C1b? The ACBL Laws Commission has issued a guideline duplicating one from the WBF Laws Commission: A pair need not play perfectly to receive redress. The kind of serious error envisioned is one that is egregious, on the order of a revoke or ducking the setting trick against a slam.

The Committee performed a numerical analysis and concluded that while it is a slight error to win the opening lead, it is hardly a serious one. Accordingly, the Committee adjusted the score for both sides to +180 for North-South.

Committee Decision	2♣X by N, Made 2, N/S +180
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Committee Members

Chair	Adam Wildavsky
Member	Ellen Kent
Member	Ed Lazarus
Member	Craig Allen
Member	Marc Rabinowitz

Commentary

Goldsmith: In a misinformation case, the first thing the TD needs to do is to establish the actual agreement. What was it? The write-up says, "the statement that East/West play standard honor leads was incorrect," but I don't see any information on which to base such a conclusion. West thought they were playing standard honor leads, and as far as their agreements go, they were. East thought that it is standard to lead Q from KQ10. She was mistaken. That doesn't change the agreement.

Result stands. Players are allowed to deviate from their agreements, which is what East did. She didn't mean to; she thought she was leading from KQ109 against a notrump contract, and for some reason she wanted partner to unblock the jack. If she thought about it a little more, she probably would have led the king, but so what? This is the finals of a national event. Players make tricky leads sometimes. Mostly, they are intentional. Unintentional ones are allowed, too. N/S were not misinformed. East was.

Marques: I often see "serious error" being invoked lightly on what are merely inferior actions. The standard for an action to be declared a "serious error" is much more strict and the AC got this one right.

Meiracker: I totally agree with the AC. This is not a serious error.

Wildavsky: I chaired the Committee and wrote up its decision. I've not changed my mind.

Woolsey: West's saying that leading the queen from KQ10 is "Standard" probably refers to leads against notrump. It certainly isn't standard against suit contracts, regardless of what West thinks. If West doesn't know what "Standard" is, he shouldn't use that phrase -- instead he should explain exactly what the lead might be from. Had he done that, there would have been no issue.

As it was, West definitely gave North MI. Should North have figured out what was going on? From a purely logical standpoint he could have worked out that something was wrong, since the lead and the auction were totally inconsistent. However, when one is misinformed about the opponents' methods it is easy to form a mind-set about the layout from that misinformation, even if that is inconsistent with everything else. That is exactly what happened here, and one should not be injured when this happens. I like the Committee's ruling.

Subject of Appeal:	Disputed Claim	Case:	R1
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Event	1 st Saturday A/B open Pairs	Event DIC	Nancy Watkins
Date	03/22/2014	Session	First

Auction

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

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

Hand Record

Board	6	N	950 mps		
Dealer	E	♠ J84	♥ 32		
Vul	E/W	♦ A9	♣ K109654		
W	2500 mps			E	3100 mps
♠	A972			♠	5
♥	J75			♥	K9
♦	Q5			♦	J876432
♣	Q832	S	9150 mps	♣	AJ7
		♠	KQ1063		
		♥	AQ10864		
		♦	K10		
		♣	(void)		

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
4♥ by S			♦ Q

Facts Determined at the Table

The Director was summoned by East/West at the sixth trick, when Declarer faced their hand. East was on lead and the defense had already won three tricks. South stated he would draw trumps, but made no statement as to what card he would play on a diamond lead. The remaining cards at this point were:

	♠ 8	
	♥ 3	
	♦ —	
	♣ K 10 9 6 5 4	
♠ 9 7		♠ —
♥ 7 5		♥ —
♦ —		♦ 8 7 6 4 3
♣ Q 8 3 2		♣ A J 7
	♠ K Q 10	
	♥ A Q 8 6 4	
	♦ —	
	♣ —	

Director Ruling

The Director considered that since the claimer had not mentioned trumping high when he made his original statement, his awareness of the potential problem on the hand might be a "doubtful point" that should be resolved against the claimer (Law 70A). Since trumping high was not mentioned in the original claim statement, it should only be allowed if failing to do so would be worse than "careless or inferior for the class of player involved" (Law 70D1). The Director ruled that it was not clear that declarer would trump high if a diamond were returned, and ruled that 4♥ was down one, E/W +50.

Director's Ruling

4♥ by S, Down 1, E/W +50

The Appeal

N/S appealed the Director's ruling. All four players attended the review. The reviewer discovered that the play to the first five tricks was ♦Q opening lead losing to dummy's Ace; low trump to the ten and jack: ♦5 to the jack and king; ♠3 to West's ace; spade returned and trumped by East with the king. At this point South claimed as described above. The Director was called immediately. South asked the opponents what the problem was, but they remained silent and did not reveal their hands. When the Director arrived, South pushed the ♥AQ8 separately from the rest of his hand. When the possibility of a diamond being returned was brought up in the Director's presence, South said he would trump high if that happened. When asked in screening why he didn't mention that in his original claim statement, South said he thought it was obvious and he didn't think of saying it specifically.

Panel Findings

The Panel considered whether this declarer might have lost touch with the potential danger of the hand at the point he claimed, thus creating a "doubtful point" as to whether he would trump high if a diamond were returned. Arguing against him was his failure to mention it at the point of his original claim, and in the period of time between the claim being questioned and the Director arriving at the table.

However, the Panel believed several factors argued in favor of allowing the claim. Clearly by his statement declarer knew trump(s) were outstanding, and they were almost certainly on his left. As well, he had seen West lead the ♦Q without the jack so the danger of West having no more diamonds was present. Finally, when the Director arrived and before he had seen his opponents' hands or heard their objections he pushed the three high trumps away from the rest of his faced hand. These factors combined persuaded the Panel that this declarer had a firm grasp on what was happening and trumping a diamond return high was not a "doubtful point". The score was adjusted to 4♥ by South, making four, N/S +420.

Panel Decision

4♥ by S, Made 4, N/S +420

Panel Members

Reviewer	Matt Smith
Member	Sol Weinstein
Member	Charlie MacCracken

Commentary

Goldsmith: The Panel ruling looks right, but perhaps the Director might have asked Declarer, "which trumps are out?" If he instantly answered, "two smaller than the 8," or "the 7 and 5 and they are on my left," or "two small, but I have the three highest," then this wouldn't be a problem, right? If he had to think about it, I'd be prone to rule against him.

Marques: Maybe the TD should have disentangled at the table the "doubtful point" regarding declarer's awareness. From the report, the evidence definitely seems to have been there for the taking. Looks like a good Panel decision.

Meiracker: Normally in doubt, I rule against the claimer, but in this case, Declarer knew that there were outstanding trumps, so I agree with the Panel.

Wildavsky: I prefer the Panel's ruling to the TD's.

Woolsey: Clearly, the declarer knew what was going on, and the Panel made the right ruling. What bothers me was that in the statement of the "facts" there was no mention that declarer had taken the AQ8 of trumps and separated them from the rest of the hand. This is basically saying: Ruffing high and pulling trumps. Why wasn't this included in the original statement of the facts?

Subject of Appeal:	Undisclosed Agreement	Case:	R2
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Event	1 st Sunday A/X Swiss Teams	Event DIC	Peter Wilke
Date	03/23/2014	Session	Second

Auction

West	North	East	South
			1♦
1♥	1♠	4♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

Hand Record

Board	19	N	1200 mps		
Dealer	S	♠	AQ984		
		♥	5		
		♦	KJ10		
Vul	E/W	♣	A764		
W	6950 mps			E	1370 mps
♠	K			♠	J53
♥	KQJ986			♥	A742
♦	Q72			♦	A3
♣	1032			♣	KQ95
		S	2630 mps		
		♠	10762		
		♥	103		
		♦	98654		
		♣	J8		

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
4♥ by W	Down 1	N/S +100	♥ 5

Facts Determined at the Table

The Director was summoned near the conclusion of play of the hand. North had passed out 4♥ without any apparent problem. West claimed that N/S must have some agreement about the likelihood of South psyching. If he had this information, he would have made his contract

Director Ruling

Law 40C1 states, "A player may deviate from his side's announced understandings always, provided that his partner has no more reason to be aware of the deviation than have the opponents.... If the Director judges there is undisclosed knowledge that has damaged the opponents, he shall adjust the score and may award a procedural penalty." Law 40A3 states, "A player may make any call or play without prior announcement provided that such call or play is not based on an undisclosed partnership understanding." The Director judged that North was aware of South's propensity to psych and initially adjusted the result to 4♠ by North, down 2, E/W +300, but as the Review began, a correction was made to down 1, E/W +100.

Director's Ruling	4♠X by N, Down 1, E/W +100
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The Appeal

Both sides appealed the Director's ruling, and North, South and West attended the review. N/S were asked, as a result of the change in ruling, if they wanted to withdraw their appeal. They wished to proceed as they wanted the table result to stand. N/S said psyching was perfectly legal, and any adjustment to the table result would be an attempt to deny the right to psych. North said that when vulnerable opponents voluntarily bid 4♥, he decided South must have psyched.

N/S produced their convention card, which said, in two places, that N/S have an obstructive bidding style. N/S also claimed that this was the first psych by South in this tournament. N/S do not have many masterpoints but were both experienced rubber bridge players. South was known by the Reviewer to be an excellent player.

West claimed he would have made 4♥ if he had any clue that North might have passed with the hand he held. The play was: trump lead and a trump to dummy; a spade to the King and Ace; a small club to the King and a spade ruff; ♥6 to dummy's 7 and a spade ruff; a club ducked to the J and a diamond exit. West is also very experienced despite a low masterpoint holding.

Panel Findings

Several Flight A players were given the North hand, and taken through the auction. They were told to assume a hyper aggressive style that believed in obstructing the opponents. All bid 1♠ at first turn, then doubled in pass out seat. When reminded of the vulnerability, and asked if something funny might be going on, all said a psych hadn't been revealed yet, so their values had to be shown.

The Panel decided the E/W appeal first. There was no legal way to allow West to make 4♥, since there was no lawful way for him to be given the knowledge needed to make 4♥. That appeal was rejected, but an Appeal without Merit Warning was not considered.

The Panel then considered the N/S appeal. It concluded that N/S had indeed violated Laws 40A3 and 40C1. The Panel did not allow North to field the psych, and assigned a result of 4♠X by North, down 1, E/W +100 for both sides. An Appeal without Merit Warning was given to N/S, as they should have known their Appeal could not succeed. N/S were also given a 3 VP procedural penalty, as the pass of 4♥ was deemed to be sufficient evidence of an undisclosed partnership understanding.

Panel Decision	4♠X by N, Down 1, E/W +100
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Panel Members

Reviewer	Gary Zeiger
Member	Eric Bell
Member	Matt Smith

Commentary

Goldsmith: Law 40A3 and Law 40C1 say that a player may deviate from his agreements or make any call as long as it is not based on an undisclosed partnership agreement. I think North's final pass was taking action based on the partnership agreement to psych one-bids white on red with very bad hands. I would have liked the Director to ask North why he passed, and why so confidently. He may have taken inference from the opponents' behavior or other legal information. If he couldn't answer that, I'd worry that he had UI from partner's demeanor.

Law 40 says that if such an infraction occurs, the Director may award an adjusted score. Presumably, it's to disallow the illegal call, North's pass, and then follow Law 12, so the ruling of 4♠X down 1 seems right, though the worst score at all probable might be down two.

So for N/S to keep their good result, all they have to do is disclose their agreement. How? They can't go about alerting all white on red one-bids, "might be a psych." There's nowhere on the convention card (anymore) to indicate frequency of psychics, not that that ever helped, since no one knew when to look. Their agreement is legal. All they have to do is disclose it. May they pre-alert? "We sometimes psych one-bids white on red in first or third seats?" There has to be some way to disclose tendency to psych.

Marques: North's reason to field the psych is poor, and the polled players agreed. Good work by the Panel.

Meiracker: The TD ruled without consulting any players. Good job by the Panel!

Wildavsky: I don't see any legal basis for changing the final contract. North had no UI so he could do as he pleased. Thus, the TD's ruling looks illegal to me.

E/W were damaged, but through MI - they were not properly informed of their opponents' bidding agreements, namely frequent psyches. I'd have adjusted the result for both sides to E/W +620, the most favorable result that was likely had Declarer been properly informed.

It would be good to know how the play went - Declarer should have stripped out the hand as best he could before the second round of clubs. But failing to do so does not rise to the level of the "serious error" contemplated by Law 12.

Woolsey: Obviously, North knew that South had psyched. The cards speak. We don't know how North knew, but it clearly wasn't from the auction itself.

The Panel was clearly right to rule against North, and I like that they gave North an additional procedural penalty. However, I don't think they went far enough. They should have:

- 1) Have North Double 4♥, and have Declarer get the play right so the score (at least for N-S) is -590.
- 2) Let North know in no uncertain terms that if this sort of thing happens again, the penalty will be a lot harsher.

We can't call somebody a cheat without solid evidence. But we can make it most unprofitable for them to cheat in this manner.

Subject of Appeal:	Break In Tempo	Case:	R3
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Event	10K Knockout Teams	Event DIC	Kenneth Van Cleve
Date	03/25/2014	Session	Round of 16

Auction

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

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: Strong, Artificial, Forcing
2: 6+ ♠, invitational+
3: Slam try
4: Cuebid (control)
5: Break in Tempo

Hand Record

Board	20	N	5700 mps		
Dealer	W	♠ J983			
		♥ AQ7			
		♦ K9			
		♣ AKQ5			
Vul	Both				
W	460 mps			E	2650 mps
♠	654			♠	(void)
♥	J105			♥	K9842
♦	J105			♦	AQ74
♣	J1064			♣	9732
		S	4250 mps		
		♠	AKQ1072		
		♥	63		
		♦	8632		
		♣	8		

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
6♠ by N	Made 6	N/S +1430	♦ A

Facts Determined at the Table

The Director was summoned after the 6♠ bid and at the conclusion of play of the hand. East/West stated that North had broken tempo prior to bidding 4♠. E/W estimated the hesitation as about 20 seconds. North/South agreed to a hesitation, but of only 10-15 seconds.

Additional Factors Determined Away from the Table

In order to determine if pass by South over 4♠ was a logical alternative, the hand was given as a bidding problem to four players from the same event who were all familiar with forcing club systems. All four passed. .

Director Ruling

The Director decided that an unmistakable hesitation had occurred and that it demonstrably suggested not passing 4♠. Based upon the polling data, the Director adjusted the contract to 4♠ by South. Since the lead of the ♦A did not seem likely against a contract of 4♠, the score was assigned as eleven tricks for N/S +650 (Laws 16 and 12).

Director's Ruling	4♠ by N, Made 5, N/S +650
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The Appeal

N/S appealed the Director's ruling, and all four players attended the review. All confirmed to the reviewer that the hesitation was lengthy and noticeable by all (and perhaps even longer than the Director was told).

N/S told the reviewer that they play Turbo over positive responses to a forcing club, but there was some partnership confusion about whether it applied here since the 2♥ bid did not guarantee game-going values. North thought it applied, but South did not. When it does apply, over the 3♠ slam try, South is expected to bid 3NT with two key cards; bid 4♠ with none; and cue bid with an odd number.

South said that when her partner did not cue bid either 4♦ or 4♥ over 4♣, she knew he must be thinking Turbo applied (N/S said they cuebid first and second round controls indiscriminately in this situation). At the end of the auction, they did explain to the opponents that a possible misunderstanding about whether Turbo applied had probably occurred

Panel Findings

The Panel agreed that there was unauthorized information from North's slow 4♠ bid and that the information suggested not passing. The South hand was given to three experts as a bidding problem (Bart Bramley, Geoff Hampson, and Pamela Granovetter).

One said pass was not possible. Another said it was, and cited a hand of Jxx-Kx-KQ-AKQJ10x as a possible North hand. The third mentioned a very similar hand as the second consulted expert and actually did pass 4♠. The last two experts were not persuaded that either the stated cuebidding methods of the pair were relevant or that South would necessarily work out what North was thinking by the very fact of his 4♠ bid.

The Panel combined the polling conducted by the table Director to its own polling to decide that pass was a logical alternative. The Panel also concurred with the table Director on the number of tricks that should be assigned in a 4♠ contract. As the non-offending side, E/W are entitled to the most favorable result that was likely had the irregularity not occurred (Law 12C1e), which would include the strong likelihood of a different lead being made against the assigned contract of 4♠. The lead of the ♦A was not close to being judged a "serious error" which would have cost E/W its right to redress (Law 12C1b), so the Panel confirmed the adjustment of 4♠ by North, making five, N/S +650.

The appeal was found to have merit since the original Director poll may have been conducted with incomplete knowledge of the N/S methods and arguments, and because one of the consulted experts was adamant that pass was not a possible action over 4♠.

Panel Decision	4♠ by N, Made 5, N/S +650
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Panel Members

Reviewer	Matt Smith
Member	Eric Bell
Member	Kevin Perkins

Commentary

Goldsmith: The Turbo discussion was a red herring. It doesn't matter what North was thinking about. South knew that North was thinking of taking some action other than signing off in game, and if passing 4♠ is a LA, it must be chosen. I'm not convinced it is, but in close cases, I've learned that Directors and ACs (and I) tend to err on the side of judging that a call is not a LA, so I'll buy that Pass is one. TD's ruling is fine.

I don't like South's 6♠. While some might argue that passing isn't a LA, I don't think anyone thinks that a slam drive is clear. Had South tried for slam, perhaps by bidding 5♠, then I'd rule that South just misjudged, but by bidding 6♠, he abused the UI of knowing that partner would accept his slam try, so he gets an AWMW and 1/4 board PP.

Marques: Ideally polls should be conducted with players that don't know the hand in question. Namely for the type of problem involved in this case, I think that it is difficult for a player to be completely neutral and candid after having already seen the hand. Anyway, I think that the TD got it right and it was a good thing that the Panel asked some more players in order to solidify the decision. A good and thorough analysis by the Panel.

Meiracker: Good decisions by the TD and Panel.

Wildavsky: Thorough job by the Panel in upholding the TD's ruling.

Woolsey: Perfect ruling by Director and Panel for all the right reasons. They did well not to buy South's self-serving statements.

Subject of Appeal:	Break In Tempo	Case:	R4
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Event	Thurs Stratified Swiss Teams	Event DIC	Peter Wilke
Date	03/27/2014	Session	First

Auction

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

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: 14-17 HCP
2: Break in Tempo
3: Stayman

Hand Record

Board	11	N	7500 mps		
Dealer	S	♠	KQJ9		
		♥	A2		
Vul	None	♦	AJ103		
		♣	1063		
W	500 mps			E	200 mps
♠	6			♠	A753
♥	K74			♥	Q96
♦	876			♦	K942
♣	AKJ854			♣	Q2
		S	6000 mps		
		♠	10842		
		♥	J10853		
		♦	Q5		
		♣	97		

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
3♣ by W	Made 3	E/W +110	♠ K

Facts Determined at the Table

The Director was summoned after the 3♣ bid and again at the conclusion of play. North explained that East had hesitated approximately 15 seconds before passing following the 1NT overcall.

Additional Factors Determined Away from the Table

The Director gave the West hand to four players with approximately 2000 MP each, and three passed out 2♠.

Director Ruling

Having used the poll to determine that Pass was a logical alternative, the Director decided that there was an unmistakable hesitation by East during the auction. Judging that the hesitation demonstrably suggested not passing, they adjusted the score on the board to 2♠ by North, making two, N/S +110, per Laws 16B, 73C, and 12C1e.

Director's Ruling	2♠ by N, Made 2, N/S +110
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The Appeal

E/W appealed the ruling. They contended that there had been no significant time taken by the East player. Each of the four players was asked in turn to estimate the time taken: North claimed a minute; South demurred, and said it was less than that. When timed with a stopwatch, they felt eight seconds was about right.

West claimed that "there was no break in tempo, maybe 7 seconds, or less." West stated that they "would always bid 3♣." East felt that she had a problem with her hand about what to bid, but agreed with her partner that it took her no more than about 7-8 seconds.

A poll was taken of about 15 players in the 300-1200 masterpoint range, given the West hand. Most doubled the 2♣ bid, or bid 3♣ immediately. Of the six who chose to pass South's 2♣, two passed 2♣ as well.

Panel Findings

The Panel felt that 7-8 seconds was sufficient to suggest interest in the auction and consideration of a call, thus making the 3♣ bid more attractive. The polls showed a sufficient minority who would have passed, making that a logical alternative under Law 16B1. The Panel cancelled the 3♣ bid and rolled the contract back to 2♣.

It was noted that even though the break in tempo took place in the first round of the auction, it could still influence a call made by partner at their third turn. The Law does not restrict the use of unauthorized information just to the partner's next turn.

The Panel considered the play in 2♣. While it could be defeated by repeated trump leads, the Panel (as well as two expert-level players consulted on the matter) felt that the contract would make two the majority of the time. Law 12C1e instructs that when a score is adjusted the offending side receives the "most unfavorable result that was at all probable" and the non-offending side receives "the most favorable result that was likely". Therefore, the result was ruled to be 2♣ by North, making two, for N/S +110.

Since further competition with the West hand was the majority action, and since there was some question of the length of East's pause, it was felt that the appeal did have some merit, so no Appeal without Merit Warning was given.

Panel Decision	2♣ by N, Made 2, N/S +110
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Panel Members

Reviewer	David Metcalf
Member	Matt Smith
Member	Gary Zeiger

Commentary

Goldsmith: There was no question about East's pause. Who'd pass in tempo with an 11-count? When it's not clear whether a BIT occurred, the hand speaks, and this hand says, "I have a problem." Furthermore, East said, "[I] had a problem." The appellants' other argument was, "I would always bid." That argument is a request for an AWMW, so they get one. Since 3♣ is a reasonable action, one which many of the player's peers would take, and it is not unlikely that West might bid 3♣ by simple misjudgment, I'd hesitate to issue a PP. Here, however, I might give one, as West did not appear even to consider UI issues, and some education appears to be in order. In particular, West knew it wasn't necessary to double 2♣, as he'll likely have another chance.

Marques: Nothing to add. Good job by everybody involved.

Meiracker: 7-8 seconds is a break in tempo, East was interested in bidding and the poll showed that Pass by West is LA, good decision again from TD and Panel.

Wildavsky: I see no merit to the appeal.

Woolsey: When there's smoke, there's fire, in the case of disputed huddles. The East hand is a good example of the smoke. Whether East should or should not pass, you can bet that with this 11-count he thought about it. If N/S say he huddled and he holds this hand, he did huddle.

I judge West's 3♣ call to be borderline, particularly since the 1NT overcall indicates that the guarded queen of clubs is behind him. I think the ruling is fine.

Subject of Appeal:	Misinformation	Case:	R5
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Event	Red Ribbon Pairs	Event DIC	Michael Flader
Date	03/27/2014	Session	Second Qualifying

Auction

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

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: 14-16 HCP
2: Lebensohl; No alert

Hand Record

Board	10	N	1600 mps		
Dealer	E	♠	9		
		♥	1084		
Vul	Both	♦	QJ654		
		♣	10843		
W	900 mps			E	1400 mps
♠	Q85			♠	KJ10643
♥	732			♥	AQ
♦	93			♦	K107
♣	AQJ96			♣	75
		S	1300 mps		
		♠	A72		
		♥	KJ965		
		♦	A82		
		♣	K2		

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
3♠ by E	Made 4	E/W +170	♠ 2

Facts Determined at the Table

The Director was called by E/W after the completion of play. 2NT was not alerted, but was Lebensohl according to partnership agreement. West told the Director that he would have bid 4♠ if he had been given the correct information.

Director Ruling

The Director felt that E/W received misinformation, and that the damage to E/W was a direct consequence of the misinformation. Therefore, they adjusted the result to 4♠ by East, making 4, E/W +620, in accordance with Law 21B3.

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

North/South appealed the ruling. They agreed that there had been misinformation, but thought that West had sufficient clues available to him to suspect a problem; and even if the correct information had been given, it was not at all clear that E/W would have bid game.

West claimed that "he would have accepted over an invitational 3♠ bid", but on further questioning, agreed that the 3♠ bid chosen by East was competitive, not invitational. East intended her 3♠ bid to be competitive, and said she would have been surprised to hear her partner continue on to game. She could have doubled or bid another suit to invite to game. When asked what she would have done had North passed, she said that with a 7-loser hand she would have passed as well.

Panel Findings

Given that E/W were not in an invitational sequence, it was deemed unlikely that they would have gotten to game, even if they had been given the correct information. It was never East's intention to invite game, and she never considered an invitational call. There was no reason, therefore, for West to bid a game.

The Panel felt that, while there was an infraction, no damage had occurred, and it restored the table result of 3♠ by East, making 4, for E/W +170. Since the ruling was overturned, there was no consideration of the merit of the appeal.

Panel Decision	3♠ by E, Made 4, E/W +170
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Panel Members

Reviewer	David Metcalf
Member	Matt Smith
Member	Matt Koltnow

Commentary

Goldsmith: Good job by the Panel. The original Director's ruling is very dubious; he ought to have known to be skeptical about East's claim. Had he ruled no damage, and E/W appealed, they would have obtained an AWMW.

It would be nice to be able to award something for Director calls such as this one which work and need to be appealed. A DCWMW?

Marques: It seems that the TD could have gotten this one right by investigating E/W's methods a bit better during the initial decision process.

On a final note, generically speaking, a very good set of decisions by the TDs, ACs and Panels at this tournament.

Meiracker: I totally agree with the Panel. They discovered that East never intended 3♠ as a game try. Good job.

Wildavsky: If the TD expected his ruling to be upheld, he had to properly document the legal reasoning he used. As I see it E/W were damaged primarily by West's conservative 2♠ response - he'd have done better to start with a double.

Woolsey: East's bid is non-invitational. There is nothing about the West hand which improves because the 2NT call is Lebensohl. The Panel has this one quite correct.