



Charged Party(ies) ACBL # Hearing Date

Disciplinary Body Hearing Location

Charging Party ACBL# Complainant ACBL#

COMMITTEE MEMBERS WHO HEARD THE CHARGES

Name	ACBL #	Name	ACBL #
Jordan Chodorow, Chair	<input type="text" value="Q498482"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
David Caprera	<input type="text" value="K349736"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Ira Chorush	<input type="text" value="J278924"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

INDIVIDUALS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE HEARING (excluding committee members)

Name	ACBL#	Via	Capacity	Name	ACBL#	Via	Capacity
Ray Yuenger	<input type="text" value="P913494"/>	<input type="text" value="web conf."/>	<input type="text" value="Advisor"/>	Charlotte Miller	<input type="text" value="O805930"/>	<input type="text" value="web conf."/>	<input type="text" value="Witness"/>
Ryan Connors	<input type="text" value="Q758913"/>	<input type="text" value="web conf."/>	<input type="text" value="Adv-Charging P"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Select One"/>	<input type="text" value="Select One"/>
Robb Gordon	<input type="text" value="K652927"/>	<input type="text" value="web conf."/>	<input type="text" value="Adv-Charged P"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Select One"/>	<input type="text" value="Select One"/>
Samir Zeine	<input type="text" value="P482183"/>	<input type="text" value="web conf."/>	<input type="text" value="Charged Party"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Select One"/>	<input type="text" value="Select One"/>

EVIDENCE AND ARGUMENTS PRESENTED (Summarize evidence and arguments presented including testimony. If additional space is needed, continue on page 3 of this hearing report.) (Note: provide new documentary evidence introduced during the hearing to the Office of National Recorder)

See pages 1 through 18 of the attached decision.

COMMITTEE FINDINGS OF FACT (based on the evidence, state the committee's conclusion as to what happened)

See page 19 of the attached decision.

DECISION (click on the box next to Not Guilty or Guilty of violating the CDR to add a check mark.)

Not guilty (check here and skip the remainder of this page) Guilty (continue by selecting the Grounds for Discipline which led to the finding of guilty. Note: A party may only be found guilty of a violation originally stated in the Charge Letter.

CDR GROUNDS FOR DISCIPLINE Type the section(s) and description(s) found in CDR 3 which led to the discipline).

3.20 Cheating and other Ethical Violations

DISCIPLINE (Unless a discipline begins immediately, which requires you to complete a Notice of Immediate Discipline, all begin dates should start at least five days after you submit this hearing Report to the Office of National Recorder.

Disciplined Party is convicted of premeditated or collusive cheating (or has admitted to such action), CDR 4.1.8 (a) YES NO

If yes, all masterpoints, titles and ACBL status ranks and other ACBL related awards earned by the disciplined party will be forfeited. These penalties also apply to the teammates and partners while playing with the disciplined party during the seven years preceding the date the Charges were brought through and including the date of this final decision.

	Start Date	End Date	Additional Requirements/Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> REPRIMAND			<input type="checkbox"/> letter of reprimand attached
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PROBATION	06/26/2022	12/25/2022	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SUSPENSION	12/26/2020	06/25/2022	

Is the disciplined party Suspended because of an Ethical Violation (CDR 4.1.8 (b))? YES NO

If yes, the masterpoints and titles won in the event by the disciplined party, partners and teammates in which the offense occurred will be forfeited.

Is the Suspension imposed due to an Ethical Violation more than one year (CDR 4.1.8 (b))? YES NO

If yes, the MPs, titles or other ACBL related award earned by the discipline party within twelve months preceding the date of the offense will be forfeited.

EXPULSION

SUSPENDED SENTENCE (only used in conjunction with an imposed Suspension from above that you have converted to Probation). State the condition of the sentence below

EXCLUSION from Events and Programs (list the exclusions and the dates of the events or activities). CDR 4.1.6

REDUCTION OR FORFEITURE of Masterpoints (MP) or Tournament Rank or Disqualification.

Remove all MPs earned in BBO sessions played with zak10

Remove MPs earned for the entire tournament in which the offense occurred

Reduction of rank in the event in which the offense occurred

Disqualification in the tournament

Disqualification in the event in which offense occurred

The teammates and partners will also receive these penalties in the event in which the offense occurred.

STATE THE OFFENSE(S) FROM APPENDIX B, CHART 1 and/or CHART 2 OF THE CDR

E 19 Cheating and other ethical violations

The discipline imposed above is within the recommended guidelines of Appendix B, Chart 1 and/or Chart 2.

If it is OUTSIDE the guidelines, a reason must be stated below.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED (CHAIR)

/s/ Jordan Chodorow

Electronic Signature (type name above)

Date: 12/21/20

Wet Signature (sign above)

SUMMARY OF THE EVIDENCE AND ARGUMENTS PRESENTED

An overview of the evidence and the Charged Party's background

The disciplinary hearing lasted two hours on December 15, 2020. The Charging Party's only witness was its Advocate, Ryan Connors. The Charged Party, Samir Zeine, testified, as did Charlotte Miller for the Charged Party.

No new documentary evidence was presented during the hearing.

The Advocate relied on the deal analysis and other statements in his prehearing disclosure. He described Mr. Zeine as "a skilled bridge player with over 50 years of experience. He has represented Jordan in six world events and played in premier contests, such as the Cavendish Invitational. The ACBL awarded him 8,000 eligibility points when he moved to District 12 to reflect this experience. He is also a bridge teacher and club director."

The Advocate focused on Bridge Base Online ("BBO") sessions played by Mr. Zeine (samzeine on BBO; "SZ" hereafter) and Zaka Masri (zak10 on BBO; "ZM" hereafter). The Advocate described ZM as a resident of Jordan and not an ACBL member. SZ described ZM as a 76-year-old who began learning bridge after turning 70. He is an inexperienced "C" player who likes to bid and double and plays few conventions. SZ said that ZM paid his nominal table fees in their BBO sessions.

According to the Advocate, this partnership played on BBO between February 12, 2020 and June 12, 2020, when BBO banned them.¹ They typically played "two BBO Speedball games and one 18-board game daily." According to SZ, who moved to Detroit from Jordan three years ago, he usually played with ZM in the morning due to the time difference with Jordan.

The Advocate drew the Panel's attention to three aspects of the evidence, (1) a snapshot of the partnership's last 30 sessions, (2) selected deals from five sessions, and (3) their use of penalty doubles. This evidence arose from two different time periods that only overlapped by one day, May 29.

Scores from the 30 most recent sessions

Looking at the partnership's 30 most recent BBO sessions between May 29 and June 12, in eleven 18-board matchpoint games they averaged 60.38% with highs of 74.72% and 70.01% and only two below average (49.94% and 48.67%), in ten 12-board speedball matchpoint games they averaged 54.43% with highs of 62.33% and 61.49% and only two below average (47.44% and 46.13%), and in nine 12-board speedball IMP games they averaged +19.8 IMPs with highs of +41.89 and +39.14 and only two with negative totals (-1.53 and -4.7).

¹ All subsequent dates are from 2020.

Successful penalty doubles

Also looking at the 30 most recent BBO sessions between May 29 and June 12, the Advocate alleged that 23 of their 27 penalty doubles were successful.² The Advocate presented evidence of only two of these successful penalty doubles from this time period, 2275 [11](#)³ on May 29 and 8945 [4](#) on June 2, and three from earlier sessions, 8898 [13](#) on May 24, 4459 [8](#) on May 27, and 2025 [8](#) on May 28. The Advocate also detailed all four of the unsuccessful penalty doubles during this time period, 2277 [11](#) on May 29, 8954 [5](#) on June 2, 8871 [15](#) on June 6, and 5880 [3](#) on June 12.

The questioned deals

To prove the charge that “Mr. Zeine and his partner made numerous bids, leads, and defensive plays between May and June, 2020, that were consistent with cheating by exchanging unauthorized information,” the Advocate relied primarily on 26 deals selected from the following BBO sessions: six of the 18 boards from a 76.26% session (#8898) played on May 24; four of the 12 boards from a -15.74 IMP session (#4459) played on May 27; five of the 18 boards from a 71.27% session (#2025) played on May 28; and twelve of the 30 boards played on May 29, four from a 12-board 45.63% session (#2275) and eight from an 18-board 70.01% session (#2281). The Advocate presented BBO movie links to all 78 boards played during these five sessions.

In rebuttal disclosure, the Advocate presented nine additional boards, one from June 1, one from June 7, one from June 9, five from two sessions on June 11, and one from June 12. Deal and auction diagrams were presented for all nine boards. BBO movie links were provided for seven of them (excepting June 7 and 9). The complete session links were provided for none of them.

Of the 26 initial boards, the Advocate questioned the bidding on thirteen of them (namely 8898 [4](#), [8](#), [9](#), and [15](#); 4459 [2](#); 2025 [1](#), [3](#), and [10](#); 2275 [1](#); and 2281 [3](#), [5](#), [8](#), and [18](#)), the defenses on eight of them (4459 [1](#), [6](#), and [8](#); 2275 [8](#) and [11](#); and 2281 [7](#), [11](#), and [15](#)), and both aspects on five of them (8898 [3](#) and [13](#); 2025 [8](#); 2275 [10](#); and 2281 [9](#)). At the hearing, encouraged by the Chair and the Advisor not to recite all the written disclosure, the Advocate discussed the following 22 boards in chronological order: 8898 [3](#), [4](#), [8](#), [9](#), [13](#), and [15](#); 4459 [1](#), [2](#), [6](#), and [8](#); 2025 [3](#) and [8](#) (bypassing [1](#) and [10](#)); 2275 [1](#) and [11](#) (bypassing [8](#) and [10](#)); and 2281 [3](#), [5](#), [7](#), [8](#), [9](#), [11](#), [15](#), and [18](#).

Though the Advocate reviewed the deals chronologically, this report will group them according to what was questioned, the auction, the defense, or both. While providing the BBO movie links to all 26 deals, this report will not set out each deal, instead focusing on deals the Advocate or the Panel identified as of particular interest.

² This report will adopt the shorthand of 2275 11 to refer to board 11 of BBO session #2275.

³ For the reader’s convenience, BBO movie links are provided for specifically listed boards.

Questioned bidding and defense

The Advocate questioned the bidding and defense on the first board chronologically out of the 26 selected.

8898 3

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		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;"> 4♥ N NS: 0 EW: 0 </div>																				

[Movie link](#)

ZM made a light vulnerable takeout double and SZ chose to bid his long ♣ suit rather than his strong ♠ suit. It turned out ZM did not have four ♠s. ZM elected to compete to the 4 level, pushing the opponents up and SZ refrained from doubling despite his ♠ holding and his partner's aggressive bidding. ZM then found a ♠ lead to his partner's unbid strength instead of leading his solid ♣ sequence.

SZ explained that his partner did not lead ♣s because it was likely from the bidding that one of the opponents was void.

8898 13

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<div style="background-color: blue; color: white; padding: 2px;">W samzeine</div> <p>♠ 3 ♥ 854 ♦ J1074 ♣ Q10985</p>		<div style="background-color: yellow; padding: 2px;">E zak10</div> <p>♠ Q ♥ AKQ103 ♦ A98632 ♣ K</p>																
	<div style="background-color: blue; color: white; padding: 2px;">S canon55</div> <p>♠ J108742 ♥ J7 ♦ KQ ♣ 742</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">5♠x N NS: 0 EW: 0</div>																

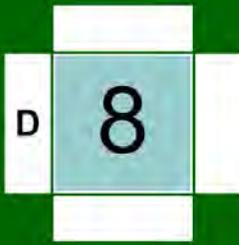
[Movie link](#)

The Advocate considered the bidding and defense remarkable on 8898 13 in several respects. First is SZ's vulnerable free 5♦ bid. Second is ZM's restraint in not raising ♦s. Third is SZ making a penalty double.

In defending 5♠s doubled, ZM cashed 2 ♥s and then played his ♣ K.⁴

In prehearing disclosure, SZ explained his 5♦ bid as a psych and said he always intended to retreat to ♥s if doubled. At the hearing he explained that he assumed his partner had a strong hand because S was preempting and thought his partner might be too afraid to act. When a panelist asked why he did not bid ♣s instead of ♦s, he acknowledged that he could have. He couldn't really explain why he bid and said he would not have with a better partner.

⁴ Using standard bridge notation, A=Ace, K=King, Q=Queen, J=Jack, and T=10.

	N dmarchal27 ♠ K1074 ♥ 83 ♦ KQJ9 ♣ 974	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>W</th> <th>N</th> <th>E</th> <th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1♣</td> <td>1♦</td> <td>1NT</td> <td>2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>X</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	W	N	E	S	1♣	1♦	1NT	2♥	X	P	P	P
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	S JKJbridge ♠ 852 ♥ AQJ76 ♦ 10654 ♣ 8	2♥x S NS: 0 EW: 0												

[Movie link](#)

In terms of the auction, the Advocate questioned why SZ bid 1NT instead of 1♥ after the ♦ overcall. ZM's double of 1♥ was alerted and explained as showing the other major, a suit SZ had presumably denied already.

In terms of the defense, ZM led the ♣ A, and seeing SZ's 5, continued with the ♣ 2 instead of the Q, but this did not cost as SZ and not declarer held the ♣ K.

SZ explained that he bid 1NT because he didn't notice he was holding 5 ♥s.

2281 9

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[Movie link](#)

On this hand, SZ opened a light 1♦ at unfavorable vulnerability, and in response to a negative double, over a splinter in support of ♠s he bid 5♦ with his 5-card suit. The opponents took the push.

In defending the hand, ZM did not lead a ♦ or the ♥ A. Instead, he led the ♥ 2 to SZ's K, and now SZ cashed the ♦ A before returning the ♥ J. ZM did not overtake with the A or Q, seemingly realizing SZ had a third ♥.

Questioned auctions

As noted above, this report will not set out all 13 of the auctions that the Advocate initially questioned.

Takeout double responses

On three deals apart from 8898 3 above, SZ made interesting responses to his partner's takeout doubles. SZ offered no specific explanations for the following three auctions.

2025 3

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<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> W zak10 </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-top: 5px;"> ♠ AQ1073 ♥ AJ4 ♦ 983 ♣ Q2 </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> E samzeine </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-top: 5px;"> ♠ KJ852 ♥ 3 ♦ KQJ65 ♣ K10 </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> S sitbit </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-top: 5px;"> ♠ 4 ♥ KQ98752 ♦ ♣ A8743 </div>																				
		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> 5♠ E NS: 0 EW: 0 </div>																				

[Movie link](#)

The diagramed auction speaks for itself. SZ's 2♠ response with an opening hand to a takeout double is notable. Nevertheless ZM competed successfully to 5♠.

2281 3

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[Movie link](#)

In response to a takeout double of a ♣ opening, SZ eschewed both a natural 1♦ and a natural 1♠ response and instead bid 1NT with his stiff ♣K, but his partner had him covered in ♣s and they did not miss a ♠ fit.

2281 18

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: auto;"> <div style="background-color: red; width: 100%; height: 10px; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <div style="background-color: lightblue; width: 100%; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; font-size: 24px;">18</div> <div style="background-color: white; width: 100%; height: 10px; margin-top: 5px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: flex-end; padding-right: 5px;">D</div> </div>	N emze1600 ♠ AJ42 ♥ 9763 ♦ 3 ♣ 10865	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="width: 25%; background-color: white;">W</th> <th style="width: 25%; background-color: red;">N</th> <th style="width: 25%; background-color: white;">E</th> <th style="width: 25%; background-color: red;">S</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">P</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">X</td> <td style="text-align: center;">P</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1NT</td> <td style="text-align: center;">P</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">P</td> <td style="text-align: center;">P</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			P	1♦	X	P	1NT	P	P	P		
W	N	E	S															
		P	1♦															
X	P	1NT	P															
P	P																	
W zak10 ♠ 86 ♥ A1052 ♦ KQ5 ♣ KJ93	E samzeine ♠ Q975 ♥ QJ4 ♦ J982 ♣ Q4	S wccgolfer ♠ K103 ♥ K8 ♦ A10764 ♣ A72	1NT E NS: 0 EW: 0															

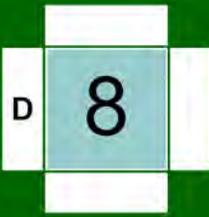
[Movie link](#)

Again SZ bypassed a 4-card major after ZM's takeout double and again they did not miss a ♠ fit. According to the Advocate, only one other pair out of 166 had the same auction.

8898 3, the first hand diagramed above, was another instance where SZ did not respond to ZM's takeout double with a 4-card ♠ suit and ZM happened to not hold 4 ♠s.

Other auctions

2281 8

	N byrdyc ♠ KJ954 ♥ ♦ K76 ♣ A10753	W N E S 1♦ 2♦ 2♥ P 4♥ P P P
	W zak10 ♠ A7 ♥ K852 ♦ AQJ52 ♣ Q8	E samzeine ♠ Q102 ♥ AQJ3 ♦ 1084 ♣ 964
	S spbelding1 ♠ 863 ♥ 109764 ♦ 93 ♣ KJ2	4♥ E NS: 0 EW: 0

[Movie link](#)

SZ apparently knew how to find major fits when they existed. On this hand the opponent's 2♦ cuebid was alerted and explained as showing the black suits. SZ elected to bid his 4-card ♥ suit, finding his partner with 4-card support. The resulting game contract was doomed by the extreme trump split.

<div style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> D 5 </div>	N rhelf1 ♠ 1063 ♥ 105 ♦ KJ5 ♣ A7543	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <th style="background-color: red; color: white;">W</th> <th style="background-color: red; color: white;">N</th> <th style="background-color: red; color: white;">E</th> <th style="background-color: red; color: white;">S</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>P</td> <td>4♥</td> <td>P</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6♥</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> </tr> </table>	W	N	E	S		P	4♥	P	6♥	P	P	P
W	N	E	S											
	P	4♥	P											
6♥	P	P	P											
W zak10 ♠ Q984 ♥ AK2 ♦ A102 ♣ Q106		E samzeine ♠ AJ752 ♥ QJ987643 ♦ ♣												
	S will816 ♠ K ♥ ♦ Q987643 ♣ KJ982	6♥ E NS: 0 EW: 0												

[Movie link](#)

ZM had no difficulty raising SZ's opening 4♥ call at favorable vulnerability to 6 despite the potential for several losers in the black suits. It turned out SZ had both the black suits covered.

4459 2

	N tenfer19 ♠ 9863 ♥ 6 ♦ 75 ♣ Q98754	W N E S P 1♥ 2♦ P 2NT P 3NT P P P
W zak10 ♠ AQ7 ♥ AJ7 ♦ AQJ962 ♣ 6		E samzeine ♠ J542 ♥ Q982 ♦ 10 ♣ KJ102
	S amberkin ♠ K10 ♥ K10543 ♦ K843 ♣ A3	3NT E NS: 0 EW: 0

[Movie link](#)

ZM made a 2♦ overcall with 18 HCP and SZ found a light 2NT response, enabling the pair to get to game.

SZ explained that he expected the overcall to be sound, so he bid to show values. To rebut this assertion the Advocate offered three counterexamples of overcalls that were not sound. One of the three was 7277 11 played on June 11.

7277 11

	N samzeine ♠ J108632 ♥ 9 ♦ J1092 ♣ K3	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>W</th> <th>N</th> <th>E</th> <th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>P</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4♣</td> <td>4♠</td> <td>5♣</td> <td>5♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td>X</td> <td>P</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	W	N	E	S				P	4♣	4♠	5♣	5♠	P	P	X	P	P	P		
	W	N	E	S																		
			P																			
4♣	4♠	5♣	5♠																			
P	P	X	P																			
P	P																					
W ABROUD ♠ ♥ Q105 ♦ K4 ♣ J10876542		E meryl3000 ♠ A54 ♥ AKJ432 ♦ 65 ♣ AQ																				
	S zak10 ♠ KQ97 ♥ 876 ♦ AQ873 ♣ 9	5♠x N NS: 0 EW: 0																				

[Movie link](#)

On this occasion, SZ overcalled a 4 level preempt with a shapely 5-count, finding his partner with decent support.

8898 9

D 9	N gotheater ♠ 10982 ♥ 73 ♦ K10764 ♣ 84	W N E S P 1♣ P P 6NT P P P
W samzeine ♠ AK73 ♥ AJ6 ♦ QJ2 ♣ A107		E zak10 ♠ J4 ♥ K1082 ♦ A98 ♣ KQ62
	S gotham ♠ Q65 ♥ Q954 ♦ 53 ♣ J953	6NT W NS: 0 EW: 0

[Movie link](#)

The Advocate pointed out that SZ jumped to a small slam without checking for either 7NT or a ♠ fit (which did not exist) or a ♦ control.

A panelist pointed out 6NT is a poor contract looking at both hands, so the auction appears more exculpatory than incriminatory.

Questioned defenses

Penalty doubles

Two examples of successful penalty doubles have been presented above, 8898 13, a penalty double by SZ, and 2025 8, a double by ZM converted to penalty by SZ.

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">11</div> <div style="margin-top: 5px; font-weight: bold;">D</div> </div>	N fmorgan ♠ AK109 ♥ KQ103 ♦ A63 ♣ QJ	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr> <th>W</th> <th>N</th> <th>E</th> <th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>P</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>1♦</td> <td>P</td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>4♠</td> <td>X</td> <td>P</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	W	N	E	S				P	P	1♦	P	1♠	P	4♠	X	P	P	P		
W	N	E	S																			
			P																			
P	1♦	P	1♠																			
P	4♠	X	P																			
P	P																					
W zak10 ♠ Q6 ♥ 7 ♦ KJ102 ♣ A109432		E samzeine ♠ 873 ♥ A9852 ♦ Q975 ♣ 7																				
	S clhun ♠ J542 ♥ J64 ♦ 84 ♣ K865	4♠x S NS: 0 EW: 0																				

[Movie link](#)

SZ found a penalty double despite the powerful auction by opponents, no bidding by his partner, and not being on lead. ZM led the ♣ A and continued with the deuce. SZ cashed his ♥ A and gave ZM a ruff.⁵

SZ offered no explanation for this defense.

⁵ Had ZM led his stiff ♥, the defense could have collected two ♥ ruffs instead of one.

4459 8

	N 10sbridge ♠ KJ4 ♥ KJ10 ♦ Q3 ♣ AJ764	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>W</th> <th>N</th> <th>E</th> <th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>1NT</td> <td>P</td> <td>6NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td>X</td> <td>P</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	W	N	E	S	P	1NT	P	6NT	P	P	X	P	P	P		
W	N	E	S															
P	1NT	P	6NT															
P	P	X	P															
P	P																	
W zak10 ♠ 10953 ♥ 953 ♦ KJ97 ♣ 52		E samzeine ♠ 862 ♥ 82 ♦ A8542 ♣ 1098																
	S mikemunson ♠ AQ7 ♥ AQ764 ♦ 106 ♣ KQ3	6NTx NNS: 0 EW: 0																

[Movie link](#)

In another strong auction, SZ made a penalty double holding only one sure trick. Instead of leading the ♦ A, however, he led the ♦ 4, and ZM played the J instead of K, so the opponents collected all the tricks. The Advocate asserted that ZM must have misclicked, because there was no reason to play the J instead of the 9 when declarer played the 6 from dummy. Absent this error, the partnership could have collected 5 ♦ tricks.

SZ said it was not a misclick but poor judgment by his partner assuming that the opener had the ♦ A.

Another defense

2281 15

	N Arlene Cur ♠ AK5 ♥ K103 ♦ AK73 ♣ 742	W N E S P 1NT P P P 2♦ P 3NT P P P
	W zak10 ♠ J8 ♥ AJ965 ♦ 1094 ♣ J96	E samzeine ♠ Q1074 ♥ 742 ♦ Q85 ♣ Q103
		3NT N NS: 0 EW: 0

[Movie link](#)

The Advocate characterized this as a nominee for defense of the year. It takes some study of the entire defense to see it, so the report will proceed trick-by-trick for those unable to open the BBO movie.

1. ♥ 7 Q A 3	6. ♠ K 4 2 J
2. ♥ 5 T 4 8	7. ♠ A 7 3 ♦ 4
3. ♣ 2 3 K 6	8. ♣ 4 Q(!) A 9
4. ♠ 9 8 5 T	9. ♦ J 9 3 Q
5. ♥ 2 ♣ 5 ♥ J K	10. ♠ Q 6 ♦ 10 ♣ 7

At trick 11, SZ led the ♣ T to his partner's J so MZ could score his last two ♥s, resulting in 3NT down 3.⁶

Charged Party's Evidence

SZ frankly acknowledged the evidence would look like cheating to a professional reviewer. He said he used to tell ZM that some of his actions like underleading honors made it look like they were cheating, but the basic question in this case is the honor of SZ and ZM. SZ elected to contest the charge rather than admitting cheating because they did not cheat. They had no motivation to cheat. ZM, not being an ACBL member, doesn't earn masterpoints, and SZ doesn't care about masterpoints. He just cares about playing bridge. Since he was banned from BBO he has been playing on OKBridge.

SZ's explanation for questionable actions is that ZM was an erratic partner who bid what he wanted, argued with SZ, and did not appear to be reading the notes he claimed to be taking. ZM didn't listen when SZ told him not to make takeout doubles with values in the opener's suit. SZ bid as he did in order to become the declarer in NT when he could and take the contract away from ZM.

Their 70% games were flukes. SZ believes based on skill alone that the best players should score 66 to 68%. He has told beginners that earning 50% is like a 70%.

It is far too expensive to call ZM in Jordan, so after their sessions, they communicated on Facebook Messenger. He does not even have the Skype application and did not know how to use Zoom before the disciplinary hearing. He did not use Messenger chat during their sessions.

Charlotte Miller, SZ's significant other, testified that she misses bridge a lot because she doesn't play online. In COVID times, she has been around the house a lot and observed SZ playing online. She never saw him on the telephone while playing, just afterwards.

Arguments

The Charging Party's Advocate argued that the deals spoke for themselves. ZM was not the only one making questionable doubles. It was equally SZ. If they were always swinging wildly with SZ trying to counter ZM's erratic bidding, they would have as many bad scores as good. By not trying for major fits, they should have missed a number of them and didn't.

SZ argued that he didn't cheat, he wouldn't cheat, and he didn't need to cheat. He loves bridge so much he will keep playing if his 8,000 masterpoints are taken away. He doesn't play in tournaments anyway. He just wants to direct and play in his club when he can.

⁶ Declarer doubtless exacerbated this result by attacking the one 7-card suit that didn't split 3-3.

PANEL'S FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS

The Panel has carefully reviewed all the evidence in the 78-page hearing packet, including the Charging Party's prehearing disclosure and rebuttal disclosure and the Charged Party's prehearing disclosure, and has considered the testimony of Ryan Connors, Samir Zeine, and Charlotte Miller. The Panel has considered not only the 22 original deals presented by the Advocate during the disciplinary hearing, but the other four deals included in the initial disclosure and the additional deals in the rebuttal disclosure.

The essential question for the Panel is whether the actions of this partnership can be adequately explained as Samir Zeine described them, as the erratic bidding and defending of an elderly beginner, Zaka Masri, and the compensatory bidding and defending by his expert partner. The problem with crediting this explanation, as the Advocate pointed out, is that consistently anti-field, swingy actions should backfire about as often as they succeed. As the Advocate pointed out, while the partnership's unusual actions did not succeed on every deal⁷, they achieved a much higher rate of success than could be reasonably expected unless the partners had unauthorized information about each other's hands. The weight of the evidence is more than enough for the Panel to be comfortably satisfied that the charge of "Cheating and other Ethical Violations" in violation of the then-applicable section 3.20 of the Code of Disciplinary Regulations has been sustained.

As detailed elsewhere in this hearing report, considering the wide-range of discipline (from "90 days Suspension up to Expulsion") recommended for a category E19 Ethical Violation under then-applicable Chart 2 in Appendix B of the CDR, the Panel has further determined that Samir Zeine's ACBL membership should be suspended for 18 months, after which he will be on probation for 6 months. Also, all the masterpoints he has won playing with Zaka Masri on BBO between February 12, 2020 and June 12, 2020 are forfeited.

⁷ In addition to the five unsuccessful penalty doubles discussed above and the 4♥ in 2281 8 that was doomed by a bad trump split, there was 8898 [15](#) from May 24. SZ initially offered an apparent penalty double of a 3♣ rebid following ZM's preemptive 2♠ bid, but then elected to sacrifice in 5♠s over 5♦s. As the Advocate pointed out, looking only at the partnership's hands, the nonvulnerable sacrifice looked reasonable, except for the 5-0 ♣ split.