

APPEAL NABC+ EIGHTEEN
Subject: Unauthorized Information (UI)
DIC: Steve Bates
Event: Jacoby Open Swiss Teams
Session: 2nd Final, April 9, 2006

Board # 22 John Fout
Vul: E/W ♠ T 5 2
Dlr: East ♥ Q J 8 7 6 4
 ♦ 8 2
 ♣ 8 7

Irakli Garishvili
♠ Q 9 4
♥ 5
♦ T 6 5
♣ A Q J T 6 2

David Chechelashvili
♠ K J 7
♥ A K 9 3 2
♦ Q 9 7 4
♣ 9

Jeff Roman
♠ A 8 6 3
♥ T
♦ A K J 3
♣ K 5 4 3

West	North	East	South
		1♥	Dbl
2♣ ¹	Pass	3♦	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

(1) Alerted – no explanation (systemically a transfer to diamonds)

The Facts: After the lead of a low spade to the Jack and Ace and a spade continuation the contract could not be defeated, and the table result was 3NT making three, E/W +600. The director was called after the play. E/W agreement is that 2♣ is a transfer to diamonds.

The Ruling: The Alert was UI for West and suggested that 3NT would be more successful than the logical alternatives established by a poll of players (the result of the poll as to what to call over 3♦ without an Alert was: 2 votes for 4♦, 1 for 4♣ and 1 for 3NT). Therefore, in accordance with law 16 and 12C2, the table result was adjusted to 5♦, doubled, down two, E/W -500 and N/S +500.

The Appeal: The E/W partnership had system notes documenting the fact that 2♣ in this auction is a transfer to diamonds.

The Decision: There was no misinformation as N/S was informed of the agreement correctly. The real issue (if UI did not contribute to the N/S defensive slip versus 3NT) was that West was under no obligation to inform N/S of his having forgotten the system. That said. Did the UI (from the Alert) contribute to West's 3NT call?

If 3♦ was a splinter in support of clubs, then clearly 3NT is not a practical option for West. The polled players may have considered this a possibility. The committee considered that the normal meaning of 3♦ in this auction was natural (not a splinter). Therefore, the committee determined that there was no logical alternative to bidding 3NT.

The table result of 3NT making three, E/W +600, N/S -600, was restored.

The Committee: John Solodar (Chair), Chris Willenken and Eddie Wold

Commentary:

Gerard First, it's down three in 5♦ doubled and that's being charitable to East. Then the write-up is deficient, as witness the fact that one of the Committee members had to send out an explanation of the Committee's thought processes. Finally, the Committee's judgment was wrong. According to the supplement, what was missing from the description was that West apparently thought 2♣ was non-forcing, so 3♦ was unlikely to be a splinter. How could that possibly be assessed when a natural 2♣ did not exist? The Committee's justifications for a natural 3♦ were completely hypothetical, not empirically supported by anything other than reference to expert practice. Well a non-forcing 2♣ shows a good suit, so East doesn't bid 2♦ just because he doesn't like clubs. 2♦ shows either a good hand or extreme distribution, in which case it is not necessary and could be dangerous to bid 3♦ with extra values, depending on what 3♣ over the double would have been in West's mind. Imagine this explanation: "In the methods I was playing, 2♣ showed values because 3♣ would have been preemptive, so East could have a theoretical force to game and would need to bid 3♦ to show it." Not even Johnnie Cochran could have proven that. What about "In the methods you were playing, 3♣ would have been a fit-showing jump so 2♣ could have been on QJ109-seventh and out?" That queen of spades doesn't look so critical to West's 2♣ bid; I'm betting that exchanging it for a deuce wouldn't have mattered. And on some of those "game forces", East just blasts 3NT because it would be a waste of time to show his 3-5-4-1 18 count or because West won't be able to bid it over 3♦ with his prototypical hand. In short, 2♦ over 2♣ in these "methods" is a practical force. If West doesn't have a 3♣ rebid, whatever that would show, he would need a very specific hand and very specific minors to pass 2♦, something like 942, 5, Q105, KJ10652. Even Ax, AJxxxx, AKxxx, - opposite that isn't likely to make game.

The bottom line is that in West's putative system, 2♦ covers almost all of the hands that the Committee wants East to bid a natural 3♦ on. If East really has a game force opposite a non-forcing 2♣ advance, let him open 2♣ next time. A splinter was a distinct possibility, certainly a logical alternative to a natural 3♦, and more possible in a partnership in which 3♦ would have been a splinter without the interference (I do understand the difference). To say that there was no logical alternative (LA) to 3NT is to assume that there is universal agreement about the meaning of 3♦. In all the partnerships in which I have played non-forcing two-level advances over a takeout double, I'm not sure I have ever discussed the meaning of opener's jump shift. At the least, there was an element of doubt that should have precluded West from bidding the 3NT that was demonstrably suggested by the UI. Since 3♠ or 4♦ was a LA to 3NT, both as forward going measures opposite a splinter, and either would have led to a contract of 5♦ doubled, the adjusted score should have been +800, -800, with a big Bronx cheer to the Committee for its bidding judgment and its appeals judgment.

- Goldsmith** I think there's a logical alternative to 3NT; in fact, I'd bid 3♠. That'll just get 3NT played from East where it's truly cold.
- Polisner** I don't understand this decision. Why wouldn't the AC pay attention to the poll which clearly indicated that West had a LA to bidding 3NT?
- Rigal** At the time I strongly disagreed with this ruling. After the Alert, West – who did NOT know his partner's system – may have been reminded of his methods. Regardless, it seemed to me that there were LAs to the 3NT call – as evidenced by the TD sample. Hence the call should not have been allowed.
- Wildavsky** On what basis did the AC ignore the poll results? They may like their own judgment better than those polled, but
- (a) They should trust the tournament directors to have polled peers of E/W and
 - (b) The AC should have realized that the respondents to the poll have two advantages that the AC members lack. The respondents do not know the complete deal and they know nothing about the UI.
- The AC in effect contended that the judgment of 75% of those who responded to the poll was "abnormal." They had no call to do so, and by ignoring this vitally useful information they undid the tournament director's diligent work.

Wolff N/S got fixed by a home brew CD. My draconian judgment says NS -600 from normal playing luck, and EW -500 in 5♦ doubled down two. In an event like the Jacoby Open Swiss Teams, in this match, the combined VP total will be considerably short of the normal amount. I might be persuaded to give N/S an average (for IMP purposes). Remember if, because of the CD, N/S would have gotten a great score (a likely result), we never would have heard about it.

Zeiger If anybody wants to know why some tournament directors are loathe to bother with player polls during an NABC+ event, this appeal shows why. Most committees, and I could give you other examples, simply do not care about player polls. In this case, a poll clearly established less successful LAs to the 3NT call, which were not suggested by the UI. The Committee, which knew all the hands of course, simply didn't care. In fact, I think N/S should have appealed, since -500 is extremely generous to E/W in 5♦ doubled. Raspberries to the Committee. Lousy write up too. Didn't E/W say anything in their behalf?