

APPEAL	NABC+ SEVENTEEN
Subject	Unauthorized Information (UI) - Tempo
DIC	Steve Bates
Event	Jacoby Open Swiss Teams
Session	Second Final
Date	March 21, 2010

BD#	19
VUL	E/W
DLR	South

Tarek Sadek	
♠	A J 3
♥	A 7 4 2
♦	T 9 7
♣	Q 6 5

Richard DeMartino		Spring 2010 Reno, NV	John Stiefel	
♠	7		♠	T 8 5
♥	Q T		♥	K 9 8 6 5 3
♦	A 8 5 4 3		♦	6 2
♣	J T 4 3 2		♣	9 8

Walid Elahmady	
♠	K Q 9 6 4 2
♥	J
♦	K Q J
♣	A K 7

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

Final Contract	6♠ by South
Opening Lead	♣ A
Table Result	Made 6, N/S + 980
Director Ruling	4♠ S made 6, N/S +480
Committee Ruling	4♠ S made 6, N/S +480

(1)	Semi-Forcing – up to 11HCP.
(2)	4+C any strength or 3+C 14+ HCP (balanced 12 or 13 counts pass)
(3)	Relay to 2♥.
(4)	Forced. – opener has no other options.
(5)	10-11 HCP with a flat hand, 3 spades, and a preference for notrump.
(6)	Slam try. American style cuebid -- shows the ♣A.
(7)	♥A, denies ♦A, does not promise extra values.
(8)	Agreed break in tempo (BIT).

The Facts: The director was called at the BIT and again after the play of the hand was completed. There was an original stipulation that there was an unmistakable hesitation before the 4♠ bid.

The Ruling: The director determined that the BIT demonstrably suggested bidding on and that pass over 4♠ was a logical alternative per Law 16B1(a). In accordance with Law 12C1(e), the director judged that for the offending side, "the most unfavorable result at all probable" and for the non-offending side, "the most favorable result that was likely" were the same - 4♠ by South making six. Therefore, N/S was assigned plus 480 and E/W minus 480.

The Appeal: N/S appealed the director's decision and North, East and West attended the hearing.

The committee learned that 2♣ could be a good hand, but not a good hand with five clubs.

North acknowledged there was a considerable break in tempo prior to South's 4♠ call and addressed only the issue of logical alternative.

The Decision: Given that there was a break in tempo that clearly suggested bidding, the issue that the committee considered was whether there was a logical alternative to bidding on over the hesitant 4♠ call. The committee recognized that North's three top honors plus the ♠J were all good cards. However, North's evaluation of his hand must take into consideration that South's 2♣ bid is technically non-forcing.

An in-tempo 4♠ call could suggest that the diamond suit might be a problem and that the five-level is dangerous. South's slow 4♠ bid suggests that this is likely not the case. This provides North with reason to ignore the three diamond losers in his own hand and consider only the good cards in his other suits.

Taking these points into consideration, the committee judged that pass was a logical alternative to bidding onwards; i.e. that some significant number of North's peer group would choose to pass. Accordingly, the committee ruled as the director had.

Clearly, the appeal had substantial merit.

The Committee: Michael Huston (Chairman), David Gold, Chris Moll, Hendrik Sharples and Bruce Reeve.

Commentary:

Goldsmith Passing 4S is certainly an option. The slow 4S bid obviously suggests bidding over passing. Therefore, pass is required. N/S should know that, and therefore an AMWM ought to be considered. Here, not only is bidding over 4S reasonable, I think it's probably the majority action, so reluctantly, I'd not give an AMWM

Polisner Where is the merit in this appeal - let alone "substantial merit". If I was asked for a prototype hand to explain Law 16 B1(a), I might use this hand. In fact, I think I would have voted for a PP.

Rigal

Not convinced by the merit – but the decision was right.
KQ10xxx/K/Qxx/AKJ is surely possible here – though maybe with that hand there would be no 4♣ bid? Still; if North has suggested three working cards, he can't have what he actually holds or he would not bid 4♠? So North is playing South to have misbid.

Wildavsky

This was as close a case as I've seen in a while. South's was a "bad" hesitation – he could have and should have planned his auction before bidding 4C. North, however, seems to have a near-perfect hand. He won't like it if South has a heart void, but even there he will usually have five level safety. EW will know to underlead in diamonds when it's right, so 10 tricks rate to be the limit opposite

KQTxxx

Void

Qxx

AKJx

Would South bid 4C with that? I don't think he should, but it's close. The legal question is whether Pass is a logical alternative. Law 16 tells us:

A logical alternative action is one that, among the class of players in question and using the methods of the partnership, would be given serious consideration by a significant proportion of such players, of whom it is judged some might select it.

With the luxury of time and the Internet at my disposal I did something the AC could not. I polled 50 experts. 26 responded by my deadline, as follows:

Bid - Not close 13 50%

Bid - Close 6 23%

Bid - Unspecified 4 15%

Pass - Not close 1 4%

Pass - Close 2 8%

Full poll results: http://bit.ly/poll_for_reno_case_17

The laws, intentionally, do not give any numerical thresholds. Here it seems that a significant proportion of those polled considered passing, and some did pass, so I judge that Pass was a LA.

If North, in committee, made a cogent argument that convinced me that at the table he had considered a range of South hands and concluded that the chances of 12 tricks were overwhelmingly more likely than those of 10, and that further bidding would result in reaching slam when it was right, than I might consider letting the score stand

Wolff

A slam dunk ruling and one which should be filed with the recorder for future reference. Again I would hate this decision to be influenced by

some group of unqualified pollsters being asked and getting answers which were unthought out by questionably qualified players. Also when a pair is playing an individual system, not known by many, how can players not knowing that system (probably including the TD and the future committee) answer accurately what should or should not be done. The only logical answer is when a pair is playing their own home brew or close they must be very discrete to not have anything resembling or close to a BIT.