

APPEAL	Non NABC+ Four
Subject	Declarer's Claim Disputed
DIC	Tom Marsh
Event	0-5000 Blue Ribbon Pairs
Session	First Qualifying
Date	December 1, 2009

BD#	18
VUL	N/S
DLR	East

3,300 Masterpoints	
♠	T 3
♥	A 8 3
♦	9 6 5 4 3
♣	K 8 2

4,700 Masterpoints		Fall 2009 San Diego, CA	4,700 Masterpoints	
♠	K Q 8 5 2		♠	6 4
♥	Q 6 4 2		♥	J 7
♦	K		♦	A Q J 8 7
♣	T 7 3		♣	Q 9 6 4

1,600 Masterpoints	
♠	A J 9 7
♥	K T 9 5
♦	T 2
♣	A J 5

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♣
1♠	2♣	2♦	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Final Contract	2♦ by East
Opening Lead	♣A
Table Result	Down 1, E/W - 50
Director Ruling	2♦ E down 1, E/W - 50
Panel Ruling	2♦ E down 1, E/W - 50

The Facts: The director was called at trick ten when declarer, on lead from her hand, claimed in the position shown below. She was asked what she was pitching from dummy and said it did not matter. North wanted her to play three rounds of diamonds and pitch the ♥HQ on trick 12, allowing him to win tricks 12 and 13.

	♥ 8		
	♦ 965		
♠ Q8			
♥ Q6			
		♦ QJ8	
		♣ 9	
	♠ J9		
	♥ 95		

The Ruling: The play of the fifth diamond was deemed to be irrational once South shows out on the third lead of the suit. Law 70E1. Final result: 2♦ by East down one, E/W minus 50.

The Appeal: N/S appealed the director's decision and all four players attended the hearing.

N/S repeated its position that East should play her ♦8 at trick 12 and throw the ♥Q from dummy, which would allow North to win the last two tricks.

East (about 4700 masterpoints) said she would have noticed if both the ♦10 and ♦9 had been played and would have played her ♣9 at trick 12.

The Decision: Law 70E1 states "The Director shall not accept any unstated line of play the success of which depends upon finding one opponent rather than the other with a particular card, unless an opponent ... would subsequently fail to follow to that suit on any normal* line of play or unless failure to adopt that line of play would be irrational." *'Normal' includes play that would be careless or inferior for the class of player involved.

Declarer, having pulled only two rounds, clearly knew there were outstanding trump. The 10 and 9 are such large cards the panel judged that someone with her experience would have noticed if they both had been played and thus it would be irrational for her to continue trump after playing the ♦Q and ♦J. The claim stands - 2♦ down one, E/W minus 50.

The appeal was deemed to have merit.

The Panel: Charles MacCracken (Reviewer), Steve Bates and Candy Kuschner.

Commentary:

Polisner Okay, I guess, but I am normally very hard on incomplete claims especially when there is an outstanding trump.

Rigal Interesting and far from obvious. Any time a declarer claims (how many tricks by the way –the report is unclear but we assume 'the rest') when they have a trump loser I think there is a good case. I'd be inclined to split the score if that were allowed. But I suspect 12C3 does not apply here. So, I guess I'll grudgingly accept the panel's decision.

Smith I agree with the directors and panel on this case. We don't know if East miscounted trumps or simply expected them to split. Probably the latter I would guess. But in any case, I agree that even if they were miscounted it is beyond careless or inferior for a player to attempt to draw the last trump with the eight.

Wildavsky I don't like these rulings. Yes, it would be irrational to throw North in with the last trump, but declarer had already shown through her claim that she had miscounted trump. There's no reason to believe that she would have paid any attention to the spots, high or low. Miscounting trump is merely careless, not irrational.

Wolff Normal greed (wanting a better score) is sometimes understandable but here N/S went too far and should be chastised by at least being embarrassed for trying to get what they didn't deserve.