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| APPEAL | NABC+ THIRTEEN |
| Subject | Unauthorized Information (UI) - Tempo |
| DIC | Henry Cukoff |
| Event | Blue Ribbon Pairs |
| Session | First Final |
| Date | November 29, 2007 |

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|-----|------|
| BD# | 22 |
| VUL | E/W |
| DLR | East |

| | |
|-----------|-----------|
| Mark Dean | |
| ♠ | 9 |
| ♥ | J T 8 6 2 |
| ♦ | 9 5 2 |
| ♣ | T 7 5 4 |

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|--------------|-----------|--|-----------------|-------------|
| Shirley Blum | | Fall 2007 San Francisco, CA | Steve McConnell | |
| ♠ | J 3 | | ♠ | A K Q 5 4 2 |
| ♥ | K Q 9 5 | | ♥ | A 7 4 |
| ♦ | A T | | ♦ | K 7 3 |
| ♣ | A K Q 8 3 | | ♣ | 9 |

| | |
|-----------------|-----------|
| Victor Chubukov | |
| ♠ | T 8 7 6 |
| ♥ | 3 |
| ♦ | Q J 8 6 4 |
| ♣ | J 6 2 |

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

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|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Final Contract | 7NT by West |
| Opening Lead | Not Shown |
| Table Result | Made 7, E/W +2220 |
| Director Ruling | 6NT W +7, E/W +1470 |
| Committee Ruling | 7NT W made 7, E/W +2220 |

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| (1) | Shows three controls. |
| (2) | A break in tempo (BIT) before bid, which denied the ♠Q. |

The Facts: The director was called after the hand and after the opponents had left the table. When the E/W pair was questioned about the 5♥ call, both players agreed that there had been a BIT. There was no agreement by either pair as to the length of the BIT.

The Ruling: The director determined that there was UI and that the BIT suggested additional values. If West didn't care about the ♠Q, she should have bid 7NT after 5♣. Therefore, in accordance with laws 16 and 12C2, the result was adjusted to 6NT by West making seven, E/W plus 1470.

The Appeal: E/W were relatively inexperienced as a partnership, having played “a bit” on the Internet. Their system is two over one. The 3♠ bid showed 16-17 HCP and did not promise solid or semi-solid spades (They seemed to be unfamiliar with that treatment.). 4NT was Roman Keycard Blackwood in spades and the follow-up was the queen ask. At that point, East did not know how to show the queen and decided that he would bid 5♥, uncertain of its meaning, and then bid more later. West thought 5♥ denied the ♠Q but bid 7NT anyway thinking that East had to have other good card to make up his compliment of HCP to make his hand good enough to bid 3♠. She thought that two side jacks instead of the ♠Q could make 7NT playable, so she bid it.

The committee asked West why she asked for the ♠Q if she was going to bid 7NT anyway. She said she asked for it so that she wouldn't have to think about whether to bid 7NT. When her partner denied the ♠Q, she thought about hand possibilities that would make 7NT playable without bringing in the spade suit. She decided in favor of 7NT.

The Decision: When West made her decision to bid 7NT she already had interpreted her partner's hand to be 16-17 HCP with six spades. Her partner's BIT may have suggested his lack of certainty about how to deny the ♠Q more than anything else, which his bidding had already shown. In fact, in terms of HCP, East was at the bottom of his bid, thus not possessing extra strength according to this partnership's understanding. Since East's hesitation seems to be the result of random confusion, the committee decided that the BIT did not demonstrably suggest a line of action to West. West was permitted to make her choice of bid unconstrained.

Therefore, the committee restored the table result of 7NT by West making seven, E/W plus 2220.

The Committee: Michael Huston (Chair), Shannon Cappelletti and Jacob Morgan.

Commentary:

Goldsmith The director got this one right. Was there a BIT? Yes. Did it demonstrably suggest 7NT? Yes, of course. Even if the BIT just showed confusion, then it demonstrably suggested not trusting the 5♥ response. What were the logical alternatives (LA)? 6NT seems pretty obvious. Did the UI suggest 7NT over 6NT? Yes. Therefore, 7NT is illegal. Can 6NT be the right spot? Sure. Give East AKxxxx/AJ10/KQx/x and 7NT is on an unlikely squeeze or the stiff SQ, but 6NT is cold. If West didn't know what the responses to 5♦ were, bidding it could only hurt her, especially if partner didn't know, too. That reasoning might have encouraged choosing an action which would not have led to controversy. This decision is so easy, I'd give E/W an appeal without merit warning (AWMW).

Polisner It seems that there has been a common theme throughout this set that if it hesitates - shoot it (except for NABC+ case nine where they should have shot it). What, pray tell, did the BIT (which was never described) indicate? What did the BIT mean? Who said that it claimed the ♠Q? The appeals committee did the right thing to restore the table result.

Rigal The most interesting of the cases so far. The question of slow key-card responses (as opposed to continuations after the response) DOES raise some challenging problems. The most likely meaning for a slow denial of the trump queen is not 'I don't have the trump queen' it is 'I do have it but don't know what to do' or 'I have an extra trump -- is that worth the trump queen?' Or 'I do not have it but I have enough extras to want to play slam anyway'.

In my view West would not have bid the Grand Slam facing a prompt denial so can't do so here when she correctly reads her partner's tempo. When she asked for the trump queen she must have been prepared to stop out of 7NT, so now she gets to do so after the worst response; her partner's tempo encouraged her to be thoughtful when she had already indicated that she might have been lazy.

Smith I strongly disagree with this committee decision. When a player hesitates before making the weakest bid available, it shows extra values of some kind. West had absolutely no new information not available on the last round of the auction when she could have just bid 7NT if she thought it was right, so she must have been considering other contracts. All the elements are present for a law 16 score adjustment and it should have been made by the committee.

Wildavsky I don't follow the appeal committee's (AC) logic. Yes, East's hesitation suggests that he was unsure about how to show or deny the spade queen. Since he in fact denied it, the hesitation suggests that he holds it, and sure enough he did.

UI was present and it demonstrably suggested bidding on. The question the AC ought to have considered was whether 6NT would have been logical for this West. Surely it was. It's easy enough to construct hands consistent with East's bidding where 7NT is an underdog. We have as further evidence West's failure to bid 7NT the previous round. No doubt she did not anticipate the ethical bind her partner's actions would place her under. Unfortunately, he both denied a card he held and indicated by his tempo that he had done exactly that. We cannot give the offenders the benefit of the doubt here. When West asks for the spade queen we have little choice but to conclude that her choice of contracts depended on the answer.

I prefer the tournament director's ruling to the AC's.

Wolff Excellent ruling.