



2006

APPEALS

Edited by David Stevenson

ENGLISH BRIDGE UNION

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All the appeals from the EBU's major weekend events have been included herein. It is hoped that they will provide interest and an insight into the way that people in England are ruling the game.

After the success of the earlier editions it was decided to repeat this publication, but this year widened to include more events. The congresses at Bournemouth, Blackpool and London plus the Tollemache are included for the first time. This publication has been put on the EBU website in the L&EC section. The feedback from this will be used to decide whether to repeat this in future years. Also consideration will be given as to whether to publish it as a booklet (as is happening in other countries in similar situations). So, whether you liked this publication or not, if you can see how you would improve it, if you would like to purchase a paper copy, or if you have any other comments, please tell the L&EC Secretary, John Pain. If you wish to comment on the actual appeals, the layout, the editing or the Commentary please tell the Editor, David Stevenson. The way to contact the L&EC Secretary or the Editor is detailed on the next page.

Comments have been made on the appeals by an international group of people who have donated their time, for which we thank them. Also thanks are due to Peter Eidt of Germany and Jeffrey Allerton of England for doing the proof-reading.

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Commentators

There are comments on each Appeal by various commentators. Their comments here reflect their personal views.

David Stevenson (b. 1947), the Editor, is an International Tournament Director from Liverpool, England. He has served as a member of the Tournament Appeals Committee of the World Bridge Federation, and on Appeals Committees in the ACBL, Scotland, Ireland, South Africa and Sweden. He is a member of the Laws & Ethics Committees in England and Wales. He was formerly the Secretary of the European Bridge League Tournament Directors' Committee, a commentator in the ACBL appeals books and Chief Tournament Director of the WBU. He hosts forums for Bridge Rulings and Appeals Committees.

Adam Wildavsky (b. 1960) of New York City is a Senior Software Engineer for Google, Inc. He has been interested in the laws since he became the director of the MIT Bridge Club in 1979. Adam is the vice-chairman of the ACBL Laws Commission and a member of the NABC Appeals Committee, an ACBL casebook commentator, and a contributor to the Bridge Laws Mailing List. He won a Bronze Medal in the 2003 Bermuda Bowl in Monaco. His interest in the laws is informed by his study of Objectivism, the philosophy of Ayn Rand. His web site is www.tameware.com.

Alain Gottcheiner is a Belgian, occasional TD, has had some successes in national championships, has written about conventions and systems and is known as a "systems freak". His main appointments as an AC member are as an expert about strange conventions. His other fields of interest include mathematical anthropology, the sociology of games and 'dolichotrichotomy'.

He has a general tendency towards severity to UI and MI, but dislikes lawyering attitude more than anything else.

Barry Rigal (b. 1957) lives in Manhattan with his wife Sue Picus. He is chairman of National Appeals for the ACBL and a full time bridge player, writer and commentator. His tournament record includes most of the major UK National titles and two US National titles.

He is currently working on an exposé of top-level bridge (after which he expects he will never eat lunch in this town again).

Bob Schwartz (b. 1945) is a computer consultant. Member of the ACBL Board of Governors, ACBL National Appeals Committee and the ACBL Competition and Conventions Committee. Married (over 30 years) with 3 children. Likes golf and poker--tolerates bridge.

Eric Landau is an American. He was a successful tournament player in the ACBL and Canada in the 1970s and 1980s, but has been semi-retired from competition since the late 80s and currently plays only once in a while. He is the author of the book "Every Hand An Adventure", and his writings have also appeared in The Bridge World, the Bulletin of the ACBL and various lesser-known publications. He directs at the club and local levels occasionally, and managed a bridge club for several years.

Frances Hinden and **Jeffrey Allerton** are tournament players from Surrey, England. Recent successes include winning the 2003 Gold Cup, while Jeffrey is a past European and World junior champion. They both used to direct club and county competitions, and Frances is a member of the EBU panel of referees.

Richard Hills is primus inter pares of the Bridge Laws Mailing List:

<http://www.amsterdamed.org/pipermail/blml/>

Richard's administrative successes include his current role as Minutes Secretary of the DIAC Social Club (and co-chair of its Film Festival sub-committee), plus his just-completed role as amicus curiae to Grattan Endicott. Richard's past competitive successes include winning five Australian Youth Bridge Championships, plus being Chess Champion of both Tasmania and Canberra, and also winning his school's Spaghetti Eating Championship.

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Abbreviations

There are some abbreviations, and they are listed here:

EBU	English Bridge Union
WBU	Welsh Bridge Union
ACBL	American Contract Bridge League
L&E	Laws & Ethics Committee
L&EC	Laws & Ethics Committee
WB	EBU White book, containing regulations for TDs and ACs
OB	EBU Orange book, containing regulations for players
WBF	World Bridge Federation
TD	Tournament Director
Director	Tournament Director
AC	Appeals Committee
Committee	Appeals Committee
LA	Logical alternative
AI	Authorised information
MI	Misinformation
UI	Unauthorised information
BIT	Break in Tempo [a hesitation, or over-fast call]
PP	Procedural penalty [a fine]
NOs	Non-offenders
N/S	North-South
E/W	East-West
!	Alerted
...	Hesitation [agreed]
(1), (2) etc	References to notes below
P	Pass
♠♥♦♣	Spades hearts diamonds clubs
Dbl	Double
Reddbl	Redouble
NT	No-trumps
Benji	Benjamin: a popular name for a form of Acol where 2♣/♦ openings are strong and artificial, 2♥/♠ openings are weak

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General

From the 1st August 2006 a new Orange book applied in England. You can download a copy from the L&EC website – see Contacts. There were major changes to the alerting rules. The most important changes were: first the introduction of “Announcements” for the ranges of 1NT openings, for Stayman and simple Transfer responses, and for natural Two level openings; and second that alerting above 3NT was usually stopped. Appeals 1 to 10 applied before the change, appeals 11 to 26 after.

From the 1st August 2000 Tournament Directors are permitted to give “weighted” scores when assigning, for example if they adjust a score because of misinformation they might give a score of 50% of 6♠ making and 50% of 4♠ +2. Previously only Appeals Committees were permitted to do this. The World Bridge Federation hopes that this will reduce the number of Appeals.

The format used to show such results is based on the “Maastricht protocol” whereby higher N/S scores are shown first. It helps scorers and TDs if a consistent style is used. Example:

Score assigned for both sides (Law 12C3):

10% 6♣ –1 by West, NS +100
+60% 6♠ doubled –3 by N/S, NS –800
+30% 6♣ making by West, NS –1370

Unlike most other publications of this sort around the world, we have named the Tournament Director in each case. He or she is the man or woman who attended the table, took the evidence, told the players the ruling, and presented the case to the Committee. But the ruling will only be given after he or she has consulted with at least one other Director and probably at least one experienced player. Thus he or she is not solely responsible for the ruling – on rare occasions he or she may not agree with it himself or herself.

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APPEAL No 1: Should we split?

Easter Festival

06.025

Tournament Director:

Martin Lee

Appeals Committee:

Jeremy Dhondy (Chairman) Nissan Rand David Gold

Board no 11	♠ 10 2	
Dealer South	♥ A Q J 3	
Nil vulnerable	♦ K J 5 3	
MP Pairs	♣ 10 7 5	
♠ A 9 7	<i>N</i>	♠ K Q 8 4 3
♥ K 10 8 2	<i>W</i> <i>E</i>	♥ 9 7
♦ none	<i>S</i>	♦ A 10 9 7
♣ A Q J 8 3 2		♣ 9 6
	♠ J 6 5	
	♥ 6 5 4	
	♦ Q 8 6 4 2	
	♣ K 4	

Basic systems:

North-South play Strong NT, 5 card majors

East-West play weak NT, 3 weak 2s

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			Pass
1♣	1♥	1♠(3)	2♥
...2♠(1)	Pass	3♦(2)	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

- (1) Agreed 'slow' by all parties
- (2) Game try in spades
- (3) Although not asked during the auction, this promises 5 spades

Result at table:

4♠ + 2 by East, NS -480

Director first called:

At end of hand

Director's statement of facts:

TD was called by North at the end of play. The facts were given to the TD and agreed. North questioned the 3♦ game try bid by East after the slow 2♠ bid.

Director's ruling:

Table result stands.

Details of ruling:

3♦ is automatic.

Appeal lodged by:

North-South

Basis of appeal:

Do not accept that 3♦ is automatic

Appeals Committee decision:

Score assigned for both sides:

2♠ + 4 by East, NS -230

Deposit returned

Appeals Committee's comments:

3♦ is not a clear-cut action and the score reverts to 2♠ + 4.

Given that N/S play weak NT West is unlikely to be thinking with a minimum hand and a singleton. Thus the hesitation implies a stronger hand and gives East information which he acted upon.

Nissan Rand agreed that East had bid on after receipt of unauthorised information but preferred a split score which the rest of the committee felt was not allowed.

Adam Wildavsky's comments:

The TD ruling is mistaken as to bridge judgement. 3D is far from automatic. I wish that TDs were required to take a poll before labelling any call as such.

The issue faced by the AC is more interesting. Often a hesitation could be based on either being sub-minimum or super-maximum. Here competitive considerations dictate that West will act with three spades even with a sub-minimum, so I agree with the AC that a super-maximum is far more likely. Awarding a split score would be illegal as I understand things. East's call is either legal or not. If it is legal we must not adjust the score, and if it is illegal then we know beyond a doubt what the score would have been. To give a weighted adjustment as the minority on the committee suggested would be unjust. In some quarters that would be known as a "Reveley" ruling.

Alain Gottcheiner's comments:

Agree with the AC : passing 2♠ is an obvious LA, with only an 8-card expected fit and 20-23 HCP.

Don't agree with the split score suggestion. The main use of split scores happens when we don't know what the non-offending side would have done absent the infraction (e.g. Would he have found that crucial Queen without the misleading hesitation? or see appeal # 6) ; they shouldn't be used to adjudicate the offending side's actions. Only L12C2 applies here.

Note that the case would be more difficult if 1♠ promised only 4 (giving West 4 spades for his bid).

But I don't buy the argument about weak NTs : playing strong NTs would lower West's minimal playing strength for 2♠ (as it would include minimal balanced hands) and make passing even more of a LA.

Barry Rigal's comments:

In order to adjust the score the committee must find that there was not only a hesitation but that it pointed clearly to his having extras, as opposed to the possibility that he might have a minimum hand and be considering passing rather than bidding.

The requirements of the law are that the hesitation demonstrably suggests extras, and I do not think it does. Thus I would not adjust the score.

Bob Schwartz's comments:

I'm a little confused by the comment that N/S play weak NT—is this supposed to be relevant? I assume E/W do not play support doubles since they weren't mentioned. If they do and West's 2S bid promised 4 I cannot even begin to imagine not making a game try.

As usual I wish that N/S had mentioned to E/W prior to the opening lead that they felt there had been a BIT and might desire their rights being protected. I dislike the timing of the director call.

The crux becomes: Was pass a logical alternative in the actual situation? Certainly.

I very reluctantly agree with the committee ruling—reluctantly because I would have bid 3D as would almost 70% of the experts I gave the problem to.

I also disagree with the TD making the initial ruling that pass was not a LA. This is the job for a committee (or possibly a poll of experts.)

David Stevenson's comments:

I am not sure there is much in it: is 3♦ an automatic try or not? Probably not so I agree with the AC.

I can see no legal or logical basis to split the score, ie to give both sides a poor score.

Eric Landau's comments:

I disagree with the assessment that "the hesitation implies a stronger hand", and so would have upheld the director's ruling. In my experience, a player who bids 2S after a huddle in this position often holds a doubleton spade, which would make East's 3D bid less attractive, not more.

Frances Hinden's comments:

A very simple case: does West's hesitation suggest extra values? If so, does East have a logical alternative to making a game try? I think the answer to the first question is yes, because the vast majority of players will always act with 3-card spade support here (opposite a 5-card 1S bid) whatever their hand. As for the second question, playing weak NT where West has either 15 HCP or extra distribution, I personally don't see an LA to making a game try and so I agree with the TD. The AC saw this differently, which is their prerogative.

I cannot see why there should any need for a split (or weighted) score here.

Jeffrey Allerton's comments:

Law 16A says:

“After a player makes available to his partner extraneous information that may suggest a call or play,, the partner may not choose from among logical alternative actions one that could demonstrably have been suggested over another by the extraneous information.”

Therefore, there are two questions for the TD/AC to consider:

- Does the hesitation demonstrably suggest that West has extra values? Note the word existence of the word “demonstrably” in the Law. So if a plausible explanation for the slowness of the 2♠ bid is that West was considering passing instead (762 KQ10 J AJ8753?) then the UI does not demonstrably suggest anything, in which case no adjustment should be considered.
- Is passing 2♠ a logical alternative for East? Under the EBU interpretation of “logical alternative” would 30% or more of East's peers pass? I suspect the answer to this question is no. So I prefer the TD's ruling to the AC's.

The comment about the dissenting opinion is interesting. If the AC had doubt on a matter of law or regulation, they should have sought guidance from the TD.

Richard Hills' comments:

If East-West were using a strong 1NT, I would agree with the Appeals Committee that passing 2S was a logical alternative for East, since West could hold a balanced minimum.

But since East-West were using a weak 1NT, I agree with the Director. West's raise to 2S denies a balanced minimum. Either West holds 15-16 hcp balanced, or West has shape and therefore better than minimum ruffing power.

Final summary by editor:

I think that there is confusion over nomenclature here. A split score is one where the two sides get different scores, which is allowed in certain circumstances. A weighted score is one where the adjustment is given as a set of percentages of various scores [see Appeal 6], which is allowed in most circumstances. Some of the commentators seemed to be talking about weighted scores but that was not what the Appeals Committee referred to.

As for the suggestion that the TD should not decide whether something was an LA or not, TDs have been expected to rule as correctly as they can for thirty years now in this country: the bad old days where players had to go to an AC just to get ordinary justice are no longer with us. A poll of experts is sensible, but how do we know the TD did not? He is required to consult with others before giving a judgement ruling, and these days the “others” often include some good players.

The case it self seems a pretty close call to me as a judgement, and it is unsurprising therefore that the commentators have no clear agreement.

APPEAL No 2: You alert weak twos?

Schapiro Spring 4s 06.037

Tournament Director:

Mike Amos

Appeals Committee:

Heather Dhondy (Chairman) Paul Hackett Roger Bryant

Board no 28 Dealer West N/S vulnerable K/O teams	♠ Q 9 8 5 ♥ J 7 4 ♦ A K Q 9 2 ♣ 9										
♠ 4 3 ♥ K Q 10 9 8 6 ♦ 4 ♣ Q 7 5 2	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;"></td> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center;"><i>N</i></td> <td style="width: 33%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>W</i></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>E</i></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>S</i></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		<i>N</i>		<i>W</i>	<i>E</i>			<i>S</i>		♠ K ♥ A 3 2 ♦ J 8 6 ♣ K J 10 8 6 3
	<i>N</i>										
<i>W</i>	<i>E</i>										
	<i>S</i>										
	♠ A J 10 7 6 2 ♥ 5 ♦ 10 7 5 3 ♣ A 4										

Basic systems:

North-South play Strong club
East-West play Weak 2s

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
2♥ ! (1)	Pass (2)	4♥	4♠
Pass	4NT !	Pass	5♦ !
Pass	6♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

- (1) Weak 2
- (2) North asked a question (see below)

Result at table:

6♠ making by South, NS +1430

Director first called:

At end of auction

Director's statement of facts:

E/W asked to reserve their rights. North asked about the meaning of 2♥. He explained that he did not expect a natural 2♥ to be alerted and had asked while the STOP card was on the table and passed immediately the card was removed. This was agreed by E/W. On completion of the board E/W asked for a ruling. TD asked South why he bid 4♠ - his English is poor. He shrugged his shoulders and said 'spades'.

Director's ruling:

Table result stands.

Details of ruling:

Not clear that North's question is unauthorised information conveying any message.
Pass is not a logical alternative

Note by editor:

By the time this booklet is published EBU alerting regulations have changed, and weak twos are no longer alertable. But they were when this event was held.

Appeal lodged by:

East-West

Basis of appeal:

Don't agree that pass not a logical alternative.

Director's comments:

TD asked several players (including internationals) and they agreed that although 4♠ might prove costly, there was no choice. TD watched an auction where the bidding started 2♥ pass 4♥ 4♠ and three where it went 3♥ pass 4♥ 4♠. TD concluded that pass was not a logical alternative.

Appeals Committee decision:

Director's ruling upheld
Deposit returned

Appeals Committee's comments:

Deposit returned JUST. This was bordering on frivolous. 4♠ is normal.

Adam Wildavsky's comments:

I agree with the "no adjustment" rulings though not necessarily with their justification. I think a pass of 4H, though a mistake, might be logical. However I do not think there was any UI suggesting one action over another. It would surprise me also that a natural weak 2 was alertable, whether or not the regulations require it. Note also that a player who thought he had shown values with his question would not act over 4S -- that would be showing his values twice.

Alain Gottcheiner's comments:

Can't tell whether 4♠ is really automatic, but let's walk the cat back a little. North asked a question – he is entitled to. Perhaps he expected 2♥ to be of the 2-suited type (that would be a good reason for alerting in any context) or even more exotic. Asking after a skip bid should never be a source of UI: it might be a good way to feign interest in the deal (similar to pretending you think about 10 seconds). And North thereafter called in the right tempo. What else should one have done ? For that reason, I'd have called the appeal frivolous. Guess South answered the question "what does 4♠ mean ?"

Barry Rigal's comments:

Frivolous appeal; no need to say more...is there?

Bob Schwartz's comments:

I like this case. I gave the hand to 8 experts here and 6 of them bid 4S, 1 passed and 1 hedged and finally passed but said it was very close and when informed about the question that had been asked said "So What?". I like the fact that this time the TD asked for expert opinions. I am not sure what information was transmitted by asking about the alert (I may be reading something in here but I gather from the comments that there WAS an alert) and surely that should not deprive South from bidding his hand.

I think everybody did their job well here.

David Stevenson's comments:

The ruling was clearly correct and the appeal totally without merit. I consider it wrong to return the deposit.

Frances Hinden's comments:

I agree with everything the TD and AC said (except that I would have kept the deposit).

Jeffrey Allerton's comments:

The TD mentioned two points in his ruling. To be successful the appellants needed to challenge both these points, but only one was mentioned (on the appeals form at any rate). Given the evidence that the TD had gathered to rule that Pass was not a logical alternative, I am surprised that the deposit was returned.

Richard Hills' comments:

I agree with the Director's ruling that 4S was South's only logical alternative given that South was an international player. And I note with pleasure that the Director correctly polled international peers of South to come to this conclusion.

But (in my personal and unofficial opinion) I disagree with the Appeals Committee that it might be desirable to keep the appealing side's deposit when the non-appealing side has selected a demonstrably suggested logical alternative. In my personal and unofficial opinion, I believe that, "Justice must not only be done, Justice must also be seen to be done".

In my personal and unofficial opinion, if non-international players East and West would have passed 4H if one of them had happened to (hypothetically) hold the South cards, then Justice is not seen to be done if those non-international players are fined for appealing.

Final summary by editor:

While the commentators are not unanimous, there seems to be a general feeling that this appeal was a waste of time.

APPEAL No 3: What is partner up to?

Schapiro Spring 4s 06.038

Tournament Director:

David Stevenson

Appeals Committee:

Tom Townsend (Chairman) Peter Crouch Martin Jones

Board no 45	♠ 9 7 6 4 2	
Dealer North	♥ 2	
All vulnerable	♦ 8 6 4	
K/O Teams	♣ 10 9 8 4	
♠ Q 5 3	<i>N</i>	♠ A K 10
♥ A	<i>W</i> <i>E</i>	♥ Q J 4
♦ K Q J 9 7	<i>S</i>	♦ A 10 5 3
♣ A J 7 2		♣ K Q 5
	♠ J 8	
	♥ K 10 9 8 7 6 5 3	
	♦ 2	
	♣ 6 3	

Basic systems:

North-South play natural

East-West play 14-16 NT, 5 card majors, short 1♣

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	Pass	1♦	3♥
4♥!	Pass	4♠!	Pass
5♦(1)	Pass	6♦	Pass
7♦	Pass	Pass	Pass

(1) Disputed hesitation

Result at table:

7♦ making by East, NS -2140, lead ♣6

Director first called:

At end of hand

Director's statement of facts:

4♥ was intended as Roman Key Card Blackwood for diamonds but was taken as a cue-bid. So East cue-bid his ♠A which West understood as 0 or 3 key cards, clearly 0 since he had three himself. So he signed off in 5♦. East had heard a cue-bid in hearts and had many controls and points so he bid 6♦. Now West realised what had happened and converted to 7♦. N/S contend that 5♦ was out of tempo – as was 4♥. E/W say it was not really slow, no slower than 90% of the bids in the match so far.

Director's ruling:

Table result stands

Details of ruling:

Passing 5♦ is not a logical alternative to bidding 6♦. So there is no reason to adjust whether 5♦ was out of tempo or not.

While it was not necessary to the ruling to decide whether 5♦ was out of tempo, it seemed likely that it was.

Appeal lodged by:

North-South

Basis of appeal:

6♦ was bid after alleged hesitation

Comments by East-West:

West might have say: ♠QJx ♥Kx ♦KQJxx ♣Jxx

Appeals Committee decision:

Director's ruling upheld

Deposit returned

Appeals Committee's comments:

We don't think pass is a logical alternative. Hand specified by appellants (and similar hands) would bid 3NT or 5♦, not 4♥.

Tempo of 5♦ therefore irrelevant.

L&E Comment:

Just because there has been an unconvincing auction doesn't mean that players are unethical.

Adam Wildavsky's comments:

I agree with the TD ruling and the AC decision. I strongly disagree with the implication of the L&E comment. It implies that were we to adjust the score it would be because we had found that a player had acted unethically. That is not the case. We adjust the score regularly when nothing unethical has taken place. To indicate that a score adjustment implies unethical conduct is pernicious. I am confident that the comment was not intended to imply any such thing.

Alain Gottcheiner's comments:

The hand specified by the appellants might double.

If East took 4♥ as a cue (agreeing Diamonds), his 6♦ bid is automatic, even a bit timid. West was lucky in a way, since the misunderstanding made it more obvious, at the end, that opener held a very strong hand. There is nothing unethical about being lucky.

Barry Rigal's comments:

Anyone who argues that the East hand might pass a slow 5D should be tossed out of the event and ordered to write out on the blackboard 100 times "I must not bring frivolous appeals just because I do not like my opponents' tempo".

Bob Schwartz's comments:

Ridiculous!!! Once again—CALL THE DIRECTOR at the time of the infraction (or at least mention it to the opponents) or shut up after the result.

East has a clear bid. West almost definitely took some time but so what?

I would keep the deposit.

David Stevenson's comments:

I am somewhat biased by being the TD, but I still think this a clear and obvious ruling, so the only real question for the AC is whether the deposit should be returned.

Frances Hinden's comments:

I would keep the deposit if N/S are at all knowledgeable of the rules; they seem to be asking for an 'if it hesitates, shoot it' ruling. East had a 19-count, including a club control, opposite a slam try which apparently does not have a club control.

Saying the 4H was "out of tempo" was a waste of time by N/S. For one thing, a 4H call on this auction is rarely going to be in tempo (even including the 10 second stop warning) and for another, what does that have to do with the ruling?

Jeffrey Allerton's comments:

I agree with the TD ruling. "6♦ was bid after alleged hesitation" is a reason for requesting a ruling, but not a basis of appeal. The appealing side should explain why they feel the TD ruling was wrong. I agree with the AC's comments and therefore believe that they should have seriously considered retaining the deposit.

Richard Hills' comments:

The Director, of course, is such a highly capable Director that he has not had time to become a student of bidding theory. But I am disappointed that all members of the Appeals Committee also lacked insight into bidding theory. Therefore I disagree with the Appeals Committee statement that "Hand specified by appellants (and similar hands) would bid 3NT or 5D, not 4H".

Firstly, at teams, a player may not want to risk 3NT with a single stopper when holding five-card support for partner's diamond suit.

Secondly, in many partnerships, a direct leap to game shows a distributional and pre-emptive raise. So this style requires a cuebid followed by a game bid to show minimum game values with balanced strength. If East-West followed that partnership style, then from East's point of view 6D may well have been missing two aces until the UI from West's break in tempo demonstrably suggested extra values.

Final summary by editor:

Another appeal which is generally seen as a waste of time. It is worth noting Bob's comment: since the hesitation was disputed why was the TD not called then? As for Adam's comment, I do not understand his implication. The L&EC made a comment but that does not mean the reverse is true: that is a well-known logical fallacy.

APPEAL No 4: Only one place to play really

Schapiro Spring 4s 06.039

Tournament Director:

David Stevenson

Appeals Committee:

Nick Sandqvist (Chairman) David Gold Nevena Senior

Board no 28 Dealer West N/S vulnerable K/O Teams	♠ Q 9 8 5 ♥ J 7 4 ♦ A K Q 9 2 ♣ 9										
♠ 4 3 ♥ K Q 10 9 8 6 ♦ 4 ♣ Q 7 5 2	<table style="margin: auto; border: none;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;"><i>N</i></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;"><i>W</i></td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;"><i>E</i></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;"><i>S</i></td><td></td></tr> </table>		<i>N</i>		<i>W</i>		<i>E</i>		<i>S</i>		♠ K ♥ A 3 2 ♦ J 8 6 ♣ K J 10 8 6 3
	<i>N</i>										
<i>W</i>		<i>E</i>									
	<i>S</i>										
	♠ A J 10 7 6 2 ♥ 5 ♦ 10 7 5 3 ♣ A 4										

Basic systems:

North-South play Acol

East-West play Relay Precision

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
3♥	Dbl	4♥	4NT (1)
Pass	5♦	Pass (2)	5♠
Pass	6♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

- (1) Agreed long hesitation and alerted
- (2) Before passing asked about 4NT, which was described as ‘two places to play’

Result at table:

6♠ making by South, NS +1430, lead ♥K

Director first called:

At end of auction

Director’s statement of facts:

South said that 4NT then 5♠ was unambiguously a slam try, somewhat optimistic because of the state of the match. He did not bid 5♠ directly because that would suggest two heart losers. If he had had spades and clubs he would just have bid 4♠.

Director's ruling:

Table result stands

Details of ruling:

The tempo of the 4NT bid did not suggest bidding a slam rather than not bidding one. Law 16A

Appeal lodged by:

East-West

Basis of appeal:

6♠ could be affected by the hesitation

Appeals Committee decision:

Director's ruling upheld

Deposit returned

Appeals Committee's comments:

The tempo of 4NT is not clearly an indication for North to raise to slam, it could be a minimum for a slam try for example. Either way North has, albeit being minimum in HCP, some good reasons to try 6♠, including, maybe, the state of the match.

Adam Wildavsky's comments:

I agree with the TD and AC rulings.

Alain Gottcheiner's comments:

Facing a good ♠/♣ hand (and known Heart shortness), North has an obvious raise to slam. "some good reasons" is an understatement. Once again, I question only one decision : returning the deposit.

Barry Rigal's comments:

Another appeal that borders on the frivolous. Yes 4NT might be slow but if it does not demonstrably suggest bidding as opposed to passing, then North is free to do what he wants.

Bob Schwartz's comments:

KEEP THE MONEY!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

David Stevenson's comments:

It could be argued that while a slow 4NT does not mean much, a slow 4NT followed by 5♠ does mean something. But as in similar situations, it could mean the player was wondering whether to make a slam try at all as against just bidding game: it could mean that the player was wondering whether a slam try was necessary or whether he should bid slam direct. Thus it neither suggests going on nor not going on.

Frances Hinden's comments:

The third simple one running, but this time I would definitely have kept the deposit. E/W could not give any reason why a slow 4NT bid should suggest bidding a slam.

Jeffrey Allerton's comments:

Same comments as appeal 3. "6♠ could be affected by the hesitation" is a reason for requesting a ruling, but not a basis of appeal. The appealing side should explain why they feel the TD ruling was wrong. I agree with the AC's comments and therefore believe that they should have seriously considered retaining the deposit.

Richard Hills' comments:

The basis of appeal was "6S could be affected by the hesitation."

There was definitely a problem in the 1975 version of Law 16, where the criterion was "may suggest a call" and logical alternatives had not yet been invented. Therefore, from 1975 to 1987 the "If it hesitates, shoot it!" school could and did argue that all rational calls had been suggested, thus any fortuitously successful rational call could and did receive an adjusted score. So under the 1975 Law 16 the appellants would have had a valid case.

But under the current 1997 version of Law 16, the criterion is instead "may not choose from among logical alternative actions one that could demonstrably have been suggested over another by the extraneous information". As South said, 4NT then 5S was an unambiguous slam try, since if South had wanted to sign off in a spade game, South could have simply bid 4S instead of 4NT.

And because of the 1997 Law 16 word "demonstrably", the UI that North "demonstrably" received when South hesitated before making a slam try was that South had a *borderline* slam try. Ergo, the illegal logical alternative action that North could have taken was the "demonstrably" suggested logical alternative action of passing South's 5S slam try. But North instead took the legal decision to bid 6S. And virtue was rewarded when the odds-against slam made due to both the trump finesse working and also no diamond void present.

Final summary by editor:

Fairly simple, and another appeal of doubtful merit.

APPEAL No 5: Double is routine

Schapiro Spring 4s 06.040

Tournament Director:

David Stevenson

Referee:

John Armstrong

Consulted with Paul Hackett

Note by editor:

A Referee is an Appeals Committee of one. This appeal was done by telephone.

Board no 6 Dealer East E/W Vulnerable K/O teams	♠ A K 10 9 8 ♥ none ♦ 8 5 4 2 ♣ A 9 6 2										
♠ 2 ♥ K 10 9 7 ♦ A Q 10 9 6 ♣ Q 8 3	<table style="margin: auto; border: none;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;"><i>N</i></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;"><i>W</i></td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;"><i>E</i></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;"><i>S</i></td><td></td></tr> </table>		<i>N</i>		<i>W</i>		<i>E</i>		<i>S</i>		♠ Q 6 5 4 ♥ J 8 6 4 ♦ 7 ♣ K J 10 5
	<i>N</i>										
<i>W</i>		<i>E</i>									
	<i>S</i>										
	♠ J 7 3 ♥ A Q 5 3 2 ♦ K J 3 ♣ 7 4										

Basic systems:

North-South play Acol

East-West play strong NT, 5 card majors

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		Pass	Pass
1♦	1♠	Dbl (1)	Redbl (2)
2♥	2♠	Pass	Pass
3♦	Pass	3♥	... Pass
Pass	Dbl	Pass	Pass
Pass			

(1) Alerted – negative

(2) About 10HCP with two spades

Result at table:

3♥ doubled - 3 by West, NS +800, lead ♠A

Director first called:

At end of hand

Director's statement of facts:

The hesitation before the pass of 3♥ was agreed.

Director's ruling:

Score assigned for both sides:

3♥ - 3 West, NS +300

Details of ruling:

While the double was reasonable, it would not be the choice of 70% of the player's peers, and double was suggested by the hesitation. Law 16A.

Appeal lodged by:

North-South

Comments by North-South:

Redouble systemically showed 10-11 HCP and doubleton spade. The opponents are very likely to be in an 8-card fit since the negative doubler did not volunteer 3♥ over 2♠. With AK, A cashing very often and trumps 5-0 and more than half the values 3♥ is very unlikely to make. If partner does have length but weak hearts he can remove the double. Double, expecting 500, is clear.

Comments by East-West:

South is marked with four or five hearts, and has shown two spades so is clearly thinking of doubling -3♥. Even though North knows hearts are not breaking the quality of South's hearts can make the difference, and if South has bad hearts there may easily be no defence. In addition N/S stated an arrangement for the redouble which does not match the South hand.

Referee's decision:

Director's ruling upheld

Deposit returned

Referee's comments:

It is easy to find constructions where 3♥ is cold. We do not believe the double is a 70% action. It is also possible that the hesitation got North thinking along the right lines, i.e. had a subconscious effect.

Adam Wildavsky's comments:

I agree with the TD and referee rulings.

Alain Gottcheiner's comments:

I like the bit about subconsciously helping partner. Hope this will make its way into jurisprudence more. As my teacher said, "you aren't allowed to be clever after partner's tempo".

3♥ could easily be a make, if South held long clubs for example (quite possible on the given auction). Furthermore, one doesn't double for -1 at teams. At that form of scoring, I'd call passing clear-cut.

The fact that Rdbl doesn't match the South hand is irrelevant here. If South wanted to pretend he held only two spades, because he had good defence against a red-suit contract, what the heck ?

Barry Rigal's comments:

Keep the deposit and give N/S a procedural penalty. How come North knows better than South what is in his hand? Personally if I had followed North's approach, the last thing I'd want to do is bring it up before a committee and let other people judge my ethics.

Bob Schwartz's comments:

I wonder why N/S did not explain South's failure to double 3H himself. Would that have been some kind of conventional bid?? If so—say so.

Did the referee question South in this regard?? I don't like North's double if South had the bid available. I don't like E/W's contention that South's hand did not match the explanation. It was off by one spade and given the negative double was tactical in case E/W had an accident—which they did.

I am beginning to sound like a broken record—WHY oh WHY was the director not called at the time of the infraction???????? From here on in I plan to use the following acronym (CTDATPT—Call The Director At The Proper Time)

End result---disallow the double unhappily.

David Stevenson's comments:

This seems another fairly standard UI case. The call is reasonable, but not automatic, so has to be ruled back.

Frances Hinden's comments:

Another one where I agree with the TD and the AC, but this is much closer than the previous few. The referee's comment about the 'subconscious effect' is a good one: while all these deductions (“Partner has got long hearts and short spades, this is likely to be going for a penalty”) are valid, the hesitation makes the auction so much easier: South pauses to show that he'd like to double but isn't certain and North doubles to confirm he's got some decent defence.

Jeffrey Allerton's comments:

I agree with the TD/Referee. As North has a trump void and South has already “shown” his spade length, the hesitation demonstrably suggests that South was considering doubling. Whilst double may well be the percentage action on the North cards (for the reasons given by N/S) it would not be a universal choice at IMPs, so has to be disallowed under Law 16A.

Richard Hills' comments:

Incomplete information. East-West believed that if South had doubled 3H, that would be a penalty double. But was that in fact the North-South agreement? If North-South are super-scientists, so that a double of 3H by South would have been takeout, then North indeed had no logical alternative to a takeout double.

However, I strongly suspect that South had no idea whether North would assume South's double was takeout or penalties, which is why after some cogitation South chose to pass. If North-South had no agreement on the meaning of a hypothetical double of 3H by South, then the actual double of 3H by North was an infraction of Law 16.

Final summary by editor:

Bob refers to calling the TD at the proper time. In the ACBL you are not allowed to reserve your rights to call the TD at the end of the hand. Despite this, many people do. Here in England – and in most of the world outside the ACBL – it is perfectly legitimate not to call the TD if the facts are agreed [unlike Case 3 where the hesitation was disputed]. Furthermore, I do not see the advantage in calling the TD at the time. Suppose the TD had been called after North's double. What would he have done? Told the players to play the hand out. So what would have been the advantage?

Some people in the ACBL seem to think that the TD should be called whenever there is a hesitation. Again, I do not see the point, it would waste a lot of time, and the letter of the Law does not support it, since there is no potential infraction until a call is made that could be affected by the hesitation.

The commentators all uphold the TD and AC this time, but most think the appeal has merit.

APPEAL No 6: Let's fool the defence!

Spring Bank Holiday

06.043

Tournament Director:

Robin Barker

Appeals Committee:

Jeremy Dhondy (Chairman) Michael Byrne Mike Elliott

Board no 4	♠ A Q J 10 7 4	
Dealer West	♥ 8 7 6 4	
All Vulnerable	♦ 9 7	
IMPs to VPs	♣ 7	
♠ 9 8 6 5	N	♠ K
♥ 10 3	W E	♥ A J 5 2
♦ A J 10	S	♦ Q 5 4
♣ K 8 6 2		♣ A Q J 9 5
	♠ 3 2	
	♥ K Q 9	
	♦ K 8 6 3 2	
	♣ 10 4 3	

Basic systems:

East-West play strong NT, 5 card majors, short club

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	Pass	1♣ ! (1)	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♦ ! (2)	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

(1) May be short

(2) Fourth suit

Result at table:

3NT - 1 by West, NS +100, lead ♠J

Director first called:

At end of hand

Director's statement of facts:

At the end of play West asked North about ♠J lead and was told Q would ask for reverse attitude, this is when TD was called. West said he would play the hand differently, taking the diamond finesse if he had been correctly informed about defender's lead style. He had looked at the convention card: there was no hatched circle and a small line under the J, i.e. Q J x (the underline was printed under the Q, but written under the J) and declarer assumed their leads were standard and decided it was safe to return spades at trick three (hoping opponents would play a red suit or rectify the count).

Play:

West ♠J ♠K x x

East ♣x x K x

West ♠9 and defence cashes 5 tricks.

Director's ruling:

Score assigned for both sides:

3NT + 1 by West, NS -630

Details of ruling:

Declarer was misinformed of opponents' methods and should not be expected to ask. If spades might run, declarer will play diamond finesse. Laws 47E2B and 40C.

Appeal lodged by:

North-South

Director's comments:

TD had already consulted Burn, Mrs Dhondy, Kurbalija, Pownall.

Appeals Committee decision:

Score assigned for both sides (Law 12C3):

40% of 3NT -1, NS +100

+ 60% of 3NT +1, NS -630

0.5 VP penalty to N/S

Deposit returned

Appeals Committee's comments:

West was misled by the poorly completed card. His line was playing for a misdefence but not stupid.

We felt West might have asked questions to protect himself and his failure to do so and not take the best line means only 60% of 3NT + 1. N/S are fined for their poorly completed card.

L&E Comment:

(1) The Committee noted it was not clear why the fact that the lead of the Queen would ask for reverse attitude meant the lead of the Jack denied the Queen. In any case North clearly did not have QJx, as South would hardly have ducked with the Ace, so it was not clear why an error (if indeed there was one) in the convention card description of the lead from QJx would have an effect on what North might lead from his actual holding of AQJ10xx.

(2) Declarer seemed to have gambled that North has not led from AJ10xx, which seemed a possible holding on any view of the Jack lead. He had lost this gamble and so it was not clear any adjustment was due in this case.

(3) The award of a weighted score on the grounds that Declarer might have asked questions to protect himself was not appropriate.

(4) In this case the Committee doubted if the misinformation had affected Declarer's line. However if there was uncertainty over which line a declarer would have followed given correct information and/or the likely success of a line declarer might have followed given correct information, then a weighted score might be given.

Note by editor:

A later minute notes that point (2) was misanalysed.

Adam Wildavsky's comments:

Apparently N/S underlined their lead when they ought to have circled it. An infraction to be sure, but the penalty seems harsh. What was West playing for? His legitimate chance was to find the DK with South. By playing spades first he had the additional chance of North leading a diamond away from the king, a serious error, or finding North with the SAJT, the HKQ, and the DK, impossible when North is a passed hand. Suppose the lead were from AJT -- South might still hold Qx and have chosen not to unblock.

I prefer the AC's ruling to the TD's -- I'd have liked to see testimony from the declarer explaining what he hoped to achieve with his line.

Alain Gottcheiner's comments:

I analyzed South's answer as implying : "we might occasionally lead the Jack when attitude doesn't seem important, i.e. with a very strong suit" ; perhaps they were playing extended Romanet (A/Q ask attitude, K/J ask count). In any case, South certainly didn't state they were playing "1st" leads.

Perhaps South's explanation was incomplete, but a good declarer should have asked more (or asked the TD to request South to tell more). Also, what was underlined about the QJ combination is irrelevant, since North is known to hold the Ace.

Agree with L&E comments (3) and (4). However, the link between the infraction and West's line is near-inexistent. North could have held AJ10xxx. Also, West's line is very poor : nothing to win, and he'll win against AJ10x even if the Diamond finesse fails, provided he doesn't lose time.

All in all, I'd prefer to let the table score stand.

Barry Rigal's comments:

West's line seems to generate undertricks for no particular reason if the diamond finesse loses. I can see his point, but I'm not sure whether N/S simply varied system or actually had mis-marked their card. The write-up certainly does not make it plain.

Bob Schwartz's comments:

Sorry. I don't understand any part of this. L&E seems to have gotten most of this right where everyone else seems confused (dare I use the word addled?)

How can declarer not ask what the lead showed? That's crazy. Is he afraid of giving the Dummy Unauthorized information? How can the TD suggest that the declarer shouldn't ask?

He then proceeds to misguess what to do and screams for help? He gets the requested help from the TD and from the consultants that the TD asked. The committee then goes totally nuts and penalizes everyone concerned.

David Stevenson's comments:

Players who play non-standard carding have a duty to make their convention cards as clear as possible in this regard. Standard leads are correctly shown as **Q J x** : the leads they play should be shown as **Q J x** : they actually put **Q J x** . It is not good enough, and the procedural penalty is reasonable.

But I cannot really see the damage.

Eric Landau's comments:

I would not have adjusted the score. N-S's poorly marked convention card presumably justified the 0.5 VP procedural penalty, but the connection between the infraction and the subsequent "damage" to E-W, required in order to adjust the table result, seems tenuous at best.

Having looked at the convention card and found it confusingly marked, West could have asked for clarification. I agree with the L&E committee's comment that "it was not clear why the fact that the lead of the queen would ask for reverse attitude meant the lead of the jack denied the queen";

I too "doubt [] if the misinformation... affected declarer's line".

Frances Hinden's comments:

In spite of the various luminaries consulted, I can't understand either the TD or AC decisions. When the SK held at trick one, the matter of what North would have led from QJx is completely irrelevant as North is marked with the SA. If it had been established that the Jack was the systemic lead from AQJ10(xx), and there was no mention of unusual lead agreements on the convention card, then West would have been entitled to feel damaged. As it is, it appears that North picked out the SJ more or less at random and West fell for it. (West hoped 'opponents would play a red suit' – how exactly was a heart back going to help him?) I would allow the result to stand, although if I think N/S have not completed their card properly I could live with the PP.

Jeffrey Allerton's comments:

It is not stated what agreement, if any, N/S had in leading from suits headed by the AQJ(10). None of the EBU's convention cards include suits headed by the AQJ in the leading section. So was there misinformation at all?

Which spade did South play on the first trick and what signals do N/S play in this situation? I assume West was hoping North would block the spades from an original holding of AJ104x, but this reasoning is flawed. As long as the N/S leading agreements are to lead the J from AJ10xx I believe West was damaged by his own poor choice of play, not by any misinformation. I would allow the table result to stand.

Whilst I don't object to the AC's decision to fine N/S for the failure to hatch the appropriate area of the convention card, there needs to be consistency in this area from directors and appeals committees; far more serious convention card errors and omissions go unpunished.

Richard Hills' comments:

It is a worry when a National Authority is temporarily less competent than the Director it is incorrectly criticising.

Presumably the later National Authority realisation of a misanalysis is because ->

If North held AJT to five spades, then the defence takes only four tricks after declarer's throw-in. If North held AJT to six spades, then the spade suit blocks.

Ergo, declarer played the cards in 3NT exactly the way I would have played them myself. Although some of my partners might say that my assertion does not necessarily indicate the best line of play. ;-)

Final summary by editor:

There are two matters here. First, was there misinformation? The English commentators, who are used to the convention card, are more easily convinced there was.

Second, was there damage? Well, the misinformation concerned QJx and declarer knew that was not the holding, so it is difficult to see any.

APPEAL No 7: Clubs? We don't bid clubs!

Spring Bank Holiday

06.044

Tournament Director:

Neil Morley

Appeals Committee:

Heather Dhondy (Chairman) Frank Wharton Jon Williams

Board no 24 Dealer West Nil Vulnerable VPs	♠ 10 9 8 5 ♥ A 2 ♦ K 7 ♣ A Q J 6 4										
♠ K 7 6 3 2 ♥ K 8 6 3 ♦ A 9 4 ♣ 5	<table style="margin: auto; border: none;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;"><i>N</i></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;"><i>W</i></td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;"><i>E</i></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;"><i>S</i></td><td></td></tr> </table>		<i>N</i>		<i>W</i>		<i>E</i>		<i>S</i>		♠ J ♥ Q J 9 7 ♦ Q J 8 6 5 3 2 ♣ 3
	<i>N</i>										
<i>W</i>		<i>E</i>									
	<i>S</i>										
	♠ A Q 4 ♥ 10 5 4 ♦ 10 ♣ K 10 9 8 7 2										

Basic systems:

East-West play Benjamin Acol

<i>WEST</i>	<i>NORTH</i>	<i>EAST</i>	<i>SOUTH</i>
Pass	1NT	... Pass (1)	Pass
2♣ ! (2)	Pass	2♥ (3)	2NT ! (4)
3♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

- (1) Hesitation agreed
- (2) Hearts and another 5-4, any order
- (3) Promises 3-card suit
- (4) Lebensohl

Result at table:

3♥ making by East, NS -140 , lead ♦10

Director first called:

At end of hand

Director's statement of facts:

Following a review of auction and various clarifications.

Director's ruling:

Score assigned for both sides:

3♣ + 1 by N/S, NS +130

Appeal lodged by:

East-West

Appeals Committee decision:

Table score re-instated

Deposit returned

Appeals Committee's comments:

We do not feel that the hesitation made a 3♥ bid more or less attractive. N/S were the engineers of their own downfall with an off-centre 1NT and no 3♣ bid by S (as a passed hand over 1NT) which would have found the club fit.

Adam Wildavsky's comments:

I prefer the AC's ruling to the TD's. That said, I find the 3H call most unusual and I'd like to find out more about why West bid it. I could see adjusting only the E/W score.

Alain Gottcheiner's comments:

The AC were incredibly harsh on N/S. I would like to know more about N/S's system. Obviously, they were playing weak or semi-weak NT (from South's pass). Calling 1NT "off-centre" and the source of N/S's problems is an overstatement : the bid seems legitimate (short honours). Perhaps N/S's system was poor (Lebensohl after passing 1NT??) but this isn't the problem here. The non-offending side surely didn't do anything absurd, so, if there was an infraction, the link isn't cut.

Now let's turn to West's actions. He's already shown 4+ hearts, uneven pattern and about that strength. What made him bid a second time, if not his partner's hesitation ? Well, perhaps East would have bid them, but that's another story.

To summarize : a) West used UI to bid 3H b) there is an obvious link between that and the table result. What else do we need?

NB : as North, over a Lebensohl 2NT and West's pass, I would have bid 3♦ ! (as over a Multi : strong club raise), and the final contract would surely have been in clubs even if East had bid 3♥.

Barry Rigal's comments:

West's bid of 3H was manic, but East would obviously have made that call himself had West passed. The question is whether the 3H bid was assisted by information from the tempo. I agree with the committee that it was not. If the reverse held true maybe South might be able to argue that once the heart fit came to light he might have bid 4C?

Bob Schwartz's comments:

Something seems to be missing from what I received so I can't comment.

David Stevenson's comments:

A very strange 3♥ bid indeed. Why on earth did West make a bid which seems dangerous, for which he does not have the values nor a guaranteed fit?

What does the hesitation over 1NT suggest? That East has sufficient values to consider overcalling? But that does not suggest 3♥ which is going to be light on values. I think the 3♥ was an atrocious gamble that got lucky, and the AC was correct!

I wish the TD had indicated whether this was Pairs or Teams: the gamble is even more incredible at Teams.

Eric Landau's comments:

I agree with the committee's ruling, but am bemused by their second comment. While it may be true that "N-S were the engineers of their own downfall" by virtue of their somewhat odd methods, that should have had no bearing whatsoever on the outcome of adjudication, and should not have been mentioned lest readers be misled into thinking otherwise.

Frances Hinden's comments:

The first point, which is not mentioned, should have been whether the hesitation over 1NT suggested any particular action to West at his second turn to call, and if so, if West had a LA to his chosen action. I am happy that West's only LA to his systemic 2-suited overcall is to double (if that shows a maximum pass) and, if anything, double is suggested by the slow pass.

The second question, which was addressed by the AC, is whether the hesitation over 1NT suggests the later 3H bid. I agree that, although the 3H bid would not be most people's choice, it is not demonstrably suggested by an earlier hesitation.

Jeffrey Allerton's comments:

The basis of the TD's ruling is not explained on the form. The hesitation could be based on many possible distributions so the UI therefrom does not demonstrably suggest that either 2♣ or 3♥ could be more successful than alternative actions. I agree with the AC's decision to reinstate the table score.

Richard Hills' comments:

I support the Director adjusting the score, but in my opinion the adjustment should be to 1NT +150, instead of the actual adjustment to 3C +130.

It seems to me that passing out 1NT is a logical alternative for West, and East's hesitation over 1NT demonstrably suggested a non-pass.

From West's point of view their pipless hand could mean that their conventional 2C balance might go for -300 or -500, especially since the nature of the East-West agreement means that they will play a 4-3 heart fit instead of a 5-3 spade fit whenever East holds a 3=3=2=5 shape.

Final summary by editor:

I do not really agree with passing out 1NT, but I do wonder whether it was Teams. There would be a slight case. Overall, the general feeling seems clear: 3♥ may be crazy, but it is not suggested by the UI.

APPEAL No 8: Second and fourth

Spring Bank Holiday

06.045

Tournament Director:

Robin Barker

Appeals Committee:

Jeremy Dhondy (Chairman) Paul Lamford Andrew Thompson

Board no 2	♠ A 9 8	
Dealer East	♥ K 9 4	
N/S Vulnerable	♦ Q 10 6 3	
MP Pairs	♣ K 9 8	
♠ K J 6 5 4 3 2	<i>N</i>	♠ Q 10
♥ Q 5 2	<i>W</i> <i>E</i>	♥ A J 6
♦ none	<i>S</i>	♦ A K J 5 4
♣ A 6 2		♣ Q 5 4
	♠ 7	
	♥ 10 8 7 3	
	♦ 9 8 7 2	
	♣ J 10 7 3	

Basic systems:

North-South play strong NT, 5-card majors

East-West play 12-14 NT, multi 2♦

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♦	Pass
1♠	Pass	2NT	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

Result at table:

4♠ + 1 by West, NS -450, lead ♥9

Director first called:

During the play at trick 7

Director's statement of facts:

West told the TD that he had asked about opponents' lead style at trick one and had been told 'second and fourth'. He had taken this as second from bad suits and played ♥A at trick one, eventually making eleven tricks. If he had known the lead could be from ♥K he could make twelve tricks. South said he had said 'Second and fourth from everything doubleton and from honours'. North agreed this is what South said. East (dummy) agreed with West that South had only said 'Second and fourth'. TD later recorded the play to the first seven tricks, but it seems it is only the play to trick one that is crucial.

Director's ruling:

Table result stands

Details of ruling:

Ruled on the basis that South said what he said he said. More likely that South gave a long answer and E/W switched off after the first few words. No misinformation, no adjustment. Laws 47E2(b), 85B.

Appeal lodged by:

East-West

Appeals Committee decision:

Director's ruling upheld

Deposit returned

Appeals Committee's comments:

That the explanation was a fair one and the convention card was accurate and complete. We felt that N/S had explained their methods and West made a play based on what he thought he had heard. It looks as if it can only gain when hearts are 1-6. Whilst he was unlucky the opponents had committed no infraction.

We recommend to N/S that they draw attention to their leads because although a description of 2nd and 4th may be accurate it is not what is most commonly understood in England.

L&E Comment:

Players should understand their responsibilities when playing very unusual methods (such as leading low from doubletons or the middle card from three to an honour) and should take particular care to explain their methods fully. They should also take particular care to ensure that convention cards are exchanged at the start of each round. It will often be preferable to refer an opponent who asks a question to the convention card as well as answering the question. Answering the question might begin 'We play unusual methods and'.

Adam Wildavsky's comments:

The rulings leave an unsatisfied feeling. I am not convinced that one version of the facts is likelier than another, but I was not present. I would not give N/S the benefit of the doubt for any explanation that included the phrase "second and fourth", since they must know it can be misleading.

Alain Gottcheiner's comments:

"Second and fourth" and no other explanation isn't perhaps complete, but it surely covers the present case; since nobody would expect North to lead 4th best from 3 cards ;-) the normal lead from Hxx would be the 2nd card. The explanation might be deemed incomplete in some cases, e.g. North leading small from a bad 4-card suit. As for the AC's comment, it IS complete.

Barry Rigal's comments:

My impression of what happened is that N/S misexplained their method and fooled West. So while West might not be due for an adjustment, N/S need to be taught that they must do better next time, maybe by a Procedural Penalty.

Bob Schwartz's comments:

I think I keep the money. This seems to be a question of Law and I don't think it should be open to appeal. Does 2nd and 4th have different meanings in England? I also fail to see how rising with the ace can ever be right—which is irrelevant to my opinion.

David Stevenson's comments:

This ruling and decision seems to hinge on the actual wording at the time, and the TD is best placed to decide that. "Second and fourth" means, to nearly all English players, the standard approach to leads, ie second from a suit of three cards or more not headed by an honour, fourth from a suit of three cards or more headed by an honour: it is understood that high from a doubleton is normal.

The TD and AC seem happy that their methods were explained adequately, but I feel that using the term "Second and fourth" will definitely mislead people, even if it is accurate. Opponents not listening carefully to the rest of the explanation will be normal.

It would be difficult to rule this misinformation since it was not, technically, but this pair should avoid a clearly misleading explanation in future.

Frances Hinden's comments:

I agree with the ruling here, but not with the comments.

Rising with the Ace of hearts does not only gain when hearts 6-1. It also gains if the lead is from five to the 9, and South has K10 doubleton; or (rather unlikely) if South has singleton ace of trumps together with the HK, DQ and CK (HA, DAK discarding hearts, trump); or assorted misdefences. All of these are improbable, agreed, but if West really had been misinformed then it would have been quite fair to ask for a ruling and it would have been relevant how the later play had gone.

While it may be a good idea to start one's explanation with "we play unusual methods and...", it may be that N/S did not know these methods were unusual in this country.

Jeffrey Allerton's comments:

I agree with the TD and AC.

Richard Hills' comments:

1997 Law 75A:

"Special partnership agreements, whether explicit or implicit, must be fully and freely available to the opponents ..."

The uncommon North-South agreement to always play second and fourth is of almost equal technical merit to the more common agreement to always play third and fifth.

But the uncommon North-South agreement obviously has the non-technical merit of surprise value.

In Australia North-South would not gain any surprise value from their unusual carding agreement, since by ABF regulation all unusual partnership understandings must be pre-alerted to the opponents at the start of a round or match. (Provided, of course, that such unusual partnership understandings occurred with a reasonable frequency. An Aussie partnership would not be required to pre-alert an unusual understanding that they had about an opening bid of 5NT.)

Final summary by editor:

Perhaps it is not entirely clear to our foreign commentators that 2nd and 4th is the common name for standard English leads, which include low from three to an honour. For example, this situation could have occurred in a similar way if we followed Australian regulations: one pair would have said at the start of the round "We play 2nd and 4th leads and ..." and their opponents had stopped listening after hearing "2nd and 4th".

APPEAL No 9: What gives?

Spring Bank Holiday

06.046

Tournament Director:

Jim Proctor

Appeals Committee:

Jeremy Dhondy (Chairman) Alan Kay Dick Shek

Board no 11 Dealer South Nil vulnerable MP Pairs	♠ J 10 ♥ K 8 2 ♦ A J 8 6 5 4 ♣ 10 9	
♠ A 9 6 5 4 2 ♥ 9 7 5 3 ♦ none ♣ A K 3	<i>N</i> <i>W</i> <i>E</i> <i>S</i>	♠ Q 7 ♥ A 10 6 4 ♦ Q 9 ♣ 8 7 5 4 2
	♠ K 8 3 ♥ Q J ♦ K 10 7 3 2 ♣ Q J 6	

Basic systems:

North-South play strong NT, 5-card majors

East-West play 10-12, 12-14, 4-card majors

<i>WEST</i>	<i>NORTH</i>	<i>EAST</i>	<i>SOUTH</i>
			1♦
1♠	2♠ ! (1)	Dbl (2)	Pass
Pass	3♦	Pass	Pass
3♥	4♦	... Pass	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

(1) High card raise to 3♦ +

(2) Suggests spade lead

Result at table:

4♠ making by West, NS -420

Director first called:

At end of hand

Director's statement of facts:

Hesitation agreed

Director's ruling:

Table result stands

Details of ruling:

4♠ not suggested over pass or double by the hesitation. Law 16A.

Appeal lodged by:

North-South

Appeals Committee decision:

Score assigned for both sides:

4♦ - 1 by South, NS -50

Deposit returned

Appeals Committee's comments:

When East doubled 2♠ E/W had no firm agreement about whether this just showed a spade suit or values. When East hesitated over 4♦ it was clear that he now had values and this information is unauthorised. It was our view that this made taking action more attractive and it was not clear to take action without this information.

Adam Wildavsky's comments:

The TD ruling is incomprehensible. Of course the hesitation makes acting more attractive. The AC got this right.

Alain Gottcheiner's comments:

Agree with the AC. Even if Dbl showed some values (it doesn't in most partnerships' methods), the pass at 4-level wasn't forcing, so East must have some *positive* reason to think, were it more values, secondary fit (as here) or more spades. 4♠ indeed makes use of the UI. One of the easiest UI cases I've seen, and I'm pretty surprised by TD's initial decision, as he should only have decided "no UI" if it was obvious.

Barry Rigal's comments:

Excellent Committee decision; Director missed the point. If West wanted to play game he could have bid 4D over 3D. The one argument in his favour is that a slow pass of 4D might suggest diamonds and thus make bidding on less attractive. It is clear that it did suggest 'not-pass' over 'pass'.

Bob Schwartz's comments:

If the dbl of 2S suggested a spade lead, but said nothing about values as seems to be the case according to the explanation about the bidding, how can West possibly bid again?

Director's ruling seems crazy. Committee got it right. I would keep the money if the Director had gotten it right and E/W had appealed.

David Stevenson's comments:

The decision by the AC seems fair enough. It is difficult to see what the hesitation suggests if not values.

Frances Hinden's comments:

I don't think this is nearly as straightforward as the AC said. If it was 'not clear' whether the double suggested a spade suit or values, why did the later hesitation now suggest values? If West thinks that East has 'values' rather than 'spades', why does the hesitation suggest bidding on – rather than defending a misfit? If anything, a suggestion of 'spades' would suggest bidding and 'values' doubling. Note that bidding 4S would have been wrong most of the time, with both 4S and 4D going off; it is only the miracle lie in spades that allows it to make.

I agree with the TD rather than the AC.

Jeffrey Allerton's comments:

The hesitation suggests that East was considering taking some action, but what? Given West's diamond void and the earlier bidding, isn't the most likely hand type one considering a matchpoint double of 4♦? In that case, the UI suggests doubling over passing over bidding. In any case it is difficult to see how the UI can demonstrably suggest bidding over defending. Therefore, I much prefer the TD's ruling to that of the AC.

Richard Hills' comments:

It seems to me that the Director's ruling was based on misinformation from East-West that they had a firm agreement about East's double of 2S, when that was not so.

Final summary by editor:

The majority see the AC decision as obvious, but not all commentators agree, which is interesting.

APPEAL No 10: Takeout doubles get penalties, don't they?

Crockfords Final 06.053

Tournament Director:

John Pyner

Referee:

Martin Pool

Note by editor:

A Referee is an Appeals Committee of one.

Board no 1 Dealer North Nil vulnerable IMPs to VPs	♠ 9 7 2 ♥ 9 6 5 4 ♦ 10 9 6 ♣ J 7 3										
♠ K 5 ♥ A Q J 8 2 ♦ Q 4 ♣ K Q 8 4	<table style="margin: auto; border: none;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;"><i>N</i></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;"><i>W</i></td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;"><i>E</i></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;"><i>S</i></td><td></td></tr> </table>		<i>N</i>		<i>W</i>		<i>E</i>		<i>S</i>		♠ A J 4 3 ♥ 10 7 ♦ K 8 7 5 ♣ 10 9 2
	<i>N</i>										
<i>W</i>		<i>E</i>									
	<i>S</i>										
	♠ Q 10 8 6 ♥ K 3 ♦ A J 3 2 ♣ A 6 5										

Basic systems:

North-South play Acol weak NT

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	Pass	Pass	1NT
Dbl	2♣	Pass ! (1)	Pass
... Dbl (2)	Pass	Pass	Pass

(1) Alerted – forcing

(2) Agreed hesitation. Double here is takeout by E/W agreement

Result at table:

2♣ doubled – 3 by North, NS -500

Director first called:

At end of hand

Director's statement of facts:

N/S protest East's pass of the slow takeout double. East was asked why he had passed, and he said that he had made up his mind earlier to make a forcing pass over the 2♣ bid and respect his partner's decision, to the extent of passing a takeout double if that presented E/W with their best chance of a plus score. N/S countered by saying that the slow double suggested it would not necessarily be a takeout double now, and that East has logical alternatives over a 'real' takeout double.

Director's ruling:

Score assigned for both sides:

3NT making by West, NS -400

Details of ruling:

East has unauthorised information from the slow takeout double and he has logical alternatives. With a good 8-count opposite 17 E/W will arrive in 3NT, which makes 9 tricks except by inferior play by declarer. Laws 16A, L73F1.

Appeal lodged by:

North-South

Basis of appeal:

Not certain that a) 3NT would be bid and b) that it would make.

Comments by North-South:

The break in tempo makes the pass of 2♣x more attractive: West would have had no reason to break tempo with a hand short in clubs.

If East removes 2♣x, unclear how the auction will go. Although both East and West have extra values, not impossible for bidding to go e.g. 2♦ 2♥ 2♠ 2NT pass. It is not guaranteed that E/W will reach 3NT and N/S should get benefit of doubt.

Although West certainly can make 3NT he might choose a losing line, e.g. using dummy's sole entry to play ♥10 or ♣10. Again N/S should get the benefit of the doubt. North could have had ♠Q for example.

Comments by East-West:

We would have appealed the ruling should the opponents not have done so first.

East made a forcing pass over 2♣ so West had to bid.

East had already taken the decision to pass if West doubled – at equal vul playing for a sure plus score rather than a possible dubious game.

East's decision made even easier when North appeared uncomfortable after West's double – thus suggesting 2♣ was not exactly guilt-edged. This is authorised information for East.

We would therefore ask for the score to be adjusted back to the table result of 500 to E/W.

Any competent declarer at this level would make 3NT after the given auction.

N/S should not be given benefit of doubt. They took a highly risky action and should accept the consequences.

If East had doubled 2♣ this would have been takeout. Thus the way to penalise is for East to pass.

Appeals Committee decision:

Score assigned for both sides (Law 12C3):

25% of 3NT – 1 by West, NS +50

+ 75% of 3NT making by West, NS –400

Deposit returned

Appeals Committee's comments:

3NT will be reached. East has unauthorised information.

Adam Wildavsky's comments:

I prefer the AC's ruling to the TD's. After East's illegal pass of the slow double I would not give E/W the benefit of the doubt as to the result in 3NT. If E/W wanted to prove they could both bid and make 3NT then East ought to have taken out partner's takeout double. My ruling would have been more favorable to N/S than the TD's or AC's.

East's explanation that by passing 2C he was committed to passing a double is reasonable but not compelling. I don't understand what West hoped to accomplish with his double, but if he was rooting for partner to pass he needed to make his call in tempo.

Alain Gottcheiner's comments:

This is a much more difficult case to assign than the previous one. West has an imperfect T/O double, okay, but it might as well be a hand that hesitates between double and a suit bid (invert West's minors) or a hand where he fears being left in (taking into account that East's pass could indeed be waiting for a reopening double), i.e. a club void. For those reasons, I don't feel there is any suggestion of a leave-in.

I don't like E/W's comments #4 (a bit too self-serving), and #7 makes no sense. They'd rather produce other hands where they passed on marginal hands (the popular –and reasonable– politics that you'd strive to double after you've doubled).

But this doesn't make their action incorrect. And argument #3 is correct : the only reason to pass over 2♣ when holding a fair major and fair hand is that you want to penalize them.

I would have let the table result stand.

Afterthought : I'm wondering whether "takeout" was the right description for West's double, as it was quite strange. Perhaps the right explanation was "optional" (easily left in). In that case, there was indeed an infraction, but it didn't contribute to the result. Only the nature of the deal did.

Barry Rigal's comments:

Ridiculous auction by East. If he wants to play for penalties and consult partner then he must double 2C for take-out and let partner convert if he wants to. I'd like to give the most unfavourable ruling possible for E/W; the actual decision seems a reasonable one.

Bob Schwartz's comments:

I can't begin to describe how I feel about this case.

CTDATPT (Call The Director At The Proper Time).

Did the dbl of 1NT promise 17+ HCP? If so-I missed it.

It seems to me the dbl of 2C after a BIT was a perfect opportunity for N/S to take a 2 way shot by not CTDATPT . If the dbl was not penalty and East bid-Call the cops. If the dbl was penalty and East did not bid-Call the cops. But first let's check the result.

Did N/S play that a pass by N would force a XX?

I allow the table result to stand and a pox on everybody involved from the director to the Referee to N/S.

I don't like referee decisions-because you don't get the give and take discussions from other committee members.

I hope I'm not alone in this opinion and that other commentators feel the same.

David Stevenson's comments:

E/W's comments give me a very bad feeling. First they say they would have appealed if their opponents had not. But that means they were not willing to risk the deposit. English ACs are instructed quite rightly to be very averse to giving an improved score to a side that has not seen fit to risk their deposit.

They say that East had already decided what to do if partner made a takeout double, but this is quite irrelevant in Law. Once UI is made available by partner certain actions become illegal, and good ethics require considering the UI with no reference to what the player was intending to do earlier. Added to which I find it incredible: suppose West has a singleton club, not only perfectly possible, but far more likely than the actual hand: are they really suggesting that it is better to defend 2♣ doubled, which could be making or nearly, when 4♠ might easily be cold? They do not even have the excuse of matchpoints.

When they refer to "any competent declarer at this level" it is clear this is an attempt to put pressure on the referee. It is not a cold contract, and there are reasonable losing lines – eg the club finesse. Suggesting that N/S should not be given the benefit of doubt is ludicrous: which side do they think is the offending side?

Overall, I am very surprised that the TD decided on only one score to adjust to. This is a typical Law 12C3 hand, where the auction might go in various ways, possibly reaching 4♥ for instance, and the number of tricks made is not clear. I think any ruling which only gives one score must be wrong. At least the AC weighted it, and since it was not matchpoints it did not matter much that they did not consider 4♥.

In my view, the TD did not really get hold of this board correctly, showing far too much generosity to the offending side. The arguments of the offending side are pretty disgraceful, and I believe the pass of the double of 2♣ can only be justified in two ways: either deliberate use of UI, or misinformation, ie it was not a pure takeout double. So I believe that a PP should have been issued to E/W, possibly double standard.

Eric Landau's comments:

The director and committee were right to adjust E-W's result from +500 against 2CX to the result of West's declaring 3NT. But I think the committee went overboard in finding a 25% probability of West's going off in 3NT (the director got it right). They may have overlooked the fact that the auction had marked South with virtually all of the N-S high cards, making the series of misguesses that would be needed for 3NT to fail vanishingly unlikely at this level of play.

Frances Hinden's comments:

I don't understand either the TD or the referee's ruling. It appears from the write-up that neither has fully understood the explanation of the E/W methods. After 1NT x 2C, E/W play that pass is forcing, and double is take-out i.e. prepared to defend if partner has a penalty double. When East passes over 2C he must have either a penalty double, or a hand that is not prepared stand a penalty double from partner (too weak, or too distributional). As East has neither a weak nor a distributional hand, he has demonstrably made the decision to defend 2Cx and has no logical alternative to pass on the second round.

In addition, none of N/S, the TD nor the Referee has explained why the slow double shows club *length* rather than a particularly offensive hand that is not keen on defending 2Cx (with a 5/6-card major and a singleton trump, for example), and hence why the slow double demonstrably suggests a pass on the East cards. Note that a common agreement when playing this approach is that the 'take-out' double has either a doubleton trump or a singleton in a defensive hand, as it is frequently passed.

Suggested auctions to, and play in, 3NT are hence irrelevant. But I would be amazed to see anyone in the Crockfords' final go off in 3NT after a weak NT opening by South.

Jeffrey Allerton's comments:

Of the many arguments put forward by the two sides, the most important one to address is East's contention that he had already decided on the previous round to pass a 'takeout' double from West. Of course, the TD/AC would need to confirm the E/W methods, but for most partnerships there would only be two options over 2♣ on a balanced hand such as East's: pass, planning to pass a take-out double from partner, or to make a take-out double himself. Once he had chosen the former, there was no logical alternative to passing as he had already committed himself to doing so.

In any case, does the UI demonstrably suggest that defending is more likely to be right? A doubleton club would be the normal holding for a take-out doubler in this position; maybe the hesitation was because the doubler has fewer clubs than normal, not more!

Did the Referee consult? When the bidding methods under scrutiny are complicated and there are many arguments to consider, it is advisable to consult at least two people; an English AC normally comprises three people. I would like to have seen more detail behind the Referee's ruling in the AC comments section dealing with the major points raised by each side. Why did he disallow East's pass? He notes that "East has unauthorised information" without explaining how the other conditions necessary for disallowing East's subsequent action have been met. After that, why/how would 3NT would always be reached and what plausible making and non-making lines might be chosen to justify the weighting to 3NT= and 3NT-1?

Richard Hills' comments:

My point-by-point responses to the eight assertions by East-West are:

1. As the Appeals Committee I would have taken two deposits, since North-South and East-West each wanted the Director's ruling changed in their favour. And I would have returned the North-South deposit, but retained the East-West deposit.
2. Not relevant that East made a forcing pass.
3. Not relevant that East made a prior decision.
4. Not relevant that North appeared uncomfortable.
5. The score should be adjusted back to +500 to East-West if and only if the sole logical alternative for East is to pass a takeout double of 2C with a trump "stack" of the ten, nine and two. ;-)
6. If there had been no infraction, then West could well misguess the location of the jack of clubs.
7. Not relevant that North took a highly risky action.
8. Not relevant that an immediate double by East would have been takeout.

Note by editor:

The choice whether a side wishes to appeal is that side's, thus the AC cannot take a deposit from a side that does not wish to appeal. But they can, and should, reduce the amount of weight to any argument that suggests they should be given a better score by the AC than the TD, and be very loath to give such a score.

Final summary by editor:

Several of the comments made assume that the double by West was not a pure takeout double. But if this was so, why did East/West not say so? They produced enough specious arguments!

I cannot imagine what difference it would have made to call the TD earlier: the hesitation was agreed, so the TD would merely have asked the players to play on.

Referees are not particularly satisfactory, and are only used in the EBU when it is impractical to do otherwise. In an eight-team final as Crockfords is there is a presumption that a non-playing Referee is fairer than using three of the players in the event. Personally I disagree.

APPEAL No 11: If it hesitates, shoot it!

Brighton 1st weekend

06.068

Tournament Director:

Ian Spoons

Appeals Committee:

Jeremy Dhondy (Chairman) Richard Bowdery Matt Haag

Board no 12	♠ 7 6	
Dealer West	♥ A 9 7 5 4 2	
N/S Vulnerable	♦ A 2	
Swiss Pairs	♣ 8 5 3	
♠ 10 2	<i>N</i>	♠ A K J 3
♥ 3	<i>W</i> <i>E</i>	♥ J 10 8 6
♦ Q 7 5 4 3	<i>S</i>	♦ 10 8 6
♣ K J 9 6 4		♣ Q 7
	♠ Q 9 8 5 4	
	♥ K Q	
	♦ K J 9	
	♣ A 10 2	

Basic systems:

North-South play Reverse Benji

East-West play 5-card majors, weak NT

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	Pass	... Pass	1♠
2NT ! (1)	3♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

(1) The minors

Result at table:

3♥ - 1 by North, NS -100, lead ♣Q

Director first called:

When West called 2NT

Director's statement of facts:

TD was called to establish the fact of East's hesitation. West said she had not noticed; East 'I had something to think about'. TD was recalled at the end of play. South considers that the auction after 1♠ should go p 2♥ p p p.

Director's ruling:

Table result stands

Details of ruling:

The knowledge that partner may be close to an opening bid does not suggest that 2NT is likely to reap a better score than passing and that with this distribution, at the vulnerability 2NT would be the choice of more than 70% of similar Wests.

Appeal lodged by:

North-South

Basis of appeal:

Logical alternative to 2NT

Appeals Committee decision:

Director's ruling upheld

That 2NT was not made more attractive by any hesitation by East.

Deposit returned

Appeals Committee's comments:

N/S argued that if West passed then it would go 2♥ p 2NT all pass. We thought it was very likely that North would continue with 3♥ or 4♥.

L&E comment

The L&E Committee was surprised the deposit was refunded.

Adam Wildavsky's comments:

I too am surprised that the deposit was refunded. The TD had it exactly right - UI was available, but it did not suggest 2NT. This appeal had no merit.

Alain Gottcheiner's comments:

I agree that the pass didn't make 2NT more attractive, but not that 2NT was automatic. However, the first part is enough to allow the bid : there are two LAs at least, but none was suggested.

By the way, the other most plausible auction is 1♠ p 2♥ p p 2NT p 3♦ p p (p or 3H). Pretending that East would have passed 2NT is verging on defamation.

Since the reason given for the appeal (there exists a LA) doesn't make sense, keeping the deposit is a LA indeed.

Barry Rigal's comments:

Yes, the only issue was the deposit and I agree with the L and E. People need to learn that the equation 'hesitation = adjustment' is irremediably flawed.

Bob Schwartz's comments:

Keep the Money!!!!!!!!!!

L&E got it right.

At least they called the Director at the proper time.

David Stevenson's comments:

A completely meritless appeal, having already wasted the TD's time with a pointless attempt at a ruling. Why on earth was the deposit not retained?

Frances Hinden's comments:

I was consulted by N/S about whether they should appeal, and I told them that they would be lucky to keep their deposit. I haven't changed my opinion.

Jeffrey Allerton's comments:

A correctly reasoned decision by the TD, confirmed by the AC. Given that the appeal has no merit whatsoever, why was the deposit returned?

Richard Hills' comments:

1. South is too strong to pass a hypothetical 2H response by North.
2. North has too many hearts to pass a hypothetical 2NT rebid by South.
3. Given favourable vulnerability and matchpoint pairs scoring, West has zero logical alternatives to an Unusual 2NT overcall.

Three strikes and you're out. No damage, no adjusted score.

Final summary by editor:

It is a pity that Richard did not suggest keeping the deposit, otherwise we should have had unanimity amongst the Commentators [for the first time?] on a meritless appeal.

APPEAL No 12: What's an Announcement?

Brighton 2nd weekend

06.072

Tournament Director:

Andrew Crawford

Appeals Committee:

Jeremy Dhondy (Chairman) Geoffrey Wolfarth Frances Hinden

Board no 28	♠ A 6 4 2	
Dealer West	♥ K 7 2	
N/S Vulnerable	♦ K Q J 5 3	
Swiss Teams	♣ Q	
♠ 10	<i>N</i>	♠ Q J 9 8 3
♥ A 8 6 5	<i>W</i> <i>E</i>	♥ Q J 10
♦ 7	<i>S</i>	♦ 10 6 4 2
♣ A 10 9 8 7 6 4		♣ J
	♠ K 7 5	
	♥ 9 4 3	
	♦ A 9 8	
	♣ K 5 3 2	

Basic systems:

North-South play 5-card majors, 14-16 NT

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	1NT (1)	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) Not announced

Result at table:

3NT making by North, NS +600, lead ♠Q

Director first called:

At end of hand

Director's statement of facts:

TD was called at the end of play by West who said if he had known that the 1NT could contain a singleton he could have played ♣A when a small club was led at trick 3.

Director's ruling:

Score assigned for N/S:

3NT -1 by North, NS -100

Score assigned for E/W:

3NT making by North, NS +600

Details of ruling:

TD formed the opinion that both East and West could have asked for an announcement after North had opened 1NT. West could also have looked at the opponents convention card which showed the 1NT could contain a singleton and North should also have alerted E/W.

Note by editor:

New alerting rules were brought in by the EBU in August 2006, and this was the first major tournament under the new rules. Under the old rules opponents were meant to find out their opponent's no-trump range from the convention cards at the start of the round, but a 1NT that could contain a singleton required an alert.

Under the new rules the requirement at the start of the round was deleted, and all natural 1NT openings were announced, ie partner immediately says the range without being asked, and also said "may have a singleton" if appropriate.

Appeal lodged by:

North-South

Appeals Committee decision:

Table score re-instated

Appeals Committee's comments:

South should have announced but E/W also know there is a problem and did nothing to protect themselves. The advice given at the start of announcing is not to apply a penalty unless it is deliberate or repeated so return the score to the table score of 3NT making.

N/S did have a properly completed convention card. The TD should remind N/S of their obligation.

L&E Comment:

The L&E Committee thought the AC had been unnecessarily generous to N/S although understood a procedural penalty had not been given as this was the first EBU event where announcements were being used.

Adam Wildavsky's comments:

Both the TD's and the AC's rulings seem reasonable.

Alain Gottcheiner's comments:

Sorry, can't comment, too unfamiliar with this procedure.

Barry Rigal's comments:

Absolutely absurd argument by West. Just because North might have a singleton is no reason to assume that he actually does – particularly when he plays on clubs himself! No procedural penalty seems relevant here.

Bob Schwartz's comments:

Was there an agreement in place by N/S that a 1NT opening MAY contain a singleton or was this a bridge decision by North given whatever reason he chose to do it? In other words should a player always announce that partner might have a singleton when he opens 1NT even if he has NEVER had one?

What was the director thinking? I would never approve of a decision like that from a director. I wonder why BOTH sides did not appeal this. If E/W felt they had been damaged enough to complain in the first place—they also should have appealed. Instead they succeeded in getting N/S a bad result and considered that sufficient.

I also sympathize with problems that occur when rules have been changed and allowances should be made.

David Stevenson's comments:

At Brighton, players were getting to grips with Announcements for the first time. Players forgot to announce no-trump ranges – in fact, they still do a year or so later – and it is not a very serious matter. Opponents have started coughing meaningfully or reminding them in other ways, but perhaps in the early days it was not clear that this was the thing to do.

So the TD and AC point out that while it should have been announced the opponents should have protected themselves. Sounds reasonable, doesn't it? NO!!!!

If the claim of damage was based on the no-trump range of course E/W would not have a case, but until a couple of weeks earlier a 1NT opening that could be on a singleton was alertable. It is not very credible that a pair who had been alerting their 1NT forgot to do anything, and in fact I wonder whether they had been. The possibility of a singleton is not something that E/W should have to protect themselves against: the TD and AC were wrong.

However the probability of West rising with the ace was not very high. Singletons are not common even in 1NT openings that can have them, and the play does not suggest a singleton. As is so often the case, a weighted score should have been given, perhaps:

Score assigned for both sides (Law 12C3):

75% of 3NT making by North, NS +600
+ 25% of 3NT –1 by North, NS –100

Frances Hinden's comments:

I don't understand on what basis the TD has awarded a split score. The ruling seems to be designed to punish both sides: N/S for not announcing and E/W for not asking, but the legal basis for that is unclear.

Unsurprisingly I agree with the AC here. It wasn't written on the form, but the AC all thought it extremely unlikely that West would have risen with the CA even had the announcement been correctly given.

Jeffrey Allerton's comments:

The TD's split ruling is interesting. Did he feel that the differing criteria in Law 12C2 had been met for the offending and non-offending sides and that no weighted score would be more equitable (Law 12C3)? Or did he feel that both sides were “offending” as nobody saw fit to ensure that the 1NT was either announced or alerted as is required by Orange Book 2006 section 5C6?

The AC comments seem to imply that there was effectively no misinformation. If the decision was affected by a feeling that West would have defended this way anyway, it would have been helpful to record this.

Final summary by editor:

Some arguments are just based on the likelihood of the defence getting it right. But no-one except me seems to think of Law 12C3. Unless people are certain the non-offenders will not get it right, why not give them “a little something”?

Frances, who was on the appeal, comments on a view of the AC which was not put on the form. Why not? How are we to know what ACs think if they do not tell us? They are asked to explain their decisions.

APPEAL No 13: Oh dear! Why did he not alert?

Brighton 1st weekend

06.073

Tournament Director:

Sarah Amos

Appeals Committee:

Jeremy Dhondy (Chairman) Matt Haag Frances Hinden

Board no 13	♠ A K J 10 2	
Dealer North	♥ J	
All Vulnerable	♦ A 10	
Swiss Pairs	♣ Q 10 5 4 2	
♠ 9 6 4	N	♠ Q 8
♥ Q 8 7 5	W E	♥ 10 9 4 2
♦ K Q 8 4	S	♦ 9 7 5 3 2
♣ K J		♣ 7 3
	♠ 7 5 3	
	♥ A K 6 3	
	♦ J 6	
	♣ A 9 8 6	

Basic systems:

North-South play natural 12-14 NT

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	3♥ (1)	Pass	4NT (2)
Pass	6♣	Pass	Pass
Pass			

- (1) 3♥ was not alerted
- (2) Blackwood

Result at table:

6♣ -1 by South, NS -100

Director first called:

At end of hand

Director's statement of facts:

East called the TD and asked her to look at the hand because he was unhappy with North's bid of 6♣. He felt that the fact that South had not alerted the 3♥ bid was unauthorised information and that North had taken advantage of the unauthorised information when deciding not to complete the Blackwood sequence but to bid 6♣ instead.

Director's ruling:

Score assigned for both sides:

6♠ -1 by North, NS -100

Procedural penalty to N/S of 0.5 VP.

Details of ruling:

Law 73C states that a player should carefully avoid taking advantage of unauthorised information. North clearly did not do so.

Appeal lodged by:

North-South

Basis of appeal:

We always appeal

Director's comments:

TD did not initially award an adjusted score because we felt that the auction would have gone 4NT 5♥/♠ 6♥ 6♠ which would have resulted in the same score. However, it was pointed out that technically the TD did award an adjusted score which was the same as the one obtained at the table.

Appeals Committee decision:

Director's ruling upheld

Deposit forfeited

Appeals Committee's comments:

North took advantage of the unauthorised information.

The TD's adjustment was entirely appropriate and North was likely to have been woken up by the failure to alert that he misbid.

We kept the deposit because we thought the decision completely clear-cut.

L&E Comment:

The Committee agreed that keeping the deposit was the correct course of action. Some members felt that such a blatant use of unauthorised information should have merited a larger penalty.

Adam Wildavsky's comments:

I agree with the L&E committee - a larger penalty for N/S would have been appropriate. Kudos to E/W for bringing the deal to the attention of the authorities even though they had a favorable result. I seldom see actions where I want to use the "C" word, but this one qualifies. The fact that he appealed arguably makes it likely that North was clueless rather than nefarious.

Alain Gottcheiner's comments:

That North was woken up to his misbid isn't a certainty. Perhaps there was only a failure to alert. The fact that South passed 6♣ (which could have been void-showing, after all) hints that he only failed to alert, rather than there was a misunderstanding.

Did the AC investigate the real meaning of 3♥, before deciding that North misbid? It *is* a splinter in quite a few partnerships (especially in the USA). In that case, the degree of incorrection specified by the L&E's comment is overstated.

I'm shocked, however, by N/S's statement that "we always appeal". This implies "we even appeal when it is egregious", and they'd receive a severe lecture about that.

Barry Rigal's comments:

Again the L and E got it right. This is CLEAR procedural penalty territory for N/S. Really disgusting for N/S to be appealing. And if their justification is 'we always appeal' the response 'And we always take your money' should explain the situation nicely to them.

Bob Schwartz's comments:

Golly Gee. Did they really appeal because they always appeal?

Keep the Money!!! Give the largest Procedural Penalty allowed then double it. Double the deposit for each subsequent appeal by this pair and then double it again until they learn.

On a more serious note: The 6C bid is VILE after a failure to alert 3H.

David Stevenson's comments:

The reason given for the appeal is a disgrace, and the AC was absurdly generous in not increasing the size of the PP.

Frances Hinden's comments:

We got this one wrong. The only reason N/S gave for appealing at the hearing was that another 0.5 VPs would be worth an additional £20 prize money, so there seemed a certain pleasing symmetry in retaining the £20 deposit, but on reflection the penalty should have been increased as well. This was a blatant misuse of UI by an experienced and senior member of the EBU who should be expected to behave impeccably and to give only a 0.5 VP fine was generous.

Jeffrey Allerton's comments:

The basis of appeal was frivolous so the AC quite correctly retained the deposit. Although the TD cannot be criticised for applying the standard penalty referred to in the EBU White Book, I believe that a more appropriate penalty would be one commensurate with the number of victory points North might have gained had his unlawful action had its intended effect.

Note by editor:

The "standard penalty" is designed so that different TDs and ACs will be consistent, and also so that the form of scoring will not affect it. But a TD or AC can always give a double standard penalty, or a triple standard penalty, and so on.

Richard Hills' comments:

"We always appeal." This highlights what, in my biased descendant-of-convicts opinion, is a flaw in the current EBU system of monetary deposits for appeals.

A filthy rich player may be always launching meritless appeals, but an impecunious student may be deterred from launching meritorious appeals.

Final summary by editor:

A very generous decision to someone who showed by his stated reason for appealing and his lack of avoiding using UI that he deserved to be penalised much more.

The method of monetary appeals has been criticised many times, but it is to be noted that the alternative methods tried in Australia and North America do not seem to work better. In this case the player involved was not one to whom money meant nothing, and I doubt that the Australian method of PPs, rarely applied, would have helped: the AC could have increased the PP anyway, and several think they should. As for the North American Appeal Without Merit Warning, I cannot see that having any effect on this appeal!

APPEAL No 14: A “Barking” line

Brighton Seniors 06.074

Tournament Director:

David Stevenson

Appeals Committee:

Jeremy Dhondy (Chairman) A Leary Graham Jepson

Board no 25	♠ 8 6	
Dealer North	♥ K Q 7	
E/W Vulnerable	♦ A K 10 9 8	
MP Pairs	♣ J 6 4	
♠ A K 5 2	<i>N</i>	♠ J 9
♥ 10 5	<i>W</i> <i>E</i>	♥ 9 8 4
♦ Q 7 4	<i>S</i>	♦ J 6 5 2
♣ A K 5 3		♣ 10 9 7 2
	♠ Q 10 7 4 3	
	♥ A J 6 3 2	
	♦ 3	
	♣ Q 8	

Basic systems:

North-South play natural
East-West play natural

Result at table:

2♠ making by South, NS +110

Director first called:

After the claim

Director’s statement of facts:

In the diagram position with three tricks to go (remaining cards in bold) declarer put down his hand suggesting they were all his. West was on lead having ruffed ♥A. At some point declarer commented ‘I could have drawn that trump’. It appears that South knew that the ♥J and ♦K were good but did not seem too sure of the trump position.

Director’s ruling:

One trick to the defence.

Details of ruling:

After a diamond lead to ruff with the seven is illogical. However to ruff with the four and play the hearts is careless.

Appeal lodged by:

North-South

Basis of appeal:

Suggested play is 'barking'.

Note by editor:

"Barking" is London slang for completely stupid.

Director's comments:

Owing to a personal problem amongst directors the form was not able to be offered to South for comments. South had previously arranged to leave early so could not attend the appeal.

The AC asked whether the decision could be weighted and was told no.

Appeals Committee decision:

Director's ruling upheld

Deposit returned

Appeals Committee's comments:

South's play was careless, not irrational.

We did not keep the deposit as South had to leave and was not offered the chance to write on the form.

Adam Wildavsky's comments:

Fair enough. To my mind a player who claims with a trump out and does not mention it in his claim statement deserves whatever happens. I think the laws support me in this.

Alain Gottcheiner's comments:

Classical case. L70D disallows South to state afterwards that he would have drawn a trump. I can understand that the AC felt compelled to find some special reason to return the deposit, as there was no classical reason for doing so.

Barry Rigal's comments:

Given the confusion I'm not sure I can sensibly comment. South's comment that she could have drawn the trump implies to me she DID know her 7 was high. But this is too messy to draw any precedent from and the general tenor of the decision seems appropriate.

Bob Schwartz's comments:

Incomplete. I need more information. If West exits a Diamond and South covers with King in dummy he must take the rest by simply pitching the heart. How did the play to Trick 10 happen? If declarer had 74 spades and AJ hearts and led the Heart A instead of 1 high trump then he deserves to lose another trick. If East returned a heart at trick 10 giving partner a ruff then OK but my guess is that is not what happened since East only had 3 hearts and no entry.

All of this makes me intuitively say that West gets another trick because South seems to be very confused and has already made one irrational play so why not another. (I'll use barking if you prefer—I like the word.)

David Stevenson's comments:

As the TD, I agree with the ruling [surprise!]. I also think the AC is right to give back the deposit because of the practical difficulties associated with the appeal.

Frances Hinden's comments:

This is a routine lawbook ruling and the appeal was a waste of everyone's time. The only possible justification for returning the deposit is the lack of correct procedure.

Jeffrey Allerton's comments:

This seems like a fairly straightforward book ruling, the TD's ruling is clearly correct in view of Law 70C, so unless the facts are in dispute the appeal is frivolous. Did the TD explain the relevant laws and the basis of the ruling to South? Did he offer South the opportunity to meet with an appeals consultant?

Final summary by editor:

Seems routine. I find that when a trump may have been forgotten declarer always says he knew it was out.

APPEAL No 15: A Reveley ruling

Brighton Midweek

06.077

Tournament Director:

Martin Lee

Appeals Committee:

Nissan Rand (Chairman) Ben Green Derek Rue

Board no 3	♠ A 10	
Dealer South	♥ K Q 10 9 5 4 3	
E/W Vulnerable	♦ none	
MP Pairs	♣ K J 9 5	
♠ 8 5 4	N	♠ K Q J 9 6 3 2
♥ 7 2	W E	♥ none
♦ A Q J 9 8 6 3	S	♦ 10 7 4
♣ 6		♣ A 10 2
	♠ 7	
	♥ A J 8 6	
	♦ K 5 2	
	♣ Q 8 7 4 3	

Basic systems:

North-South play 5-card majors, weak NT

East-West play 4 weak 2s, mini NT

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			Pass
3♦	4♥	4♠	5♥
... Pass	Pass	5♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Result at table:

5♠ +1 by East, NS -680

Director first called:

After 5♠ bid

Director's statement of facts:

TD was called by N/S after East bid 5♠. There had been an agreed hesitation by West. TD asked for play to continue and he was called back at the end of the hand. Facts not in dispute. Question by TD to East 'Why did you bid 5♠?' Reply 'I believed 5♥ will make.'

Director's ruling:

Table result stands

Details of ruling:

The hesitation does convey unauthorised information but there is no logical alternative to 5♠.

Appeal lodged by:

North-South

Basis of appeal:

Pass is a logical alternative

Director's comments:

Interpreter (French or Italian) required and provided. N/S were not asked to write comments by TD as English is not their primary language and we conversed in French instead.

Appeals Committee decision:

Score assigned for both sides (Law 12C3):

50% of 5♠ +1 by East, NS –680

+ 50% of 5♥ +1 by North, result not specified

Deposit returned

Appeals Committee's comments:

Due to the hesitation it becomes a matter of ethics. Thus East has a duty to be 'super-ethical' and would not always bid 5♠.

After the TD found the committee had given a 'Reveley Ruling', the decision was amended to 100% of 5♥ by North, result not specified.

Note by editor:

The following description of Reveley rulings is taken from the EBU White book 2004, #16.3. For a full understanding of the argument it is recommended that the full section in the White book is read. It can be downloaded from:

<http://www.ebu.co.uk/lawsandethics/misc/2004whitebook.htm>

If a call (or play) is disallowed because the TD judges that an illegal alternative was chosen when unauthorised information was present then this call or play may not be used in any calculations of weighting. Note that it is possible for the result to be included when it might have been reached in another way.

This is affectionately called a "Reveley ruling" because of a decision some years ago which brought this problem to the L&E's notice. Some authorities in other countries permit Reveley rulings.

Adam Wildavsky's comments:

Excellent work by the TD in deferring to the AC's bridge judgment and then varying their score adjustment in order to apply the laws correctly.

Alain Gottcheiner's comments:

Saying that East would not always bid 5♠ is quite strange, unless of course you want to say he'll sometimes bid –and most probably win– 6♦. The obligation of "bending backwards" does not go as far as to avoid making a totally obvious decision. I'm with the TD, who for once was right in stating the case was obvious (which is implied by letting the score stand, see comment to case #9). Do you want to bet how few Easts would pass, or isn't the 70% rule a guideline anymore ?

Barry Rigal's comments:

Despite the UI from the slow pass (double of 5H is possible so the 'Demonstrably suggests' argument is not 100%) I think bidding 5S with the East hand is clear-cut because of the diamond support. So I would have ruled the other way.

Bob Schwartz's comments:

I don't like the AC statement that the BIT made this "a matter of ethics."

Are they really saying that :

- 1 All BITs create ethics problems; and
- 2 Every decision made where TDs or ACs ruled that the BIT affected the result and was therefore not allowed automatically says the offenders were unethical?

I DO NOT AGREE WITH THAT

I would say that Pass is a logical alternative so I will accept the ruling of the AC and I also agree with the TD ruling though I would kind of prefer the offenders to bring the appeal.

We do not use 12C3 so that is not an option here—but I can live with it.

David Stevenson's comments:

The Reveley ruling is actually a red herring. There is no LA to 5♠ which should have been allowed. East is just not going to defend a heart contract with his diamond fit and excellent spades. The TD got it right.

Frances Hinden's comments:

A more difficult ruling. I remember being consulted at the time on the East cards. I said then, and still think, that the only LAs for East over 5H are 5S and 6D, so I do not agree with the AC. However, I do believe that the UI suggests spade support from West, so I might have adjusted to 6Dx-1. This does seem a very good hand for a player poll to discover what East's LAs are; it is a pity that it did not take place.

Jeffrey Allerton's comments:

Assuming that West's hesitation demonstrably suggests spade support (from East's point of view might West have been thinking of doubling?) then it is not so much a case of East being "super ethical", rather deciding whether passing out 5♥ was a logical alternative or not. My gut feeling is that passing out 5♥ is not a logical alternative but this would be a good hand for a player poll. Indeed if the TD had performed a comprehensive poll of East's peers, it is unlikely that the AC would have justification for overturning his decision.

Richard Hills' comments:

West has perpetrated the most dangerous type of pre-empt: second seat and vulnerable against not. A lively possibility for the decisive reason that West chose that risky 3D bid is West was encouraged by possessing a spade void. If so, East's push to 5S could have been a "cheap" save of -800.

However, West's hesitation demonstrably suggested spade support rather than a spade void, since with a spade void West would have nothing to think about.

Final summary by editor:

Fairly split between people who think that pass is an LA, and those who do not. Frances says a player poll would be a good idea – I agree – but says it is a pity it did not happen. How does she know? TDs are required to consult, and recently there has been a shift towards advising consultation with players.

APPEAL No 16: "Two for me?"

Brighton 2nd weekend

06.081

Tournament Director:

Robin Barker

Appeals Committee:

Jeremy Dhondy (Chairman) Graham Osborne Eddie Lucioni

Board no 16	♠ 8 6 4	
Dealer West	♥ 9 5	
E/W Vulnerable	♦ A J 4 2	
Swiss Teams	♣ A K Q 8	
♠ A 10 2	N	♠ Q J
♥ Q 7 2	W E	♥ J 4
♦ 7 5	S	♦ K Q 10 9 6
♣ J 10 9 6 5		♣ 7 4 3 2
	♠ K 9 7 5 3	
	♥ A K 10 8 6 3	
	♦ 8 3	
	♣ none	

Basic systems:

North-South play 5-card majors, 14-16 NT

East-West play 5-card majors, strong NT

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	1NT (1)	Pass	2♣ (2)
Pass	2♦	Dbl	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) Announced 14 to 16

(2) Announced Stayman

Result at table:

4♥ claimed at trick 9 by South

Director first called:

At trick 9

Director's statement of facts:

The play to the first eight tricks:

- ♦ to ♦A
- ♣A (S discarded ♦x)
- ♣K (♠x)
- ♣Q (♠x)
- ♠ to Q, K and A
- ♦ ruffed
- ♥A
- ♥K

At trick nine, the position is shown in bold. South (declarer) on lead. West asked 'Do we get a heart and a spade?' South said OK, showed his hand and then the defence saw they could get a second spade trick.

Director's ruling:

Three of the last five tricks to declarer.

Details of ruling:

Defence denied a second spade trick. West's question constitutes a claim of two tricks and the attempt to get a second spade trick is an attempt to cancel the concession of one of the remaining three tricks. TD ruled that West could crash the spade honours in normal play, so the concession stands. Laws 68, L71C.

Appeal lodged by:

East-West

Basis of appeal:

Not normal to play ♠10 on a ♠ lead from S.

Director's comments:

West's question is consistent with declarer holding ♠Jx. When South plays a spade from hand it is careless (not irrational) for West to take his spade trick by playing ♠10.

Comments by East-West:

West said he thought South was 4-7. He further said he didn't notice East's card at trick 8 which told him South was not.

Appeals Committee decision:

Director's ruling upheld
Deposit returned

Appeals Committee's comments:

West was careless but there is a play to give the contract that is not irrational.

If South plays a spade the 10 would potentially save an overtrick which is a possible play from a player who thinks he only has two further tricks.

Adam Wildavsky's comments:

I agree with the TD and AC rulings. I would not have returned the deposit -- West caused this problem at the table and then wasted everyone's time with an appeal he could not win.

Alain Gottcheiner's comments:

Okay, West thought South was 47. So he was wrong, and wrong again to claim-and-concede. Easy. See footnote to L69. For the Lord's sake, please dare keep those deposits !

Barry Rigal's comments:

I'd rule against both sides. N/S would never make the contract but E/W do not deserve to defeat it. Declarer would not lead a low spade if he had the jack so in practice if a split ruling is permitted it should be given so as to make both sides unhappy.

Note by editor:

It is not permitted to split or weight a claim. The Laws require a single number of tricks made to be decided by the TD or AC.

Bob Schwartz's comments:

West's statement constitutes a claim—play ceases.

South holding J9 of spades leads the 9 and west ducks??????????

Keep the money.

David Stevenson's comments:

Seems routine. West was careless.

Frances Hinden's comments:

Another one where the AC should have been closer to keeping the deposit than amending the TD's ruling.

Jeffrey Allerton's comments:

I agree with the TD and the AC.

Richard Hills' comments:

There is nothing like a claim
Nothing in the world
There is nothing you can name
That is anything like a claim

Final summary by editor:

Looks like another one where the AC's time was wasted but they failed to keep the deposit.

APPEAL No 17: An Adventure!

Brighton 2nd weekend

06.082

Tournament Director:

Andrew Crawford

Appeals Committee:

Frances Hinden (Chairman) Matt Haag Paul Lamford

Board no 10	♠ 9 6 5 4	
Dealer East	♥ K J 6 4	
All Vulnerable	♦ J 7	
Swiss Teams	♣ J 7 3	
♠ K 3 ♥ 9 7 5 ♦ A 10 8 6 4 2 ♣ A 10	<i>N</i> <i>W</i> <i>E</i> <i>S</i>	♠ A J 8 ♥ 10 8 ♦ K 9 5 ♣ K Q 6 5 2
	♠ Q 10 7 2 ♥ A Q 3 2 ♦ Q 3 ♣ 9 8 4	

Basic systems:

East-West play Every Hand An Adventure

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♦	Pass
2♦ (1)	Pass	Pass	Dbl
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

(1) Weak hand with diamonds

Result at table:

3NT making by West, NS -600, lead ♥x

Director first called:

At end of auction

Director's statement of facts:

TD was called at the end of the auction and established the above auction. After the hand had been played West said he thought his partner had opened 1♥.

Director's ruling:

Table result stands

Details of ruling:

TD advised the players that N/S had been given a correct explanation of the E/W bidding system and therefore the result stood.

Appeal lodged by:

North-South

Appeals Committee decision:

Score assigned for both sides (Law 12C3):

50% of 2♦ +3 by E/W, NS -150

+ 50% of 3NT making by E/W, NS -600

Deposit returned

Appeals Committee's comments:

Correct explanation was 'no agreement'. On being told that South has to guess whether to protect or not.

Note West has UI from the lack of alert and explanation, but we did not think that assuming a 1st in hand game all 1♦ psyche was a logical alternative so allow the 3NT bid.

South must protect if 2♦ is weak to protect a possible game or certain partial swing – he simply has to guess given the correct explanation.

L&E Comment:

The Committee considered the response of the pair, who described their system as 'Every Hand An Adventure'. Whilst EHAA is a published system with a fairly long pedigree it is practically unknown in this country. The pair had submitted their system card on request which was perfectly satisfactory. The secretary is to write thanking them for their co-operation.

Adam Wildavsky's comments:

I don't have enough information to comment intelligently. Is EHAA compatible with inverted minors? Is a 2/1 forcing in EHAA? How was the E/W convention card marked? What did their notes say?

Alain Gottcheiner's comments:

What does 1♦ mean? NT type? Anyway, West's explanation of what happened seems right, provided that their convention card indeed states 2♦ over 1♦ is weak.

And if that's the case, why say the correct explanation was 'no agreement'?

I guess the L&E's comment wouldn't have been made if the pair hadn't written what 1♦-2♦ meant, so I'll assume they did.

And why should the AC try and determine what South would have done if he got the right information, since South *did* get the right explanation of West's bid? The fact he didn't get the right explanation of West's hand is irrelevant, see L40A and last sentence of L75B.

Barry Rigal's comments:

Since I am no longer familiar with the UK card I can't really comment definitively on this.

IF the UK card has a section for raises, then presumably we'd know that 2D was either forcing or not. So the only question would be one of UI or AI (East's pass of a forcing bid is AI to West but not his explanation).

Were bidding boxes in use? If so then assuming the system card or system file properly documented the raise as non-forcing South does not appear to have MI.

But I know too little to comment sensibly here.

Note by editor:

All bridge in England, with possible exception of one or two very small clubs, is played with bidding boxes, and has been for many, many years. The convention card has sections for responses to 1-bids generally, but not sections marked specifically for raises.

Bob Schwartz's comments:

Once again the write-up leaves me with questions.

It is fine to say in the auction section that 2D was weak hand with diamonds but:

When was it questioned? I guess after East passed.

Who asked? I guess South.

Who explained? I assume East.

Correct explanation was "no agreement"????

Why—If their agreement is that 1D-2D is weak?

East is not aware that West might have misread auction if that indeed is what happened.

Many more questions.

I won't question the every hand is an adventure business though I hate it.

I allow the table result to stand.

David Stevenson's comments:

A careful effort by the AC. It shows the care necessary in finding out what agreements really are in place.

Eric Landau's comments:

I don't understand this case at all. The systemic meaning of West's 2D was, as advertised, a "weak hand with diamonds", a very ordinary single raise. There's no reason to think that that wasn't the E-W agreement, and the TD reports that "N-S had been given a correct explanation", so how did the committee find that the "correct explanation was 'no agreement'"? Does an ordinary two-over-one (1H- P- 2D) require an alert in England? -- if not, how did the committee find that "West has UI from the lack of alert and explanation"? East's bidding was entirely consistent with West's holding a weak hand with diamonds, and West's bidding was entirely consistent with his having thought East opened 1H up to the point where East passed his "100% forcing" 2D. I see no misinformation, no transmission of UI, and no use of UI. The director apparently found that no infraction had been committed and let the table result stand with virtually no comment; the committee seems to have imagined there being much more to this case than there actually was.

Frances Hinden's comments:

I don't recall being told at the AC hearing that West thought East had opened 1H; he did not say anything to that effect at the hearing (although it is possible it was written on the form and we did not notice). The ruling we gave was based on West thinking they played inverted raises and East thinking they didn't whilst the system card did not specify. If we had believed that the agreement was that single raises were weak, the TD's ruling would have been upheld.

Jeffrey Allerton's comments:

The TD had written on the appeals form: "After the hand had been played West said he thought his partner had opened 1♥." It is apparent from the AC ruling and comments that either they were not aware of this statement or they simply did not believe it; they ruled on the basis that West knew what East had opened 1♦ but that there had been a misunderstanding over whether or not inverted raises were in use. Most representations are made verbally at English appeals, but this case demonstrates that it is worth reading the form as well in case some points have been omitted.

Final summary by editor:

It is interesting that different Commentators have got a different idea of what happened here. Perhaps the clearest conclusion from all this is that it would be better if the EBU used scribes as in the ACBL, so that the write-up includes things said at the appeal.

APPEAL No 18: I always alert 4♣ - shouldn't I?

Brighton 2nd weekend

06.084

Tournament Director:

Robin Barker

Appeals Committee:

Jeremy Dhondy (Chairman) Raymond Semp Matt Haag

Board no 8	♠ A 6 2	
Dealer West	♥ 10 4	
Nil vulnerable	♦ 10 9 8	
Swiss Teams	♣ A K J 8 3	
♠ J 10 8	<i>N</i>	♠ K 5 4
♥ none	<i>W</i> <i>E</i>	♥ K Q 8 5 3 2
♦ K Q J 7 6 5 3	<i>S</i>	♦ 4
♣ 9 4 2		♣ 10 6 5
	♠ Q 9 7 3	
	♥ A J 9 7 6	
	♦ A 2	
	♣ Q 7	

Basic systems:

North-South play Acol

East-West play 5-card majors, strong NT

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
3♦	Pass	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♣ ! (1)	Pass	4♦ ! (1)
Pass	4♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

(1) Both bids were alerted but should not have been

Result at table:

4♥ -1 by South, NS -50

Director first called:

At end of auction

Director's statement of facts:

TD was recalled at the end of the hand, North intended 4♣ as natural. East thought the alert of 4♣ meant North had unauthorised information and could not bid 4♥; N/S would bid higher (and go off more – doubled?)

Director's ruling:

Table result stands

Details of ruling:

TD could see East's point but thought 4♥ was normal. TD resorted to asking a number of players, all of whom (given the auction with no alerts) bid 4♥. So there is no logical alternative to 4♥. Law 16.

Note by editor:

New alerting rules were brought in by the EBU in August 2006, and this was the first major tournament under the new rules. Under the old rules 4♣ and 4♦ would be alerted if artificial, but calls above 3NT are no longer alerted under the new rules.

Appeal lodged by:

East-West

Basis of appeal:

North should bid 4♠

Appeals Committee decision:

Score assigned for both sides:

6♣ doubled -2 by North, NS -300

Deposit returned

Appeals Committee's comments:

Our reasons are:

North is in receipt of unauthorised information (alert of 4♣)

After 4♦ cue he has a good hand and but for unauthorised information would bid 4♠. After this the likely contracts are 5♥ doubled or 6♣ doubled both of which are likely to go down. We thought if 6♣ was the final contract it would get a Lightner double.

Adam Wildavsky's comments:

I find it interesting that the judgment of the AC members differed so markedly from that of the players polled by the TD. Kudos to the TD for taking the poll -- I wish he had told us how many players he had asked. Since this was a judgment call I think both the TD and the AC did the right thing.

Alain Gottcheiner's comments:

First, the TD's action was right and the result of the investigation obvious. How I wish the same would have been made on case #15 !

Second, South's 4D isn't a slam try in most partnerships' methods, but rather a choice-of-games bid, "several places to play", typically 4612, in which case 4H by North is indeed obvious.

Anyway, since it was established, from the investigation, that 4♥ would have been bid by a huge majority of players, on what grounds did the AC decide the contrary ?

Barry Rigal's comments:

Loopy Decision by the Appeals Committee. How could you possibly do more than bid 4H with the North cards? I'm all for ruling against the offenders but this one seems out of line.

Bob Schwartz's comments:

First some questions.

Editor's note—1S-4C splinter: is this alertable? Here it is. EBU no?

Were any explanations of the alerts asked during the auction and prior to the opening lead?

What did South think 4C was and why did he alert it?

Why would 4D ever be alerted?

Did North or South explain anything prior to the opening lead and if so why was the director not called then? If there was any misexplanation N/S were obliged to inform the defenders. Did they do so?

I'm glad to see the director polled experts before arriving at his ruling—so I can find no fault whatever in the TD ruling.

Given only what was in the write-up, I think the AC did a well-reasoned job and I won't fault their decision.

David Stevenson's comments:

The TD seems to have used the correct methodology, and I see no reason not to accept his ruling. Note that while there may have been no damage here, there would have been no UI problem at all if the new rules had been followed. A year or more after the new rules came in there is still much argument about some of them, but the principle of not alerting above 3NT has pretty wide support, except perhaps on the first round where there are other problems.

Eric Landau's comments:

Once again, the director got it right and the committee seems to have overreached. They base their entire ruling on the finding that "North is in receipt of unauthorized information (alert of 4C)", but give no indication of what they believed the nature of the UI to be nor what it might have suggested. The alert can only have suggested to North that South thought 4C to be some kind of artificial bid, but neither North, the committee nor the reader seems to have had any idea of what exactly North might have thought it was, what it might have shown or not shown, what it might have suggested or not suggested, or what its unintended implications might have been for South's understanding of North's 4D bid. None of it matters, though; add me to the "number of players" who thought that the 4H call was entirely normal and essentially automatic. A vague notion floating in the air that partner may have thought that an intended natural bid was some sort of artificial call hardly suggests that the obvious 4H is somehow more likely to be successful than would be so had there been no alerts.

Frances Hinden's comments:

I don't object to the AC's ruling, but it seems a pity that once the TD had gone to the trouble of researching whether North had any LAs to 4H, that the AC should over-rule him. I believe that the TD consulted at least six players all of whom bid 4H, so if two members of the AC thought that 4S was an LA, that is still not more than 30%.

Jeffrey Allerton's comments:

The EBU White Book defines a logical alternative as “a call or play which three or more in ten players of equal ability could be expected to make in a particular situation, if playing a similar system and style, but if the irregularity had not occurred”.

The TD did an excellent job here. He polled 'three groups of two or three players' without the UI and having ascertained that they all bid 4♥, concluded that there was no logical alternative.

I suspect the AC members were not familiar with this TD's thorough method of gathering evidence before giving his ruling. The role of the AC should be to review the TD's decision. They should use any evidence the TD has gathered, supplemented by any additional facts they may obtain during the appeal and additional evidence of logical alternatives from their own opinions; they should not disregard the basis of the TD's ruling and start from scratch.

It seems to me that if the TD had polled 8 players and 8 bid 4♥, then even if all three AC members would bid 4♠ then that still only makes 3 out of 11 (under 30%) in the extended sample. If the TD had answers from 6 players then 0 out of 6 could turn to 3 out of 9 (more than 30%) in theory.

I suspect the AC members all thought that 4♠ was a plausible action, rather than it being the first choice of bid for all three. In that case their ruling is wrong as there is no reason to disregard the evidence that the TD had collated.

Final summary by editor:

Appeals members generally tend to use their ideas of what players would do in a situation, rather than count votes. Some of the Commentators seem to think that vote-counting is the answer. Maybe it is, but in general the whole idea of ACs is to use *their* expertise and bridge knowledge, rather than some unknown players who have been polled.

In this case the TD explained what he had done. In other cases a TD may have taken a vote, but not written it down, and some Commentators assume that if it does not say so, it has not happened. Perhaps it would be better if TDs were instructed to give details of any such polling. But not necessarily, since the TD's final view is unlikely to be just a vote-counting exercise.

APPEAL No 19: I have shown my hand

Autumn Congress 06.093

Tournament Director:

Chris Barrable

Appeals Committee:

Tim Rees (Chairman) Catherine Draper Mike Elliott

Board no 27 Dealer South Nil vulnerable Swiss Pairs	♠ J 2 ♥ J 10 4 3 2 ♦ Q 7 6 3 ♣ J 8										
♠ 7 6 ♥ K 9 8 7 5 ♦ 8 ♣ 10 5 4 3 2	<table style="margin: auto; border: none;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;"><i>N</i></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;"><i>W</i></td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;"><i>E</i></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;"><i>S</i></td><td></td></tr> </table>		<i>N</i>		<i>W</i>		<i>E</i>		<i>S</i>		♠ K 10 8 3 ♥ A Q ♦ A K J 9 5 ♣ A Q
	<i>N</i>										
<i>W</i>		<i>E</i>									
	<i>S</i>										
	♠ A Q 9 5 4 ♥ 6 ♦ 10 4 2 ♣ K 9 7 6										

Basic systems:

North-South play 15-17 NT in 3rd position

East-West play Acol

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			Pass
Pass	1NT (1)	Dbl	Reddbl
2♣	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

(1) Psyche – agreed

Result at table:

3NT –2 by East, NS +100, lead ♠x

Director first called:

At end of hand

Director’s statement of facts:

TD was asked to record the psyche made by North. TD recorded it and asked players to comment.

TD ruled the action by South to have fielded the North psyche, by not doubling the final contract.

Director's ruling:

Artificial score awarded:

30% to N/S, average plus to E/W

Details of ruling:

Partnership agreements, Orange Book 6B3. Law 75B.

Note by editor:

When a psyche is adjudged to be Red, ie to be fielded, the board is cancelled, and the non-offenders get Average Plus, the offenders get Average Minus and a further procedural penalty of at least the standard amount. This would be 60% – 30% in a MP Pairs. However, in a Swiss Pairs it should be 60% – 40% plus a 0.5 VP procedural penalty.

Appeal lodged by:

North-South

Director's comments:

After ruling, the TD then asked for comments by South who placed comments on the psyche form as shown below.

Comments by North-South:

Redouble was for penalty.

Having redoubled and told my partner my hand, I leave it to my partner over 3NT to double as the bidding is now unusual.

Appeals Committee decision:

Table score re-instated

Deposit returned

Psyche reclassified as Amber.

Appeals Committee's comments:

The TD ruled the psyche was Red based on the statements on the form. At that time N/S had not written anything as justification for their actions. Had they written something at the correct time, we feel the TD would not have ruled a red psyche.

Note by editor:

When a psyche is adjudged to be Amber, ie not to be fielded but there is some doubt, the score on the board is not affected. There is no adjustment unless the pair has another Red or Amber psyche.

Adam Wildavsky's comments:

I prefer the AC's ruling to the TD's.

Alain Gottcheiner's comments:

East's bidding makes it highly probable that North's 1NT was a psyche. It wouldn't be the case if playing 11-13, for example. South has every right to detect the psyche on logical reasoning, and that's not fielding. I'd have de-classified the psyche altogether.

By the way, scoring a ton while fielding is uncommon ;-)

Barry Rigal's comments:

Justice restored by Appeals Committee. Yes South's action looks smelly but East has shown 21+ and you have 9HCP; so partner has neo-classical 1NT opening I suspect.

Bob Schwartz's comments:

I don't feel qualified to comment on this case since this is not the way we handle psyches. I am not familiar with red, amber psyches.

David Stevenson's comments:

So, you have nine points, partner has at least fifteen, why do you not double 3NT? But another way of looking at it is that RHO seems to have a lot: his partner showed nothing, but he jumped to 3NT: maybe 20 points? Perhaps RHO has a long solid or semi-solid red suit?

If you count the points, they really do seem to add up to more than forty. Because you have redoubled, partner will presumably double if he had his first bid. So not to double seems obvious.

Fielding is allowing for partner's possible psyche illegally. Here the authorised information is sufficient to tell you that either partner or RHO has psyched: a forcing pass over 3NT is fine. I would have ruled it Green: no field.

Frances Hinden's comments:

I should have liked the AC to explain why the psyche is amber ("whilst there is some evidence of an unauthorised understanding it is not sufficient, of itself, to justify an adjusted score"). What evidence was there? (Note that if East really wanted to get N/S into trouble, he should just pass the 2C bid as N/S should be in a forcing pass auction... if South passed out 2C that really would be a red psyche!)

Jeffrey Allerton's comments:

I agree with the TD. The only explanation for South's failure to double 3NT was that he was catering for a psyche from his partner. Of course, the 3NT bid is strange, but why should South believe the opponents rather than partner? Under the EBU "traffic light" nomenclature defined in section 6B of the Orange Book, this psyche must be classified as Red. An Amber categorisation is appropriate when the psycher's partner has a borderline decision and chooses the action which works well when partner transpires to have psyched. South does not have a borderline double of 3NT!

Richard Hills' comments:

Blind Freddy could deduce from the auction that East is a beginner who is bidding their hand several times over with a boring 15-count, and West is a beginner who panicked into 2C with a 4333 yarborough.

Ergo, if I was the Blind Freddy sitting South, I would automatically double 3NT, and collect my flashy top of nine off for +2300 when East is progressively squeezed on our zillions of winners.

I would never pass 3NT, since pard might suspect that my redouble was a psychic call with a yarborough.

What's the problem? (Yes, I know that my bridge partners spend an entire session of play facing the problem CHO sitting opposite.)

Final summary by editor:

As is often the case with psyches, different people have strong opinions – but inconsistently so! Five thought it was not fielded, but some would have ruled Green, some Amber. Two thought it was fielded.

APPEAL No 20: Well?

Autumn Congress 06.095

Tournament Director:

Jim Proctor

Appeals Committee:

Jeremy Dhondy (Chairman) Jon Williams John Armstrong

Board no 40	♠ 8 4 3	
Dealer West	♥ Q J 10 9	
Nil vulnerable	♦ A K J	
MP Pairs	♣ J 6 3	
♠ K 10 9 5 2	N	♠ A J 7 6
♥ 7	W E	♥ 8 6
♦ Q 9 4	S	♦ 10 6 5 3
♣ K 10 8 2		♣ A 5 4
	♠ Q	
	♥ A K 5 4 3 2	
	♦ 8 7 2	
	♣ Q 9 7	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
2♠ ! (1)	Pass (2)	3♠ ! (3)	4♥ (4)
Pass	Pass	Pass	

- (1) Exactly 5 spades and weak
- (2) Asked and looked at East expectantly
- (3) Pre-emptive
- (4) Asked and bid

Result at table:

4♥ making by South, NS +420

Director first called:

At end of hand

Director's statement of facts:

TD was called at end of play by West and ascertained the following facts:

- (i) 2♠ was alerted
- (ii) North asked and East replied 'exactly 5 spades and weak'
- (iii) 3♠ was alerted
- (iv) South asked and was told pre-emptive.
- (v) West queried South's 4♥ bid because of North's action at (ii)

Director's ruling:

Score assigned for both sides:

3♠ -1 by West, NS +50

Details of ruling:

2♠ should have been announced not alerted

3♠ should not have been alerted

4♥ cancelled

Appeal lodged by:

North-South

Director's comments:

The facts are disputed.

When the TD gave the ruling to N/S, North then said she did not ask a question but looked expectantly at East. TD decided that for the purpose of ruling this was equivalent to asking.

Appeals Committee decision:

Director's ruling upheld

Deposit returned

Appeals Committee's comments:

South was in receipt of unauthorised information and there is a logical alternative to 4♥.

We did not think North intended to give South information but the question or questioning look did give South information. We also considered whether North might reopen after 2♠ P 3♠ P P but N/S did not suggest this and we thought it unlikely.

Given that 2♠ showed exactly five the L&E might wish to consider if East was wrong to alert as the TD ruled.

L&E Comment:

The Committee considered a hand from the Satellite Final at the Bournemouth Autumn Congress where the question of whether an otherwise announceable 2-opening became alertable because of particular constraints. On the hand in question a player had opened 2♠, which was weak but showed exactly five spades. The Committee confirmed that such an opening was announceable and the distributional constraints did not affect this. Players were still at liberty to ask about announceable calls where strength and distribution would be disclosed.

Only in circumstances where a call is unexpected should a call be alerted where otherwise it might be announced/alerted. E.g. 1♣ 1♦ dble. If this double shows precisely four hearts then it would be alertable, even though it was for take out as this would be unexpected by the opponents.

Note by editor:

This last paragraph has been the subject of further discussion as to whether the precise sequence is alertable. This does not affect the decision on the sequence in this appeal, but might be considered a poor example of what the L&E was saying.

Adam Wildavsky's comments:

I've mentioned this before and no doubt will again. I do not comprehend the value of the regulations here. What is the point of an alert if an opponent cannot ask the meaning of the call? Is he meant to look at the opposing convention card? That would convey exactly as much UI. Should he memorize the opposing convention card at the beginning of the round? That would delay the game to no purpose, and were it expected no alerts would be necessary. The last time I looked at the EBU regulations a player was not supposed to ask unless he planned to bid or double. This ignores the possibility that whether or not one passes may depend on the meaning of the call in question. It seems clear that North always intended to pass -- he simply wanted to know what was going on. That's a natural enough desire. The regulation seems designed to frustrate players, forcing them into a Kafkaesque existence.

Note that I am not claiming that WBF or ACBL alerting regulations are in general any better than the EBU's, though I find them superior in this instance. I look to the English to show the rest of the world the way here.

Alain Gottcheiner's comments:

I see little difference between this and case #2. Is there some element that makes 4♥ less obvious than 4♠ was before? Does the AC believe 4♥ is less obvious here than 4♠ was before? Well, maybe, but I'd have liked to hear about it.

It would be a good idea if ACs spontaneously referred to other rulings to explain why they were different. Mrs. Dhondy was chairwoman in both cases, so she could tell us.

Once again, asking is correct procedure after a skip bid is alerted, and doesn't convey UI.

Note by editor:

Actually, Jeremy was Chairman here, Heather in case #2.

Barry Rigal's comments:

Maybe the call should be alerted; it does seem surprising that even though the call is weak, the precise and unusual nature of the call should not be told to the opponents. I can go either way on this decision; I think it really does depend on the facts somewhat.

Bob Schwartz's comments:

If I am reading this properly East was supposed to announce what the 2S bid was and not alert it. If this had been done-North would never have asked anything or looked like he was asking.

The 3S bid was neither announceable nor alertable.

South's question is irrelevant to anything except my note below.

E/W creates all of the problems and N/S gets the shaft??

I can certainly live with not allowing the 4H bid. I cannot live with letting E/W off scot free.

NOTE: I might also have made another bid with the North hand if my partner bid 4H without all of this extraneous info. Was this addressed?

David Stevenson's comments:

While questions do provide UI since players in this jurisdiction have a habit of not asking with worthless hands, it seems unfair on N/S that North would presumably have no reason to ask if East had correctly announced the weak two rather than alerted it. Thus I feel that N/S were the non-offending side – or perhaps both sides were offending. I also feel that the UI provided by asking about an alerted bid in a situation where all natural bids are announced is very small, since more players tend to ask when the alert is unexpected.

The 4♥ bid is not unreasonable. I am of two minds as to whether we should adjust for N/S in the circumstances, but I am quite certain that E/W should receive their table score. They were given an adjustment because of a situation that they created by not following the rules.

Eric Landau's comments:

I guess I do not understand the subtleties of the English alert/announcement protocols. In a venue where an opening 2S call showing exactly five spades is announced rather than alerted, an alerted opening 2S call would, I'd expect, be something rather unusual indeed.

I'd certainly be curious, and, as it would likely be necessary to have any chance of following the subsequent auction, I would surely ask about it. Wouldn't you? Wouldn't just about anybody? That can't be considered transmission of UI by itself -- it can't be illegal to try to follow the opponents' bidding as it goes along, and you can't do that if you let their artificial bids pass unexplained! Unless North conveyed UI by some wording or manner unmentioned in the write-up, no North American committee would find there to have been UI here.

Frances Hinden's comments:

I don't feel very strongly about this one. It is arguable that there is no LA to 4H on the South hand. It is arguable that there is no UI from the question (expectant look) from North after 2S was alerted, as most 2-major openings are no longer alerted. However the TD and AC were not persuaded by either argument.

Jeffrey Allerton's comments:

Did the TD establish why North "looked expectantly at East"? It is possible that North knew from the E/W convention card that the 2♠ opener was a weak two and wondered (without reference to his own hand) why the opening bid had not been announced? However, the normal presumption in England is that a player who asks about the auction is considering bidding, ergo ask then pass creates UI for the player's partner. Once you accept this presumption, the TD/AC ruling follows as the UI demonstrably suggests the logical alternative of 4♥ over the logical alternative of Pass.

Richard Hills' comments:

Am I a peer of South? If I sat South, I would always bid 4H with those cards after West opened 2S (weak with exactly 5 spades) and East bid 3S (pre-emptive). The auction suggests that not only does partner hold values, but also that we have a fit in hearts.

Likewise, if the late great Rixi Markus sat South, she would join me in automatically bidding 4H, since the late great Maurice Harrison-Gray described her as, "Madame Altivolans, to whom a pre-empt is like a red rag to a bull".

; -)

Final summary by editor:

There is often criticism of the English approach to asking questions, and it is often suggested especially by players in other countries, that questions should not be treated as passing UI. But that is nonsense. Players do not ask every time a call is alerted. Perhaps it would be better if they did, but they do not. As a result, when a player asks a question, something can be inferred about his hand, and that inference is unauthorised information to partner. Suggestions that you can ignore this are wrong: it is a matter of Law that when a player passes unauthorised information to partner that partner has restrictions, and since it is a matter of Law it applies in every jurisdiction world-wide.

I play regularly in the ACBL, and I can often tell a player's minimum strength there by the questions he asks. If I can tell that, so can his partner. If this is not treated as such in the ACBL then they are ignoring the Laws, and – much worse – those with partners whose ethics are less than pure are getting an unfair advantage.

It is possible that the number of alerts in England has exacerbated the problem here, and if so the fact that the new rules reduce the number of alerts [or should, as in this case!] will help. In fact, there were suggestions to reduce the number of alerts still further, for example by not alerting artificial bids of the opponent's suit, but they were not accepted at this time. Perhaps in future.

APPEAL No 21: Is it Blackwood?

Autumn Congress 06.096

Tournament Director:

Kathy Williams

Appeals Committee:

Jeremy Dhondy (Chairman) David Burn Brian Senior

Board no 8	♠ 9 5 3	
Dealer West	♥ A J 10	
Nil vulnerable	♦ K 10 9 8 7 4	
IMPs	♣ 10	
♠ 8 7	<i>N</i>	♠ A J 6 2
♥ 5 2	<i>W</i> <i>E</i>	♥ K Q 9 7 6
♦ A Q	<i>S</i>	♦ J 3
♣ A K 9 7 6 5 3		♣ Q 8
	♠ K Q 10 4	
	♥ 8 4 3	
	♦ 6 5 2	
	♣ J 4 2	

Basic systems:

East-West play Acol

<i>WEST</i>	<i>NORTH</i>	<i>EAST</i>	<i>SOUTH</i>
1♣	2♦	2♥	4♦
4NT	Pass (1)	5♠	Pass
6♣	Pass	Pass	Pass

(1) North asked East about the 4NT bid and was told Roman Key Card Blackwood.

Result at table:

6♣ making by West, NS -920, lead ♦x

Director first called:

After E/W had moved.

Director's statement of facts:

TD was called to the table by North after E/W had moved. He asked me to look at the hand. He said that his partner did not double 5♠ for a lead because she thought she would be on lead against a heart contract. Although a question was asked about the 4NT bid West had meant this as a natural bid not RKCB. North also asked if there was any unauthorised information.

Director's ruling:

Table result stands

Details of ruling:

Result stands. RKCB does not guarantee that the contract will be played in an agreed suit. There is no logical alternative to 6♣.

Appeal lodged by:

North-South

Appeals Committee decision:

Director's ruling upheld

Deposit returned

Appeals Committee's comments:

There was no clear-cut agreement about what 4NT was. However West had intended 4NT as natural. His bid of 6♣ was normal. East thinking he was offered a choice of contracts elected to pass.

The committee thought that South should have doubled 5♠ anyway especially as her previous 4♦ bid might attract the wrong lead.

Adam Wildavsky's comments:

North caused this problem. Why did she ask about 4NT? The laws place no limitation on such gratuitous questions -- I often think they should. I agree with the TD and AC rulings.

Alain Gottcheiner's comments:

I've been taught that, in case there is ambiguity, KCBW focuses on asker's suit. So South should have known partner would often be on lead. It could, however, depend on E/W's system. Benji would have made an "asking" hand in clubs about impossible.

Is an AC allowed to adjust a score for some reason completely different from the one invoked by the appellant ?
I'd answer Yes, L81C6 also applying to them.

Barry Rigal's comments:

Everything perfect except for the failure to take the deposit. Back to the 100 lines syndrome again for N/S. What else could West do over 5S?

Bob Schwartz's comments:

I was involved in a similar hand about 15 years ago. North asks a stupid (barking-is that correct?) question in an auction that he could care less what the bid means and as a result creates a problem that would never have occurred. Then he screams that he was injured.

I'd keep the money.

David Stevenson's comments:

South made an obvious error and hoped the TD or AC would give it back to him. Why was the deposit returned?

Eric Landau's comments:

As with appeal #7, the committee made the right ruling but had too much to say about it. That they "thought that South should have doubled 5S anyway" has no relevance to the case, and should not have been mentioned.

Frances Hinden's comments:

I think the AC were extremely generous to return the deposit. *North* called the TD after E/W had moved to explain that *South* had not doubled because she thought she would be on lead. Why could South not speak for herself before her partner saw her hand? (Why am I not surprised that North is 'he' and South is 'she'?)

The UI question is worthy of consideration: West has UI that partner thought that 4NT was Blackwood. However, it is reasonable to rule that, in such an auction where 4NT is known to be possibly ambiguous, 6C is the only LA. Perhaps they returned the deposit as that element of the ruling is less clear.

Jeffrey Allerton's comments:

The TD's ruling seems clear-cut. What was the basis of appeal? I can't see one, so I am surprised that the deposit was not retained.

Final summary by editor:

There is a box for 'Basis of appeal' on the form, and it is always shown here unless it is left blank. It is a pity it is not filled in more often.

Another appeal that wastes everyone's time, and another one where it is not clear why the deposit was returned.

APPEAL No 22: A little thought

Tollemache Qualifying

06.100

Tournament Director:

James Vickers

Appeals Committee:

David Burn (Chairman) Jim Mason John Holland

Board no 8	♠ A J 6 5 3	
Dealer West	♥ 6 3	
Nil vulnerable	♦ 9 4 3 2	
Cross-IMPs/VPs	♣ Q 5	
♠ K 8 4	<i>N</i>	♠ 10 7 2
♥ A Q 2	<i>W</i> <i>E</i>	♥ 10 8 5
♦ A K Q 8	<i>S</i>	♦ 10 5
♣ 9 4 3		♣ A K 7 6 2
	♠ Q 9	
	♥ K J 9 7 4	
	♦ J 7 6	
	♣ J 10 8	

Basic systems:

North-South play Acol with multi. Bid on very weak hands over strong club.
East-West play Precision Club

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♣ ! (1)	1♠ (2)	Pass ! (3)	Pass
1NT (4)	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

- (1) Precision Club alerted
- (2) Natural
- (3) 6-8 points, alerted
- (4) 17-19 balanced

Result at table:

3NT making by West, NS -400, lead ♠5

Director first called:

After the auction had started on the following board

Director's statement of facts:

TD was called by South after two passes on the following board. South felt that a hesitation in the play had affected his defence on this board.

Trick 1: ♠5, ♠10(H1), ♠Q(2), ♠K(H3)

(H1) agreed long hesitation

(2) played quickly

(H3) agreed short hesitation

Trick 2: club ducked to South

Trick 3: South switched to ♥J

South claimed the short hesitation before playing ♠K at trick 1 suggests West has AKx which prompted him to switch to hearts rather than return a spade. When asked to confirm this hesitation West said that there may have been a short hesitation, East said 'no more than 5 seconds', North agreed there had been a slight pause for thought.

Director's ruling:

Score assigned for both sides (Law 12C3)

60% of 3NT -1 by West, NS +50

+40% of 3NT making by West, NS -400

Details of ruling:

One player consulted thought the hesitation definitely suggested a holding of AKx, which prompts a heart switch. However South has a genuine choice of plays after an in tempo play so would not make the correct decision all the time. Laws 73F2, 12C3.

Appeal lodged by:

East-West

Basis of appeal:

Hesitation was not significant.

Director's comments:

West's hesitation suggests a holding of AKx (with Axx she will normally duck, with Kxx she will normally win or risk losing her king and the contract). North might well overcall a strong club with ♠J 8 x x x. West had plenty of opportunity to think about her play from hand before playing from dummy, so could have known that hesitating might mislead the opponents (although no intent to deceive is being suggested).

Comments by North-South:

N/S interfere on very weak hands over strong club (could be Yarborough). They do not play Smith Peters. Hence neither the overcall nor the play to trick 2 suggest either line of defence over the other.

Comments by East-West:

In the ensuing discussion with the TD West described her hesitation variously as 'a few milliseconds, a few seconds' and was concerned it was being judged against South's normal tempo (allegedly very fast). She described herself as a 'thoughtful player'. She claims to have a valid reason for hesitating before playing the king, as it would be the correct play if North has six spades.

Appeals Committee decision:

Table score re-instated
Deposit returned

Appeals Committee's comments:

Although declarer's tempo was not entirely satisfactory, we don't consider that she could have the hand that South was playing her for (♠AKx and the unguarded ♥Q).

Adam Wildavsky's comments:

I prefer the TD's ruling to the AC's, which baffles me. I see no reason West could not have held the hand that South was playing her for. Further, it is distasteful to allow West to profit from her performance.

Alain Gottcheiner's comments:

No infraction at all in the first hesitation. However, any hesitation before playing the ♠K is very suspect indeed unless something very unusual happened (South discards). I'm with the TD, including weighting.

Barry Rigal's comments:

I am far less impressed by the N/S argument than the director. And the fact that the play might be necessary if spades were 6-1 makes N/S lucky they got the initial ruling or else they were in frivolous territory.

Bob Schwartz's comments:

Good Job. If there was a hesitation it sure took N/S a long time to realize it.

David Stevenson's comments:

Whether the length of the hesitation was significant is best decided by the TD or AC, and I would defer to them. But what does a hesitation show?

Logically, there is no holding that makes sense. Declarer should have decided what to do before playing from dummy, and normally it is only if third hand plays a surprising card that she would hesitate. But players often do illogical things, and here it may be that declarer took a moment to see whether her original decision was right.

The possibility that the AC decided was not possible is certainly possible. With AKx and not liking a switch the first instinct is to take it. But this leads to doublethink: perhaps it is better to duck, and now the defence will not believe declarer has weak hearts. On second consideration the trouble with that is that when declarer takes the second one the position is exposed. That fits very much with an approach, a second thought, and then a quick realisation that the second thought does not work.

So if the hesitation was significant, then I agree with the TD that there was the possibility of damage.

Frances Hinden's comments:

I don't object to the late call for a ruling here on principle (compare appeal 21) as, assuming declarer claimed his 9 tricks after the heart back, it may have taken a few minutes for it to register to South that they could have beaten the contract.

On balance I agree with the AC. The description of what happened at trick one sounds like a slight hitch – declarer thought about what card to play from dummy, worked out that the 10 could not cost and might gain, then when the Q appeared had another swift re-think to check what the right line was.

We can see that West has no reason to duck the SQ: if spades are 6-1 West has not led fourth highest and while it cuts out the spade suit declarer only has 8 tricks. If South has QJ doubleton it's right to duck, but then South would with 99% certainty have played the Jack. However, it still does take time to work out that it can't be right to duck the queen.

Jeffrey Allerton's comments:

I agree with the AC here. Suppose that the East/South hands and the facts up to trick 2 are the same, except that now West's actual major suit holdings are ♠ AKx ♥ Qx. South plays a spade back at trick 3 reasoning that: "With ♠ AKx ♥ Qx West would not even consider ducking". How would the TD have ruled then?

Richard Hills' comments:

Tim Seres was Australia's greatest ever bridge player, and one of the world's greatest ever rubber bridge players. He died in 2007 at the ripe old age of 82, but almost to the very end of his life he was earning a very comfortable living at the rubber bridge table declaring his favourite contract, 3NT.

Well worth a look is the collection of deals "Play Cards with Tim Seres", written by Tim's much younger Aussie expert colleague, Michael Courtney, which naturally has a large chapter devoted to Tim declaring 3NT. Unlike his Unlucky Expert rivals, Tim does not necessarily choose the technical percentage play when attempting to achieve his contract.

For example, suppose that Tim was West declaring 3NT on the attached vaguely familiar deal when the first trick proceeded spade five, ten, queen and king:

Board no 8	♠ J 8 6 5 3	
Dealer West	♥ A 6 3	
Nil vulnerable	♦ 9 8 4	
Cross-IMPs/VPs	♣ Q 5	
♠ A K 4	<i>N</i>	♠ 10 7 2
♥ Q 2	<i>W</i> <i>E</i>	♥ 10 8 5
♦ A K Q 3 2	<i>S</i>	♦ 10 5
♣ 9 4 3		♣ A K 7 6 2
	♠ Q 9	
	♥ K J 9 7 4	
	♦ J 7 6	
	♣ J 10 8	

The technical Unlucky Expert line is to immediately cash winners, hoping for a 3-3 diamond break, which is a mere 36% chance (although for once in his career the Unlucky Expert gets lucky, since diamonds do break 3-3).

The Bols Bridge Tip of Tim Seres, however, was "give the opponents enough rope". On this deal Tim would evaluate the chance of a trick three misdefence (or heart blockage) as worth at least a 40% chance, so Tim would quickly and smoothly duck a club at trick two.

Final summary by editor:

Another one with a clear split between those who thought the TD had the right approach, and those who preferred the AC's line.

APPEAL No 23: Bidding again after a pre-empt

Tollemache Qualifying

06.101

Tournament Director:

Robin Barker

Appeals Committee:

Jeremy Dhondy (Chairman) Michelle Brunner Clive Owen

Board no 22	♠ 8 6 4	
Dealer East	♥ 10 9 7 4 2	
E/W Vulnerable	♦ 9 8 7	
Cross-IMPs/VPs	♣ 5 3	
♠ A 3	<i>N</i>	♠ K Q J 10 9 5
♥ 8	<i>W</i> <i>E</i>	♥ J 6 3
♦ A 5 3	<i>S</i>	♦ Q J 10 4
♣ K Q J 7 6 4 2		♣ none
	♠ 7 2	
	♥ A K Q 5	
	♦ K 6 2	
	♣ A 10 9 8	

Basic systems:

North-South play Acol

East-West play Benji Acol

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		2♠ (1)	3♣ ! (2)
3♠ (3)	Pass	4♠	Pass (4)
Pass	Pass		

- (1) Announced 'weak'
- (2) Weak t/o
- (3) West asked about 3♣
- (4) South asked strength of 2♠. 2♠ = 6 to 10

Result at table:

4♠ +1 by East, NS -650, lead ♥A

Director first called:

At end of auction

Director's statement of facts:

North was concerned about the 4♠ bid. West had asked a number of questions about 3♣ and thought a bit before bidding 3♠. East bid 4♠ because his hand had so much playing strength. He described 3♠ as (strictly) to play. West said 3♠ was different from an uncontested auction because he did not have an invitational bid (e.g. 2NT), but he agreed 3♠ was to play. They had not discussed the meanings of other calls in the auction.

Director's ruling:

Score assigned for both sides:

3♠ +2 by East, NS -200

Details of ruling:

The questions and pause are unauthorised information to East and suggest values. Pass is a logical alternative for East and so TD adjusted to pass replacing 4♠. TD consulted a number of players and directors, none would have chosen a 2♠ opening. When a 2♠ bid was imposed on them, around half passed 3♠ - on the basis that they had (presumably) shown their hand.

Appeal lodged by:

East-West

Appeals Committee decision:

Director's ruling upheld

Deposit returned

Appeals Committee's comments:

4♠ was not a sufficiently clear-cut action to be allowed after the questions and hesitation.

We considered withholding the deposit but returned it after some discussion.

Adam Wildavsky's comments:

A close call -- the rulings seem reasonable to me.

Alain Gottcheiner's comments:

Agree with the AC, including the fact that returning the deposit is marginal but OK. The fact that this isn't every person's 2♠ is irrelevant. FWIW I think it's perfectly normal at the vulnerability to hold 6 ¾ tricks.

E/W suffered from lack of preparation (of course, there should be an invitational bid here, the most logical being 3♥ ; or West could double first, then bid 3♠ over 3♥).

West's questions-tempo-then-3♠ are invitational, but disallowed as such. (well-known euphemism in Brussels)

Barry Rigal's comments:

I can see why the TD and AC assumed that the slow 3S call showed values, but it is not clear that a slow call in this sequence does not indicate general doubt. And East's hand is sufficiently skewed that I would allow him to bid 4S.

Bob Schwartz's comments:

Have some more discussion-----Keep the money.

David Stevenson's comments:

This is simple basic UI stuff. Once East has UI from partner he can no longer decide to bid again on a pre-empt. Goodness only knows why the deposit was returned.

Eric Landau's comments:

I would have allowed East's 4S bid. West's thinking "a bit before bidding 3S" could be because he was stretching, because he was underbidding, or because (as appears to be the case) the unusual 3C call presented him with a difficult tactical problem (he is forced to choose between showing his clubs or his spade support, and must consider how the auction is likely to go after various possible bids).

That he "asked a number of questions about 3C" would seem to suggest the last. I would rule that the hesitation and questions did not "demonstrably suggest" East's 4S. Meanwhile, the director went off track by taking inferences from his consultees, "none [of whom] would have chosen a 2S opening". They failed to appreciate that a player who opens 2S on a six-loser Goren 13-count does so in the hope that the auction will develop in such a way that he will get to make a "surprise" rebid. I've been known to employ such tactics myself (with mixed success); as one who might well have opened 2S with those cards, I consider East's 4S call essentially automatic.

Frances Hinden's comments:

This looks like a case of 'if it hesitates, shoot it'. Yes, the questions and pause are unauthorised information to East, but I don't see why they suggest that 4S is more likely to be successful than pass. West's questions arguably suggest club values (which are not good news for East), or he might have been considering whether to pass or bid 3S and only bid because it was a 'weak' take-out rather than a strong one. The TD's survey contains some very useful information: none of the players and directors consulted would have opened 2S. Playing a weak two as 6-10 HCP, East must have known he was really too good to open a weak two, and decided to try and catch up.

I would have allowed the table result to stand, and I am amazed that the AC considered keeping the deposit.

Jeffrey Allerton's comments:

The key question here is what did the UI demonstrably suggest? Whilst I agree with the TD statement that the questions/pause "suggest values", I don't understand why West's alternative action is assumed to be 4♠. West could equally have been considering Pass, in which case would suggest East passing 3♠ over bidding 4♠. He could also have been considering double or 3 of a red suit; I'm not sure if that makes bidding 4♠ more attractive or not. My conclusion: the UI does not demonstrably suggest the logical alternative of 4♠ over the logical alternative of Pass; hence there has been no breach of Law 16A or Law 73C; hence the table result should stand.

Final summary by editor:

Yet again, not much agreement. Personally, I like Alain's comments about questions-tempo being invitational. I am unconvinced by other commentators' views on the meaning of questions: I think a player without invitational values just bids 3♠ straight away. Also, I prefer Eric's view to Frances': players who thought it was not a weak two and said so should be excluded from the poll rather than given as evidence that it is reasonable to bid again.

APPEAL No 24: No transfer break?

Tollemache Qualifying

06.102

Tournament Director:

Ian Muir

Appeals Committee:

Heather Dhondy (Chairman) Nick Sandqvist Ron Davis

Board no 14	♠ K J 6 5	
Dealer East	♥ 7 2	
Nil vulnerable	♦ 10 9 7 3	
Cross-IMPs/VPs	♣ K Q 9	
♠ 10 3	<i>N</i>	♠ Q 9
♥ A K 10 4	<i>W</i> <i>E</i>	♥ J 9 8 6 5 3
♦ A 6 2	<i>S</i>	♦ K Q 4
♣ J 8 5 2		♣ 4 3
	♠ A 8 7 4 2	
	♥ Q	
	♦ J 8 5	
	♣ A 10 7 6	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		Pass	Pass
1NT (1)	Pass	2♦ (2)	Pass
2♥ (3)	Pass	Pass	2♠
... Pass (4)	Pass	3♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

- (1) Announced 12-14
- (2) Announced Hearts
- (3) Not mandatory, can be broken with max 1NT
- (4) Agreed very lengthy hesitation before West's 3rd round pass

Result at table:

3♥ making by West, NS –140, lead ♠5

Director's ruling:

Table result stands

Details of ruling:

There is clear unauthorised information from West to East. TD deemed that pass is not a logical alternative. Laws 73C, 16A.

Appeal lodged by:

North-South

Basis of appeal:

Pass is a logical alternative

Comments by North-South:

West's hesitation over 2♠ can only really be with heart support, thereby greatly reducing the risk of continuing to 3♥ on a jack high suit. The chances of finding West with four spades and two hearts are greatly reduced by the hesitation.

Comments by East-West:

With six hearts it appeared likely that both 2♥ and 2♠ would make. 3♥ would be an action taken by a majority.

Appeals Committee decision:

Score assigned for both sides:

2♠ + 1 by South, NS +110

Deposit returned

Appeals Committee's comments:

The hesitation has made 3♥ a more attractive option. We consider pass to be a logical alternative.

Adam Wildavsky's comments:

Good work by the AC. The TD ought to be required to take a poll before ruling that a call has no logical alternatives.

Alain Gottcheiner's comments:

Easy. 3♥ is far from automatic (especially at IMPs) AND it is suggested.

Barry Rigal's comments:

Clear that West deserves to concede 2S. As to the other three players at the table, I'd feel instinctively that passing 2S is a totally losing position at pairs. And is it possible that West was contemplating doubling 2S?

Bob Schwartz's comments:

I don't understand comment 3: "not mandatory" what are other choices?

Pass is certainly a logical alternative, but it is highly unlikely that 3H will be doubled or down more than 1 so I would bid it. I allow the table result to stand, but I could be talked out of it if I was the only member of a committee to feel that way.

David Stevenson's comments:

Perfectly normal conclusion by the AC. I am surprised the TD considered pass not an LA, though of course his ruling is correct if he does not. As for West's bidding, words fail me. <silence> J

Note that E/W's comments suggest the appeal is correct: 3♥ may be the majority action but it needs to be evident not just a majority action to allow it.

Frances Hinden's comments:

I agree with the AC. I would like to know why North did not bid 3S, but I don't think failing to do so would be considered wild or gambling. This would be a good hand for a player poll on the East cards: if there was a near-unanimous vote for 3H then the table result should stand (love all at *matchpoints* I would accept that pass is not a logical alternative).

Jeffrey Allerton's comments:

I would tend to agree with the AC's judgement. However, I would be interested in the result of a poll of East's peers. If the TD had been as thorough as the TD on appeal number 18 and had discovered that (say) 8 out of 8 people bid 3♥, then the AC should then have accepted his conclusions.

Final summary by editor:

There were some suggestions that the TD should do a player poll. While certainly true, there is no evidence that the TD did not. It is not usual for the TD to write on the Appeals form whom he consulted, and it is totally routine that he would consult. Perhaps TDs should be asked to say whether they did poll players.

There were one or two confusing comments: this was 'Cross-IMPs/VPs' so not matchpoints. As to what alternatives, it is normal for players to break a transfer with four-card support and a maximum, but only a minority agree to do so with four-card support and a minimum.

APPEAL No 25: “Standard textbook adjustment.”

Tollemache Qualifying

06.103

Tournament Director:

Jim Proctor

Appeals Committee:

Chris Dixon (Chairman) Ted Reveley Michael Byrne

Board no 29	♠ K 6 2	
Dealer North	♥ K 10 5 4	
All Vulnerable	♦ 9	
Cross-IMPs/VPs	♣ K J 10 5 4	
♠ 9	<i>N</i>	♠ J 8 7
♥ Q J 9 7 6	<i>W</i> <i>E</i>	♥ A 8 3 2
♦ A 10 6 4	<i>S</i>	♦ J 5 3 2
♣ Q 3 2		♣ 9 6
	♠ A Q 10 5 4 3	
	♥ none	
	♦ K Q 8 7	
	♣ A 8 7	

Basic systems:

North-South play 5-card spades (Precision 11 to 15)

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	Pass	Pass	1♠
Pass	3♣ ! (1)	Pass	3♦ ! (2)
Pass	4♠	Pass	5♣ (3)
Pass	... 5♠	Pass	6♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

- (1) Fit jump ‘goodish club suit’, spade honour
- (2) Game try
- (3) Cue bid

Result at table:

6♠ making by South, NS +1430, lead ♥Q

Director first called:

At end of hand

Director’s statement of facts:

The fact of the hesitation was agreed.

Director's ruling:

Score assigned for both sides:

5♠ +1 by South, NS +680

Details of ruling:

6♠ cancelled. Pass is logical alternative.

6♠ suggested over pass by the slow 5♠. Laws 16A, 12C2.

Appeal lodged by:

North-South

Comments by North-South:

5♣ was grand slam try. 3♣ fit jump might not have top spade honours.

Comments by East-West:

3♣ explanation was 'might be fit jump, might be something else'.

Appeals Committee decision:

Director's ruling upheld

Deposit returned

Appeals Committee's comments:

Pass was logical alternative. No evidence that fit jump promised spade honour. Grand slam try not accepted as reasonable.

L&E Comment:

Standard text book adjustment.

Adam Wildavsky's comments:

Nice try by South, claiming he was trying for a grand. I'd have penalized him for insulting the AC's intelligence. A grand would require partner, who has passed, to hold the SK, DA, and CKQ. I see no merit to the appeal.

Alain Gottcheiner's comments:

This is one case where I think 6♠ would be bid by quite a few, but bending backwards is necessary. North's bidding suggests a hand that's good for game purposes, but bad for slam, something like xxxx – Kx – x – KJ10xxx. (4♠ not being the most positive bid available by far)

The explanation that South was looking for a grand is self-serving and should have been investigated as such. What did South expect to find ? Kxx – xx – Axx – KQxxx ????

Barry Rigal's comments:

If the 3C call was really a fit jump it is far from unreasonable to drive to 6S as South, but I agree that one should not allow South to bid on here. The slow 5S call suggests second round controls, though, which actually makes bidding on worse. The more partner has in hearts the less good slam becomes. Again you have to establish a link between the slow 5S and it demonstrably suggesting bidding on as opposed to there being doubt about what to do.

Bob Schwartz's comments:

OK. Except CTDATPT—Call The Director At The Proper Time.

David Stevenson's comments:

North had passed as dealer. That means that the grand slam try argument is facetious, so I routinely uphold the TD and keep the deposit.

Eric Landau's comments:

Here I flat-out disagree with the committee's evaluation of South's hand. North's 3C showed a hand too good for a simple raise to 2S, and his 4S showed a better-than-minimum hand in that context. 5C was hoping to catch a 5D bid for a grand-slam try auction. Once North bid 4S, staying out of a small slam was not a logical alternative for South.

Frances Hinden's comments:

I agree with the AC, and this is another deposit I would have kept. Deciding to drive to slam in the absence of UI is not unreasonable, but someone representing their county should i) be aware of their obligations under Law 16A and ii) not suggest that he is "making a grand slam try" when a grand slam needs the SK, DA and CKQ opposite in a hand that passed in first position, and iii) not introduce a partnership agreement after the event that a fit jump "promises a top spade honour" with no justification.

Jeffrey Allerton's comments:

I agree with the TD's ruling, confirmed by the AC. North/South should be careful with their comments to appeals committees; South was making a "grand slam try", but that implies playing his passed-hand partner for ♠K, ♦A and ♣KQxxx. As this does seem to be a clear-cut textbook ruling, the basis of appeal is frivolous, so again I believe that the deposit should have been retained.

Richard Hills' comments:

Pull the other one, it's got bells on.

How can it be true that South evaluated their cards as worth a grand slam try, when South has already grossly underbid by failing to treat their cards as worth a Precision 1C opening bid?

Final summary by editor:

North and South seem to be looking for someone gullible. Sadly for them they did not find someone, but why do ACs not keep deposits?

APPEAL No 26: Not Ghestem again (groan!)

Year End Congress

06.107

Tournament Director:

Jim Proctor

Appeals Committee:

Frances Hinden (Chairman) Anne Rosen Jeremy Dhondy

Board no 13 Dealer North All Vulnerable MP Pairs	♠ none ♥ A K Q 10 6 ♦ K Q 8 2 ♣ A 9 4 2										
♠ K 9 6 5 4 3 ♥ 8 2 ♦ 10 9 7 ♣ 7 3	<table style="margin: auto; border: none;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;"><i>N</i></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;"><i>W</i></td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;"><i>E</i></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;"><i>S</i></td><td></td></tr> </table>		<i>N</i>		<i>W</i>		<i>E</i>		<i>S</i>		♠ 7 ♥ J 9 5 ♦ A J 4 ♣ K Q J 10 8 5
	<i>N</i>										
<i>W</i>		<i>E</i>									
	<i>S</i>										
	♠ A Q J 10 8 2 ♥ 7 4 3 ♦ 6 5 3 ♣ 6										

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♥	3♣ !	Pass (1)
3♠	4♣	Pass	4♥
4♠	5♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

(1) South asked – told diamonds and spades

Result at table:

5♥ -2 by North, NS -200, lead ♠7

Director first called:

At end of hand

Director's statement of facts:

TD was called by N/S at the end of play, because East's hand did not match the explanation. E/W convention cards had 'CRO' in three places. Cue bid, 2NT overcall and Other Conventions. Suits were not mentioned in any of the three places. In the jump overcall box there was no reference to 3♣.

Director's ruling:

Table result stands

Details of ruling:

TD ruled that it was a mistaken bid, that East had not acted on the unauthorised information of the alert and explanation and that West had not fielded the misbid.

Appeal lodged by:

North-South

Basis of appeal:

Mistaken explanation not mistaken bid.

Director's comments:

E/W told to name the suits after CRO in all places where it occurs on the convention card and to put an explanation of a 3♣ jump overcall in the jump overcall box.

Comments by East-West:

West: I didn't consider bidding 5♠ because I've bid strongly already and I thought 5♥ might be going down.

Appeals Committee decision:

Director's ruling upheld

Deposit returned

Appeals Committee's comments:

Agree with TD that 3♣ is CRO as under cue/2NT. Agree West will not bid 5♠. East has unauthorised information from the alert that suggest pass; however double would be better for E/W so no reason to adjust.

Adam Wildavsky's comments:

David Stevenson has explained to me that CRO is a variation on what's known as CRASH in the USA, and that it's not an adequate explanation of a defence to a one-level suit opening since it doesn't explain which bids show which suits. That being the case I find the TD and AC rulings puzzling. The footnote to Law 75 instructs us that "the Director is to presume Mistaken Explanation, rather than Mistaken Bid, in the absence of evidence to the contrary." Where was the evidence to the contrary? It seems overwhelmingly likely to me that E/W had no agreement as to the meaning of 3C, or that if they had any agreement at all that their agreement was "natural." Evidence for this, besides the fact that this is clearly what East thought their agreement was, is that nothing was marked on the convention card for jump overcalls. Perhaps East thought that the CRO steps were 2C, 2H, and 2N, and who's to say they're not?

Alain Gottcheiner's comments:

Groan. Wasn't somewhere some ruling that everybody who erred in the use of Ghestem would be disallowed to play it for the rest of the year?

Agree that West's 5♠ would be excessive, although I don't understand his 3♠ bid (tactical reasons, hoping to be left in 4♠ ? That should be investigated)

Would have penalized E/W anyway (10%). Convention disruption contravenes L74B2 if nothing else.

Barry Rigal's comments:

North/South brought this whole thing on themselves. No reason to assume mistaken explanation. Close to meritless appeal.

Bob Schwartz's comments:

Well done even to the AC comment that East should X which would result in a better result for them and should not be allowed. Only observation is should E/W not receive a procedural penalty for the failure to x without actually allowing it against N/S?

David Stevenson's comments:

For once, E/W seem to have got away with messing up Ghestem (ok, CRO, but it is the same sort of thing) but have not done anything that needs an adjustment.

Frances Hinden's comments:

I have nothing to add to this one. The TD & the AC determined that "spades and diamonds" was a correct explanation in spite of there being nothing on the card under jump overcalls and hence there was no MI.

We may not have entirely agreed with West's bidding, but West has no UI. While East has UI, it suggests passing 5H over the more successful logical alternative of doubling, so N/S have not been damaged.

In some circumstances E/W might have been given a PP for not having a fully completed convention card, but given the overall standard of convention cards at this event that would have felt a bit harsh.

Jeffrey Allerton's comments:

CRO is most commonly seen as a defence to strong 1♣ openings, where three particular calls show two suits of the same colour, rank and shape respectively. It is clear that E/W were playing a convention by the name of 'CRO' over natural opening bids but it is not clear what 'CRO' means. I have not come across 'CRO' in English tournament play, and I cannot find any reference to 'CRO' in the *Official Encyclopedia of Bridge*. We do know that the jump overcalls section indicated that 3♣ was natural. The entries on the convention card would be consistent with using 2NT, the simple cue bid and the jump cue bid as 2-suiters, for example. The EBU Orange Book 2006 section 4C1 states that "a TD will rule against a partnership if there might be misinformation from the failure to give a clear and precise explanation on the convention card" with a special mention for 2-suited overcalls (section 4C3). So, in my view, the TD should have ruled Mistaken Explanation under Law 75 (footnote).

It is hard to predict how the auction would have gone had the 3♣ bid been described as natural (for a start, South might or might not have bid 3♣), so a weighted assigned score under Law 12C3 incorporating the several possible outcomes would be appropriate.

Richard Hills' comments:

In my extremely idiosyncratic opinion, the Director and the Appeals Committee failed to adopt my extremely idiosyncratic axioms. They sensibly believed that the only two possible East-West partnership agreements about the meaning of East's 3C were either:

(1) diamonds and spades

or

(2) clubs.

Law 75B (Violations of Partnership Agreements):

"...habitual violations within a partnership may create implicit agreements, which must be disclosed..."

Therefore, if I was the Director, I would give an extremely idiosyncratic Third Way ruling that East-West's *implicit* partnership agreement about East's 3C was:

(3) 3C is a two-way bid, showing diamonds and spades on those frequent occasions when East remembers their notional partnership agreement, but showing clubs on those frequent occasions when East forgets their notional partnership agreement.

And, in my extremely idiosyncratic opinion, since North-South were not told about the implicit agreement to play 3C as a two-way bid, North-South were indeed misinformed.

Final summary by editor:

CRO is certainly played by a number of pairs. It stands for Cue-bid, 2NT and 3♣ showing two suits of the same 'Colour', same 'Rank', and 'Other', ie two other suits. This is consistent with the explanation, and despite some worries from some Commentators it is not unreasonable for the AC to decide that this is what the pair played. Note that if people wish to see the possibilities for two-suited overcalls they will find them at:

http://blakjak.org/two_suit.htm

There were some suggestions that the pair should be penalized for Convention Disruption, but the WBF have said this is inappropriate. Convention Disruption means that when pairs get their conventional agreements wrong they should be penalized because it creates chaos. But whether this might be suitable at top level, it is not right at lower levels. Most players prefer their opponents to make mistakes over their system.

FINAL COMMENTS

Alain Gottcheiner's comments:

I feel that there were a high proportion of totally unjustified appeals. Some appellants (see e.g. #13) don't understand an appeal's function. One should keep more deposits, and apply PPs if that isn't enough. Also, TDs have the right –and duty- to warn potential appellants that their appeal risks being considered frivolous (perhaps not in UI cases, but in case #14 for example, showing them the relevant lines of the Law Book could be enough).

Some TDs and ACs (case #15 is astounding, case #18 also rather strange) seem to believe that you aren't allowed to make a 100% obvious bid that's somehow suggested by UI. Do they believe it should be more than 100% to be allowed ? I really don't like this. And I'm not known to be especially good-natured to UI dealers.

Ah yes, rather than general bidding approach, which is often irrelevant, it would be helpful to commentators to mention the level of the competition and the expertise level of the case's actors whenever they're known.

Barry Rigal's comments:

I may just be in a bad mood but there do seem to be some pretty terrible rulings and decisions here. And meritless appeals; you want'em, we got'em!

Bob Schwartz's comments:

I wish the write-ups of these appeals provided more information as reflected in a lot of my comments. I find far too many of these cases where the TD is not called at the proper time. In our national events the players are identified by name—I would suggest this procedure for your cases as well. It tends to discourage players from embarrassing themselves as well as identifying people who tend to appeal far too often. As usual the deposits are not kept nearly enough times. I would prefer not seeing any referee decisions-the give and take in committee discussions is too valuable to do without.

David Stevenson's comments:

As usual, the clearest thing wrong is that ACs continue to return deposits in frivolous appeals. There are also a number of cases where there was no doubt that there was UI, but it was less obvious what it showed or suggested.

Eric Landau's comments:

As usual, the committees did a pretty good job, although I had a few more quibbles this year than the last couple. Changes to the alert/announcement protocol seem to have generated a few extra appeals that wouldn't normally have been needed.

Frances Hinden's comments:

Out of 26 English appeals, I have counted nine on which I think the deposit should have been withheld, on only one of which it actually was. I am told it can be difficult to get people to sit on ACs (particularly when they are meeting late at night or after the end of play), so we should be doing more to discourage frivolous appeals. On the remaining 17, although I have disagreed with the AC's decision on four of them, there is only one (number 10) where I think there was a real miscarriage of justice.

Jeffrey Allerton's comments:

The tournament directors and appeals committees did a reasonable job this year, but couldn't quite replicate the high standards achieved in 2005.

Many of the cases in this booklet involve unauthorised information (UI) arising from a hesitation. In such cases it is imperative for the TD/AC to consider all likely hand types which could give rise to a hesitation. Often when the hesitator chooses a middle action (e.g. 3♥ when both 2♥ and 4♥ could both reasonably have been the hesitator's alternative action) no adjusted score should be due. An adjustment under Law 16A can only be made when the UI *demonstrably* suggests one logical alternative over another.

In previous years' appeals booklets, commentators have remarked that not enough deposits were being retained. This year, I counted eight, maybe nine, frivolous appeals where the TD's ruling was confirmed and yet only one deposit was retained. As long as would-be appellants feel that the chance of an unlikely ruling in their favour exceeds the chance of a lost deposit, they will continue to appeal. In some cases I wonder whether the players would benefit from a greater explanation of the legal basis of the TD ruling; it seems that some appeals arise from the TD ruling not being properly understood.

Richard Hills' comments:

It is a fact of the science of psychology, well-established by experiments, that it is very difficult for even the best-intentioned person to avoid being biased by context. I can recommend the popular science book "Blink", by Malcolm Gladwell, which discusses this and related issues.

A slightly unusual case where, in my opinion, English international player David Burn might possibly have been biased by context in his analysis of a deal was appeal number 22:

" ... we don't consider that she could have the hand that South was playing her for (S AKx and the unguarded H Q)"

Of course, David Burn could see that West did not hold AKx of spades, and could calculate that a heart switch would not beat 3NT if West held the guarded queen of hearts - Qxx - since with best play by declarer the heart suit would block.

Board no 8 Dealer West Nil vulnerable Cross-IMPs/VPs	♠ J 8 6 5 3 ♥ A 6 ♦ 9 4 3 2 ♣ Q 5	
♠ A K 4 ♥ Q 3 2 ♦ A K Q 8 ♣ 9 4 3	<i>N</i> <i>W</i> <i>E</i> <i>S</i>	♠ 10 7 2 ♥ 10 8 5 ♦ 10 5 ♣ A K 7 6 2
	♠ Q 9 ♥ K J 9 7 4 ♦ J 7 6 ♣ J 10 8	

I conducted my own double-blind poll of peers of South, telling them that West had inadvertently shown the AK4 of spades to South while playing the ten of spades from dummy at trick one, then asking them what they would lead at trick three.

One of them (Harald Skjaeran) considered leading the jack of hearts at trick three, while the other (John Probst) believed that the jack of hearts was mandatory on the information provided.

The point of the jack of hearts, rather than a low heart, is to cater for an automatic reflex of "cover an honour with an honour" by a declarer whose ability is way below that of David Burn, thus beating a "cold" 3NT. In effect, David Burn was the wrong person to serve on this Appeals Committee, since he was blinded by his own learning.

Alexander Pope (1688-1744):

A little learning is a dang'rous thing;
 Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring:
 There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
 And drinking largely sobers us again.

Final summary by editor:

Every year there are several meritless appeals. This wastes time for the respondents, the TDs, the AC members, and the Commentators. What can be done? Richard Hills thinks that ACs should penalise rather than keep deposits, as in Australia. But he has missed the point: the ACs are not applying their powers. If the ACs kept several deposits it would get talked about, complained about, letters to English Bridge, and so on – and there would be fewer appeals without merit. But while ACs let players get away with meritless appeals, it does not matter what the sanction is – because they are not applying it!

There have been several comments suggesting TDs should conduct player polls. Over the last few years, this has been more and more of a recommendation to TDs, who always consult over judgement rulings anyway. The recommendation now is to consult some players as well as another TD, or make sure you consult with the two or three TDs who are also top class players. But we do not know whether this has been followed in many cases, so perhaps another recommendation would be not only to conduct player polls but also to write on the Appeals form the results of such a poll.

Occasionally there are unfavourable comments about Referee decisions. I agree in one way: in fact I made an effort about fifteen years ago to reduce the number of appeals held by Referees with some success. But generally the EBU only uses Referees when it is felt impractical to form a full AC.

One suggestion was about providing the level of expertise of players and competition. Of course, English players get some idea from the competition itself: perhaps I should explain the competitions to our overseas commentators. But there is currently a suggestion that Master Point Ranks should be shown on Appeals forms, so we might have some idea in future.

One commentator suggests the TD is not called at the proper time. There is a feeling in North America that it is important to call the TD as soon as there is a hesitation even if it is agreed. I have never seen any point, and nor do the majority of English players. More importantly, there is no such recommendation in England, so it is not fair to say the TD is not called at the proper time.

Finally, there is a lack of information given on the form. Much depends on the Chairman of the AC. While there is pressure to fill in some more detail perhaps the EBU might consider scribes as in the ACBL so that the important parts of what is said at the AC are noted and can be included in future booklets.