



The European Bridge League

Appeals Booklet 2010

**Including the Appeals from:
The European Teams
Championships,
Oostende**

Statistics from the Appeals Committee

Only 9 cases were brought before the Appeals Committee in Oostende. That is five less than two years ago in Pau. This brings the Board Appeal Ratio down to 0.19 appeals per 1,000 boards. This is a new low in European Championships, and the Appeals Committee is pleased with this fact – it shows the EBL has taken right decisions in its policy on Directing.. The Women had 3 cases and the Seniors only one (BAR: 0.20 and 0.12). There were 5 appeals in the Open series, 2 during the qualifying stage (0.15) and 3 in the Final stages (0.93).

Once again, the quality of the directing was impeccable. Only in 1 case did the Committee alter the Director's ruling, and even this one was a very close decision. The deposit was never kept.

The Appeals Committee heard all cases from within a group of 11 members. In the European Teams Championships, Committees of more than 5 people can be used, bringing the average to 5.6 members per Committee. All Committees were convened composed of 5 members or more.

All the Appeals have been written up and will be published on the Web (<http://www.eurobridge.org> - follow links to departments - appeals)

Board-Appeal Ratio's (BARs)

In order to compare the rates of appeals, the EBL Appeal Committee has developed the notion of a Board-Appeal Ratio. In essence, this is the number of appeals that are heard in relation to the number of boards played. It is expressed as the number of appeals per 1,000 boards played. The BARs are continuously going down, a fact we ascribe to ever better directing.

BARs throughout the years:

Team championships:

Malta 1999	0.70
Tenerife 2001	0.81
Salsomaggiore 2002	0.56
Malmö 2004	0.33
Warszawa 2006	0.36
Pau 2008	0.36
Oostende 2010	0.19

Open championships:

Menton 2003	0.32
Tenerife 2005	0.26
Antalya 2007	0.22
Sanremo 2009	0.28

Total number of boards:

46,752 boards have been played during these championships (Pau 38,880).

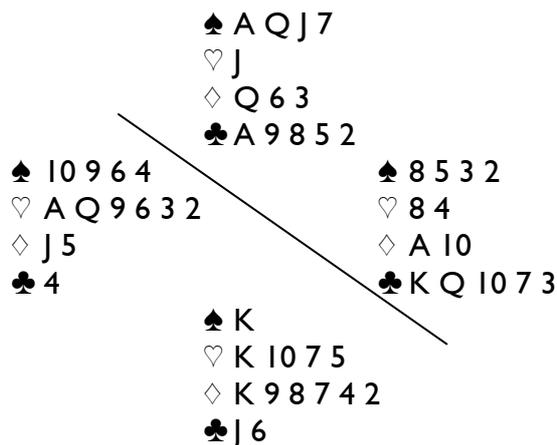
Appeal No. 1
Belgium v Germany

Appeals Committee:

David Harris (Chairman, England), Grattan Endicott (and scribe, England), Ata Aydin (Turkey), PO Sundelin (Sweden), Jan van Cleeff (the Netherlands),

Women Teams Round 6

Board 7. Dealer South. All Vul.



West	North	East	South
<i>Nehmert</i>	<i>De Grave</i>	<i>Giampietro</i>	<i>Topiol</i>
Pass	1♣	Pass	Pass
1♥	1♠	Pass	1♦
All Pass			2♣

- Comments:**
- 1♦ transfer to hearts
 - 1♥ spades and diamonds
 - 1♠ spades and clubs
 - 2♣ weak in diamonds or limit hand

Contract: Two Clubs, played by North

Result: 7 tricks, NS -100

The Facts:

West quickly realized she had misbid and said so to South. The tray had already been passed to the other side of the screen. East explained the systemic meaning of 1♥ correctly to North

The Director:

Considered that both North and South had received the correct explanation of 1♥.

Ruling:

Result Stands

Relevant Laws:

Law 40A1b, 40C2

North/South appealed.

Present: All players and both Captains

The Players:

North/South, through their captain, expressed their view that a partnership should not gain from its own error of system. North agreed that she had received a correct explanation. 2♣ was alerted by South to West but not by North to East.

The Committee:

Perceived that both North and South had been correctly informed as to the meaning of 1♥. In addition South has the gratuitous information that West has misbid; but she knows what explanation will have been given by East to North. South is in full possession of all the information by which to judge her best action. Her choice of 2♣ was unsuccessful and possibly ill-judged. South failed to find a solution to her problem; it was the North/South opinion that 2♦ would show a limit hand, not weak in diamonds; the possibility of INT was not considered.

North will not believe South can have long diamonds since West has shown the suit. The Committee chairman explained to the Belgian Captain that sometimes a misbid can lead to a good result for the misbidder and this is acceptable when the calls are correctly explained according to the system.

The Committee's decision:

Director's ruling upheld.

Deposit: Returned

Appeal No. 2
France v Wales

Appeals Committee:

Jens Auken (Chairman, Denmark), Herman De Wael (Scribe, Belgium), Philippe Coenraets (Belgium), Chris Dixon (England), Barry Rigal (England)

Women Teams Round 8

Board 18. Dealer East. N/S Vul.

	♠ 5 3		
	♥ 9 4		
	♦ A K 8 7 5 3 2		
	♣ 9 3		
♠ A K 2		♠ Q J 8 6 4	
♥ A J 6		♥ K 8 3 2	
♦ Q J 10		♦ —	
♣ 10 8 6 5		♣ A Q J 4	
	♠ 10 9 7		
	♥ Q 10 7 5		
	♦ 9 6 4		
	♣ K 7 2		
West	North	East	South
<i>Woodruff</i>	<i>Neve</i>	<i>Clench</i>	<i>Bessis</i>
2♦	Dble	1♠ Redble	Pass All Pass

Comments: 1♠ natural, 4-card majors

Contract: Two Diamonds Redoubled, played by West

Result: 5 tricks, NS +1000

The Facts:

West called the Director, claiming that she had received a wrong explanation of the Double. South had said “she (North) may have diamonds”.

The Director:

Investigated what South had said and concluded that she had correctly described the double as showing diamonds.

Ruling:

Result Stands

Relevant Laws:

Law 40A1b

East/West appealed.

Present: All players and both Captains

The Players:

West explained her actions. 1♠ showed 4-cards, and she needed to know what East really had. Her 2♦ bid was natural, showing 4 cards. She had chosen to bid her 3 card suit rather than the 4 clubs, because any values East could show her in diamonds would be much more valuable for an eventual slam. When the tray came back with the double and redouble, and before West had had a chance to ask about the meaning of the double, South asked her if 2♦ was natural. West confirmed this, and South did not alert.

According to West, South had then said “she may have diamonds”.

West stated she now had a decision to make. If the double was take-out, the redouble showed a strong NT-type hand (they play weak INT in this position). In that case, with 30 HCP and at the worst a 3-2 fit, she wanted to play 2♦XX. If, on the other hand, the double was for penalties, she would certainly not pass.

She had decided to believe it was take-out because South had asked about 2♦ being natural. Surely that meant that the double was of the normal kind, take-out.

North/South showed their System Notes, which contained the line

”IM-passe-2m-contre = punitif” (French for Penalty).

They stated that they had decided to play it this way because so many people bid 2m on three-card suits.

South explained that when the tray came back with the double, she had been surprised. After all, she had 3 diamonds herself, which is why she asked if 2♦ was natural – it could after all have been totally artificial. When West confirmed that 2♦ was natural, she had stated “partner shows diamonds”. She had not used the word penalty, but she had said that North held diamonds. South stated she had not used any word “may”.

North told the Committee she had alerted her double because it shows diamonds. South stated she had not alerted it, since she had already explained it.

The Committee:

Accepted that South had been surprised that North could still have enough diamonds for a double, and that this was the reason for her actions. She had clearly told West that North held diamonds.

The Committee noted that West had given good arguments as to why she needed to know what the Double meant, but then wondered why she did not make doubly sure. West had guessed, and had guessed badly.

The Committee’s decision:

Director’s ruling upheld.

Deposit: Returned

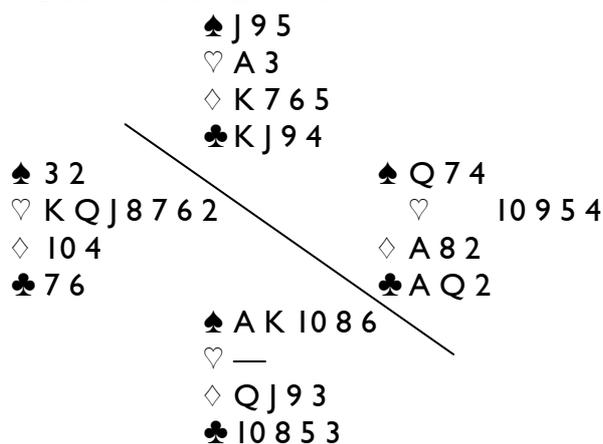
Appeal No. 3
Estonia v Romania

Appeals Committee:

Jens Auken (Chairman, Denmark), Herman De Wael (Scribe, Belgium), Philippe Coenraets (Belgium), Chris Dixon (England), Grattan Endicott (England), Jean-Paul Meyer (France)

Open Teams Qualifying Round 15

Board 9. Dealer North. E/W Vul.



West	North	East	South
<i>Ionita</i>	<i>Levenko</i>	<i>Florin</i>	<i>Sester</i>
	1♦	Pass	1♠
Pass	INT	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

Contract: Four Spades, played by South

Play:	West	North	East	South
	♥K	♥A	♥5	♣3
	♠2	♠J	♠Q	♠K
	♠3	♠9	♠4	♠10
	♥6	♠5	♠7	♠8
	♦4	♦5	♦2	♦Q
	♦10	♦K	♦A	♦3
	♥7	♦6	♥10	♠6
	♥8	♦7	♦8	♦J
	♣6	♥3	♣2	♦9

at which point the following cards remain:



The Facts:

With declarer on lead, and four tricks to go, East claims. He shows his cards and says “2 down”. South calls the Director, who awards – immediately at the table – the Spade Ace to North/South. A score of one down is entered, but the Director studies the hand after he leaves the table and returns after the next deal to give his ruling.

The Director:

Considers that East has forgotten about the outstanding trump, and that it should be considered “normal” to cash the second club before cashing hearts, in which case declarer makes two of the last four tricks.

Ruling:

Score settled at 4♠ by South, making 10 tricks, NS +420

Relevant Laws:

Law 70C

East/West appealed.

Present: All players and both Captains

The Players:

There had been disagreement, when the Director had been at the table, as to whether or not East had added “I will take all the tricks”, to his claim statement of “two down”. East vehemently denied having said this. North stated in the Committee meeting that he was not sure what East had said, but North and East agreed that “two down” had been said. North told the Committee that East had told him, after the first ruling of the Director, that East had miscounted the trumps because of the discard in the first trick. East, via his Captain, denied having said that, stating that he knew very little English, not enough to be able to say these things.

East stated that he had miscounted his tricks. He had thought he had won the first trick, and that when he claimed two down, this was just the three tricks he thought he was entitled to, not all four.

The Committee:

Found that it was most likely that East had forgotten about the outstanding trump. In that case, the laws are very clear and the Director had correctly applied them.

The Committee’s decision:

Director’s ruling upheld.

Deposit: Returned, already because of the confusion of the two rulings.

Appeal No. 4
Hungary v Switzerland

Appeals Committee:

Jean-Paul Meyer (Chairman, France), Herman De Wael (Scribe, Belgium), Chris Dixon (England), Grattan Endicott (England), PO Sundelin (Sweden)

Open Teams Qualifying Round 19

Board 5. Dealer North. North/South Vul.

♠ 9 5 3			
♥ A 8 6 3			
♦ A K J 7			
♣ A 7			
♠ -	♠ K 8 7		
♥ K J 10 7	♥ Q 9 2		
♦ 9 8 5 2	♦ 10 6 3		
♣ Q J 10 3 2	♣ K 9 8 5		
	♠ A Q J 10 6 4 2		
	♥ 5 4		
	♦ Q 4		
	♣ 6 4		

West	North	East	South
<i>Piedra</i>	<i>Szalay</i>	<i>Abou Ch'd</i>	<i>Harangozo</i>
	1♣	Pass	1♠
INT	Pass	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

Comments: 1♣ strong
 1♠ 5+♠, 8+HCP
 INT, 3NT see below

Contract: Four Spades, played by South

Result: 13 tricks, NS +710

The Facts:

INT was explained by West to South as a two-suiter, while East explained it to North as “no conventional agreement”. South explained his 3NT to West as showing 7-2-2-2, while North claimed afterwards to the Director that he could not be certain of the meaning of 3NT because he did not know what INT actually was.

The Director:

Could not find any reason why North could not understand South’s 3NT bid, and that North had not been misinformed.

Ruling:

Result Stands

Relevant Laws:

Law 40A1

North/South appealed.

Present: All players and both Captains

The Players:

South explained his system: After 1♣-1♠, a 1NT by opener asks responder to further describe his hand. When it is fourth hand who bids 1NT, the pass serves the same function. 3NT is the bid to describe a 7-2-2-2 shape.

North explained that he was not told the precise meaning of 1NT. He was afraid that there was a spade stopper in West.

East explained that he had not alerted the 1NT bid, because he considered it general bridge knowledge that this was not natural. He explained that they did have a number of agreements, most notably on 1♣ strong – 1♦ weak, but not on this sequence.

The Committee:

Considered the two reasons why North pretended to be misinformed.

Firstly there was his allegation that he did not understand South's 3NT bid. Because of the explanation of the system, it should have been quite clear to North that South was showing the 7-2-2-2 shape, whatever 1NT actually meant.

Secondly there was his thinking of a spade stopper in West. The Committee found that there had been no suggestion whatsoever, by East to North, of 1NT being natural.

The Committee's decision:

Director's ruling upheld.

Deposit: Returned

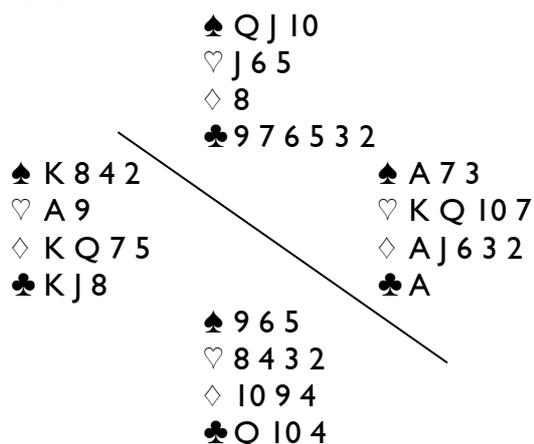
Appeal No. 5
Israel v Russia

Appeals Committee:

Jens Auken (Chairman, Denmark), Herman De Wael (Scribe, Belgium), Ata Aydin (Turkey), Chris Dixon (England), Grattan Endicott (England), David Harris (England), PO Sundelin (Sweden)

Women Teams Round 21

Board 12. Dealer West. North/South Vul.



West	North	East	South
<i>Chubarova</i>	<i>Poplilov</i>	<i>Vorobey'a</i>	<i>Levit Porat</i>
INT	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♥	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♥	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♠	Dble	5NT	Pass
6♦	Pass	7♦	All Pass

Comments: INT 15-17
 2NT transfer to diamonds
 3♣ good support for diamonds
 3♥,3♠ natural or values
 4♣,4♥ cue♦
 4NT RKCB 5♠ 2KC + ♦Q
 5NT Kings 6♦ ♦K or ♠K&♥K

Contract: Seven Diamonds, played by West

Result: 13 tricks, NS -1440

The Facts: South called the Director while West was thinking before 6♦, complaining about the general slowness of East/West, and then again when East bid 7♦.

The Director:

Established that there had been a break in tempo. He estimated the pause to be of around 1 minute in duration.

The Director showed the East hand and the bidding to several players, who all bid 7♦. He ruled that passing 6♦ was not a Logical Alternative and allowed the result to stand.

Ruling:

Result Stands

Relevant Laws:

Law 16A

North/South appealed.

Present: All players and the Captain and Coach of North/South

The Players:

North/South, through their captain, explained why they believed East/West ought not have bid seven:

- West had not been certain of what answer to give to 5NT. She had not alerted 5NT or 6♦ and had given an incorrect answer;
- They have an answer which precisely shows the kings she had (6♥);
- The long hesitation passed a message

North told the committee she realized that she should have been the one to complain about the long pause before the return with 6♦, but her partner had beaten her to it. She used the time to have East write down the answers. These were:

6♣ = 0/3 kings; 6♦ = ♣K or ♠K & ♥K; 6♥ = ♥K or ♠K & ♣K; 6♠ = ♠K or ♥K & ♣K

South explained that she had called the Director about the slow play (in general, not just on this board). South said that West had been very precise on alerting and explaining, but she had not alerted 5NT or 6♦, and had been very hesitant on explaining them. She had seemed desperate before bidding 6♦.

When asked what West could have had for her bidding so far, South explained “we are not World Champions, so we do not bid perfectly”.

East explained her bidding. After 5♠, she was afraid West had 10 points in the red suits, ♠QJ and ♣QJ, so she really needed the ♣K to be certain of the grand slam. When West showed the ♣K by her bid of 6♦, the values that had been promised in spades had to be ♠QJ, and the double showed where the ♠K should be. That also meant 13 tricks were available. East told the committee that she would have bid 6NT if the answer had been 6♠.

West explained why she had departed from system. She had considered that on the previous bidding it would be unlikely for her to be having 0 or 3 kings, so she downgraded the answers of 6♦ and 6♥, and was intending to show the ♥K or the two black ones, with her bid of 6♦.

North/South pointed out that this downgrading of the bids of 6♦ and 6♥ may have been understood by East because of the hesitation

The Committee:

Started by reminding the players that any hesitation should be brought up by the screen-mate of the player receiving the possibly unauthorized information, rather than by the partner of the hesitator. However, it was clear from the timing that there had been unauthorized information.

However, the Committee was satisfied with the reasoning given by East for her bid of seven, and agreed with the Director that there had been no Logical Alternative to it.

The Committee's decision:

Director's ruling upheld.

Deposit: Returned

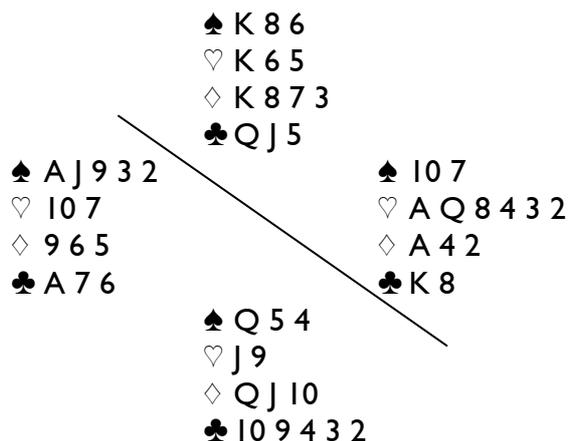
Appeal No. 6
Germany v Scotland

Appeals Committee:

Jens Auken (Chairman, Denmark), Herman De Wael (Scribe, Belgium), Chris Dixon (England), Grattan Endicott (England), Jean-Paul Meyer (France), PO Sundelin (Sweden)

Senior Teams Round 17

Board 5. Dealer North. N/S Vul.



West	North	East	South
<i>Gordon</i>	<i>Marsal</i>	<i>Diamond</i>	<i>Wenning</i>
	1♦	1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

Comments: 1♦ Precision, can be 0 cards

Contract: Four Hearts, played by East

Lead: ♣2

Result: 11 tricks, NS -450

The Facts:

South called the Director after play had ended. 2♦ had not been alerted, so he lead the ♣2 instead of a diamond.

The Director:

Asked South if he had asked about the meaning of the bid of 2♦. He told the Director that he had not asked when the bid had first come through the screen, but only "at the end". The Director interpreted this at first as meaning "after the end of play". He therefore gave a ruling of "failing to protect himself". Later on, the captain of North/South explained that South had asked at the end of the bidding, so the first ruling had not been correct. The Director then examined the case again and began by asking what exactly West had replied to the question. West had said "don't know - may be

artificial". The Director ruled that South should have called the Director at the time of this reply if it hadn't been sufficient.

Ruling:

Result Stands

Relevant Laws:

Law 40B4

North/South appealed.

Present: All players and both Captains

The Players:

South explained that when the tray came back with 2♦, he had waited a small while to allow West to alert, and when that did not happen, he passed. Before the lead he had asked about the meaning of 2♦. He explained that his screen-mate had already inquired about the meaning of 1♦ before. When West told him he was not certain if it was artificial, South concluded from the non-alert that 2♦ was probably natural, so he took his "mental" hand back from the ♦Q and selected a club lead.

West told the Committee that they really had no agreement about this sequence, so he did not alert. He realized meanwhile that this is wrong. When the bid may well be artificial, it is better to alert.

East explained that he had tried to find a bid to show his more than minimum hand. They play long suit trials.

The Committee:

Started by pointing out to East that trial bids are only used when a fit has been given, so he really could not be showing extra values by 2♦. In fact, East admitted that with 5♥, 4♦ and 10 HCP, he would also have bid 2♦.

The Committee then pointed to one of the reasons for South's problem. If North's 1♦ opening does not show any diamonds, this creates a problem for South. South should not expect his opponents to solve this problem for him. East/West cannot be blamed for not having a complete system, and West has done his best in explaining this to South.

The Committee's decision:

Director's ruling upheld.

Deposit: Returned

Disciplinary Hearing No. 1

Jan Jansma

Appeals Committee:

Jens Auken (Chairman, Denmark), Herman De Wael (Scribe, Belgium), Chris Dixon (England), David Harris (England), Jean-Paul Meyer (France), PO Sundelin (Sweden)

Open Teams Final Round 11

The Facts:

The Director was called by East at the end of board 6 to complain about the time taken by North/South to bid and play the board. He learnt later that a different director had been called at the end of board 5, by North/South, complaining about slow play by East/West.

Whilst speaking to East, West called the Director over and told him that South (Jan Jansma) had said the words “f*** you”. The Director had not heard this himself, but South admitted that he had spoken those words, quietly, under his breath, not aimed at his opponents.

The Director:

Reprimanded South, and made a report to the Appeals Committee.

Present: All players and both Captains

The Players:

South said that the Director had given a correct report. He had said “f*** you, what is happening here?” to himself, and he had not addressed this at anyone in particular. He told the Committee that he had been angry, and that he shouldn't have used those words. He had apologised to West, they had shaken hands and he felt the matter was over between them.

West explained that they had been a little upset about North/South calling on them for time wasting, and about the Director deciding they were 90% to blame for any overrun. This was why they had called again one board later, when it had been North/South taking up a lot of time.

West agreed that South had not looked at anyone in particular when uttering the words. He had not taken it as an attack against himself. He had accepted the apologies that South had presented, and he felt the matter was settled.

The Committee:

Found that the facts were clear. South had been in the wrong, but had recognised this, and he had apologised for it. He had been very honest and clear about his wrongdoings at the hearing. Nevertheless, conduct at the table should be irreproachable, and this was not the way the sport of bridge ought to be played.

The Committee's decision:

Jan Jansma is given a formal warning by the Appeals Committee.

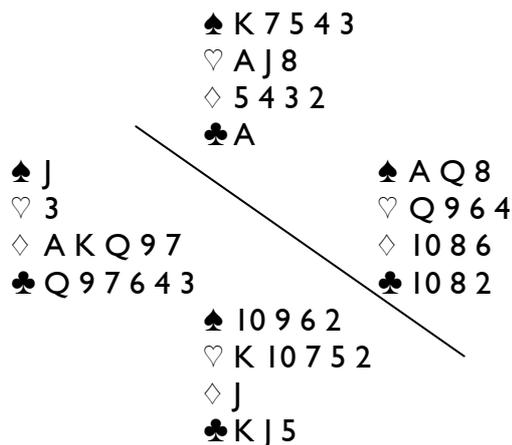
Appeal No. 8
Poland v Bulgaria

Appeals Committee:

Jens Auken (Chairman, Denmark), Herman De Wael (Scribe, Belgium), Chris Dixon (England), Grattan Endicott (England), PO Sundelin (Sweden)

Open Teams Final Round 26

Board 10. Dealer East. All Vul.



West	North	East	South
<i>Karaivanov</i>	<i>Balicki</i>	<i>Trendafilov</i>	<i>Zmudzinski</i>
		Pass	Pass
1♦	1♠	INT	2♦
4♣	Pass	4♠	Pass
5♣	Pass	5♦	All Pass

Comments: INT 4-cards ♥, balanced

Contract: Five Diamonds, played by West

Result: 9 tricks, NS +200

The Facts:

East explained 4♣ to North as a Splinter. North assumed 5♣ to show a void in Clubs. North called the Director at the end of the board, claiming that the misinformation he had received had caused him not to double.

The Director:

Established that North had been misinformed. He asked a number of players and they would all have doubled without any doubt. The Director ruled that the misinformation had not caused the damage.

Ruling:

Result Stands

Relevant Laws:

Law 40B4

North/South appealed.

Present: All players and both Captains

The Players:

North stated that he had received only one piece of information: that 4♣ was a splinter. Thereafter, there were no more alerts, questions or answers. But he did not complain. He did not need an alert to know what 4♠ meant. Nor did he have any doubt that 5♦ was a cue-bid, and when it was passed out, he assumed that there might have been better contracts available, so he passed.

North/South, through their captain, expressed the view that there was other possible damage. If North knows that 4♣ is natural, he may elect to bid 4♠ and no-one knows where it will end. The Director commented on this, saying this argument had not been used at the table.

North was asked if he had not thought of asking again what 4♣ meant, after the pass on 5♦. North believed that East ought to have told him, without asking, if he changes his mind about some previous explanation.

East pointed out that INT shows 4 cards in hearts, in a balanced hand (no singletons, no 5-cards except perhaps hearts). So with a void in West and maximum 4 cards in East, South should have at least 7 clubs, and North should realize that there is something wrong.

The Committee:

Ruled that North had been misinformed.

East should have said something after 5♣ or after the pass on 5♦. However, North knows enough to be suspicious and should have asked as well.

The Committee's decision:

Director's ruling upheld.

East/West are fined a ½ VP for failure to draw attention to the possibility that East's previous explanation might be incorrect.

Deposit: Returned

Appeal No. 9
Netherlands v France

Appeals Committee:

Jens Auken (Chairman, Denmark), Herman De Wael (Scribe, Belgium), Chris Dixon (England), Grattan Endicott (England), PO Sundelin (Sweden)

Open Teams Final Round 27

Board 6. Dealer East. East/West Vul.

	♠ A 8 3		
	♥ Q J 9 6 5 2		
	♦ 6 4		
	♣ J 9		
♠ K J 4	♠ Q 10 9		
♥ A 8 7 3	♥ 4		
♦ A K Q	♦ 10 9 7 5 3		
♣ K 7 2	♣ A 10 8 5		
	♠ 7 6 5 2		
	♥ K 10		
	♦ J 8 2		
	♣ Q 6 4 3		
West	North	East	South
<i>Eisenberg</i>	<i>Paulissen</i>	<i>Vinciguerra</i>	<i>Jansma</i>
		Pass	Pass
2NT	3♥	Dble	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Contract: Three No-Trumps, played by West

Lead: ♥2

Result: 8 tricks, NS +100

The Facts:

South's final pass came after an agreed hesitation.

West called the Director at the end of the hand, claiming that North's lead of a small heart had been influenced by South's break in tempo. On the lead of the ♥Q, he makes his contract.

The Director:

Established that there had been a break in tempo. The players disagreed about the timing, but the BBO operator confirmed that there had been some pause to think. The Director asked both players separately what a double would ask for, and they both replied that it would ask a spade lead. The Director asked a number of players for their lead and all of them went for the lead of a small heart. Most players agreed however that the hesitation suggested the lead of a small heart.

So, while the Director did establish that there was Unauthorized Information that suggested the lead of a small heart, he found that leading the Queen was not a Logical Alternative.

Ruling:

Result Stands

Relevant Laws:

Law 16A

East/West appealed.

Present: All players except East and both Captains

The Players:

West told the Committee the hesitation was about a good minute in length. North and South disputed this, calling it 15 to 20 seconds. But South admitted that for a third pass after 3NT, even 10 seconds would be a break in tempo. North/South accepted that there had been Unauthorized Information.

West thought the ruling should be pretty simple. When there is no reason to expect South to have something in hearts, the lead of the small heart may very often give away the contract, while the ♠Q would rarely do so. Moreover, if dummy has the singleton or doubleton ten, the queen may defeat the contract while the 2 allows it to make.

North told the Committee that he always takes the technical play, which in this case is the small one. When asked if the hesitation helped him, he answered that he did not know what South was thinking about. Furthermore, the hesitation was not that long. South put forward the argument that his pause was about bidding 4♥, which would suggest that he had 3 small hearts, in which case the ♠Q would be suggested.

The Committee:

Agreed that there had been a break in tempo. South cannot have been thinking about doubling for spades, so the heart suit is put into focus. It is more likely that he has an honour rather than three small ones.

The Committee found that leading the ♠Q was a Logical Alternative.

The Committee's decision:

Director's ruling adjusted:

Score adjusted to 3NT by West, making 9 tricks, NS -600

Deposit: Returned