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ADJUSTED SCORES

by Ton Kooijman

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Introducing the weighted scores formally as the default position within the EBL makes it necessary to pay attention to the application of this approach, in the rulings given and the resulting calculations from such rulings. The laws make it clear that an NBO needs to take a formal decision whether they wish to continue the approach described in the 1997 Laws.

Teams   S/NS

EW explained wrongly the meaning of 3♦ after which they played in 5♦x going 2 off. The TD decides that the 5♦ bid should not be allowed. He finds out that the expected result should be based on half the time making 3NT+1 by NS and half the time playing 4♠, making 9 or 10 tricks with the same chance. The result at the other table was 4♠ -1.

Is this analysis worth the trouble? Or is the team sitting NS at this table damaged?

The table result is +300 / + 100 giving the NS side 9 imps.
The expected result without the infraction gives:
0.50 times imps for (630/+100) = 6
0.25 times imps for (620/+100) = 3
0.25 times imps for (-100/+100) = 0 which adds up to 9 imps.

The actual result was 9 imps for + 400.

The NS side is not damaged through the infraction (which might be a good reason to alter the 50/50 to 60/40 in favor of making 4♠, having a more educational meaning for the offending side).

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Pairs  W/EW

W     N     E     S
1♥    1♠    2♥    2♠
pass  pass  3♥    3♠
All pass
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West did hesitate before passing. 3♠ went one off while 3♥ would have been 2 off. The TD considers the 3♠-bid as utterly undisciplined.

NS are entitled to redress for the damage caused by the infraction. This is the difference between the result without the infraction (Rn) and the expected result after the infraction (Re); of course only if Rn–Re is positive. There is no compensation for the difference between this expected result and the actual result (Ra).

In this case the normal result is based upon +110 and the expected result is based upon +200. So the infraction did not cause any damage.

Let us look at the offending side now. According to the '97 Laws there are different views about the meaning of Law 12C2. For the non-offenders, the adjusted score was based on the most favorable result had the irregularity not occurred; for the offending side, on the most unfavorable result at all probable (had the irregularity not occurred). You don't see these last words in brackets in the Laws but many applied the law this way (let me confess that in the Dutch version we added these words in the law book for clarity reasons!!). In the last meeting of the WBF Laws committee the top TDs present confirmed that they always apply L12 this way.

The 2007 laws mention that the offending side should be awarded the score that it would have been allotted as the consequence of its infraction only. And for those NBOs who want to continue the '97 approach things are completely clear now: there is no need to base the score on the result had the infraction not occurred.

This brings me to the conclusion that for the offending side we could base the score on Re if this result for them is worse than Rn. In this example we could have given them -200!! Another confession: I do not understand what *'the score that it would have been allotted as the consequence of its infraction only'* means. But it seems that -200 is a score related to the infraction. And for sure -200 fits into the description of being the most unfavorable score that is at all probable.

I know that we are not familiar with this approach so we might have to change our view.

In the test we had a problem where the same approach was possible. At trick 2, RHO led a card in a tempo which suggested it to be a singleton. It was considered to be a

logical alternative to uphold the ace, so, for the defenders, the score was based on declarer making his contract. But there is something to say for a weighted score for the non-offenders. If the majority play is to take that ace they get a lot allowing them to make the contract. Is 50/50 for making/one off reasonable? Is ⅔ / ⅓ better? Or should we not adopt this possibility at all?

Proposal: if the expected result for the offenders is worse than the normal result without the infraction the adjusted score is based on that expected result. This means that we do not allow them to profit from a stupid mistake by their opponents once they have committed an infraction.

A last remark. Ra is a fixed result; the other (Rn and Re) are not. A variation is possible in that both can be weighted scores. A trick more, or a trick less, can still be within the range of normal results.

Another idea to consider. Trying to establish the normal result the TD finds out that declarer has a choice of 50% for one action and 50% for another, leading to a weighted score. There is a good reason, in such a case, to allow him to do it somewhat better than half the time. We could base the score on 60% making the plus decision and 40% on making the minus decision.

Recently (Sao Paulo) the Appeals Committee decided that after unauthorized information, a choice of action was created where a logical alternative was available, damaging the non-offending side. So an adjusted score had to be given. The Committee decided for a weighted score in which the forbidden action got a fair weight. Until 2007 the Laws were very clear regarding such decisions: plain wrong! They seem to be less clear now. When I tried to convince members of that Committee that such decision should not have been made, some agreed but others did not. That in itself is not impressive; you don't come up with an invention to abandon it immediately.

Let us discuss this point here.

Law 16 is clear: one may not choose an action that could have been suggested if there was a logical alternative. 'May not' indicates that it is considered to be a severe infraction to make such choice.

Law12 speaks about the adjusted score being weighted to reflect the probability of potential results. For me, there is only one acceptable interpretation for potential results as far as the offending side is involved. If an action is forbidden (Law 16) it cannot be considered to be a source for a potential result. And although I don't know what *'a score that it would have been allotted as the consequence of its infraction'* (Law 12c1b) means, it seems to say that the actual result should not play any role in the adjusted score.

The last sentence of Law16B3: the TD assigns *'an adjusted score if he considers that an infraction of law has resulted in an advantage for the offender'*, seems to imply that the adjusted score should take away that advantage.

There is an argument less related to law interpretation.

If we are going to include the forbidden action in the adjusted score for the offending side, we would be encouraging the offenders to infringe the law thus put the ethical players in an uncomfortable disadvantage. The hesitation forbids partner to take a profitable action. Following that line, he reaches an inferior contract. Another player still taking that action is not put back in the position of his ethical colleague, but he gets rewarded with part of the forbidden result.

This idea of a weighted score for the offenders does not seem to be an exception anymore. Question 14 also occurred in Sao Paulo and the TDs came up with a weighted score for both sides giving weight to 3NT made and 5♣ going down. So something is growing and we should discuss it.

In my opinion there is only one reasonable conclusion: *for the offending side the adjusted score does not include any weight for a result realized by committing an unauthorized information infraction.*

For the non-offenders, the position is somewhat different, though I do understand those who claim that the forbidden action should not play a role in their adjusted score either.

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