



2008

APPEALS

Edited by David Stevenson

WELSH BRIDGE UNION

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All the appeals from the WBU events have been included herein. It is hoped that they will provide interest and an insight into the way that people in Wales are ruling the game.

After the success of the earlier editions it was decided to repeat this publication. This publication has been put on David Stevenson's Lawspage, and 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. 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 Chairman, Anne Jones. 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 Chairman 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 herein 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.

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 attitudes more than anything else.

Barry Rigal (b. 1958) lives in Manhattan with his wife Sue Picus. He was chairman of National Appeals for the ACBL for three years and is a full time bridge player, writer and commentator. His tournament record includes most of the major UK National titles and two US National titles.

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 4* teams at Brighton, while Jeffrey is a past European and World junior champion. They both used to direct club and county competitions, and are members of the EBU panel of referees.

Heather Dhondy (b. 1966) is a part-time accountant and part-time bridge professional living in North London with husband Jeremy Dhondy (chairman of the EBU Laws and Ethics Committee). She has been a national appeals chairman for a number of years and is on the EBU panel of referees as well as being a member of the EBU Selection Committee. She is also a regular member of the English ladies team.

Jens Brix Christiansen (b. 1951) lives in Copenhagen, Denmark. He was trained as an international TD in the 1990s and has been chairman of the National Appeals Committee and Laws Commission for the Danish Bridge Federation since 1998. He headed the effort to translate 2007 edition of the Laws into Danish.

Paul Lamford is a Grandmaster and winner of a few national events. He is author of *Starting Out in Bridge* and *50 Bridge Puzzles* and a regular contributor to the International Bridge Laws Forum and the Bridge Laws Mailing List. He is a former Executive Editor of *Bridge* magazine and Macmillan bridge books.

Richard Hills (former chess champion and Aussie bridge expert) is primus inter pares of the Bridge Laws Mailing List (blml). Note that the new website for blml is:

<http://www.rtlb.org/>

Richard's successes include:

Co-Chair of the DIAC Social Club's Film Festival sub-committee,

Co-author of the 2007 Lawbook's Index, and

Co-lege Spaghetti Eating Champion.

Robin Barker (b. 1961) is a research computer scientist at the National Physical Laboratory, near London, and is a TD for the EBU and the European Bridge League. After studying mathematics at Cambridge, he spent a few years in the professional theatre, before getting a proper job. He now lives with his family in Exeter.

Tim Rees has been playing bridge since school, and has won most of the English and Welsh national titles at some stage. The 2008 Schapiro Spring Foursomes completed his set of major titles, the Gold Cup and Crockfords being the others. He has represented Wales at every European, Olympiad and Commonwealth Games since devolution from Great Britain in 2000, with his greatest success being a silver medal at the 2002 Commonwealth Games. Tim works at the Transport Research Laboratory, analysing (and hopefully solving) motorway congestion.

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Abbreviations

There are some abbreviations, and they are listed here:

WBU	Welsh Bridge Union
EBU	English 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
(A)	Alerted
(H)	Hesitation [agreed]
(1), (2) etc	References to notes below
P	Pass
♠♥♦♣	Spades hearts diamonds clubs
Dbl	Double
Redbl	Redouble
NT	No-trumps
5-CM	Five card majors
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 Wales, updated each year. You can download a copy from the EBU 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.

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. From 1st August 2008 weighted scores have become the normal form of adjusted score here and in most of the rest of the world.

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.

The 2007 Laws came into use in Wales on 1st August 2008. Appeals 1 to 3 were held under the 1997 Laws. The remaining ones were held under the new Law book.

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APPEAL No 1: What happened?

08.001 East Wales Congress

Tournament Director:

Ken Richardson

Appeals Committee:

David Harris (Chairman) Tim Rees Peter Goodman

Swiss Teams Board no 2 Dealer East N/S vulnerable	♠ 53 ♥ K92 ♦ A852 ♣ Q864	
♠ AJT76 ♥ J6543 ♦ J9 ♣ 5	<i>N</i> <i>W</i> <i>E</i> <i>S</i>	♠ 9842 ♥ T8 ♦ KT43 ♣ KJT
	♠ KQ ♥ AQ7 ♦ Q76 ♣ A9732	

Basic systems:

North-South play Blue Club

<i>WEST</i>	<i>NORTH</i>	<i>EAST</i>	<i>SOUTH</i>
		Pass	1♣ (A1)
2♣ (A2)	2NT (A)	3♣ (A3)	Dbl
3♥	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Pass	Pass	3♠	3NT
All pass			

- (1) Blue Club
- (2) Various options depending on West's strength and club holding, but not including 5-5 in majors.
- (3) No explanation asked but asks for major

Note by editor:

The form is somewhat confused and partly illegible. Some clear errors have been corrected, and some comments are partly based on guesswork.

Result at table:

3NT -2 by North, NS -200

Director first called:

After East's 3♠ bid

Director's statement of facts:

East corrected his explanation of the auction (the 2♣ bid) after West bid 3♥. After the hand West explained East's 3♣ bid as "asking for the major".

Director's ruling:

Score assigned for both sides:

3♣ doubled -4 by East, NS +800

Details of ruling:

The TD was unhappy that the 3♥ bid revealed to East that West did not hold clubs. Although the 3♣ bid "asks for major" the TD could not see why East should not simply support spades.

Appeal lodged by:

East-West

Basis of appeal:

The TD supported an appeal and took no deposit.

Director's comments:

This is a complicated sequence with much room for misunderstanding. The TD was unhappy with East's bidding (3♣) and that the explanation was corrected only after the 3♥ bid made it clear that West did not have clubs.

Appeals Committee decision:

Score assigned for both sides:

3♣ doubled -2 by East, NS +300

No deposit taken

Appeals Committee's comments:

Appeals Committee is not happy with the explanations given. We do not believe that E/W would have ended up in 3♣ and allow them to find their fit. E/W should note that their convention cards must be fully and properly completed and they should check what system their opponents are playing.

Split the score:

Barry Rigal's comments:

West was in possession of UI from his partner's explanation; if West had heard East explain 2♣ as majors at least 5-5, he might have acted over 3♣, but when 3♣ gets doubled his correct call is 'clearly' to pass - or possibly to redouble to show better spades than hearts. If he redoubles E/W will get to spades, and now 3Sx is certainly a possibility. If he passes the contract will be 3♣x. Since this is a Swiss match there is no need for reciprocal scores; E/W get left in 3♣x, N/S I think get the assigned score by the AC of 300. I think 3♣ goes down 1100.

By the way West's outright lie of what 3♣ means deserves a private ticking off from the AC.

Some felt the state of the Appeals form made intelligent comment impossible:

Bob Schwartz's comments:

Sorry! I couldn't possibly make any intelligent comment with the information given.

David Stevenson's comments:

It is important that full details are given on forms by the TD, and omissions of fact should be added by the AC. At a guess, East gave a confused explanation of 2♣, raised to 3♣ in case it included clubs, and now when partner alerted 3♣ and bid 3♥ realised he must have spades, so bid 3♠. Assuming this is so then his original explanation was MI and his bid of 3♠ was based on UI. Furthermore, his alert and explanation of the 2♣ bid woke West up to the fact that East had misunderstood the 2♣ bid, and his 3♥ bid was based on UI from that explanation.

That is all very well, and there appears to be at least one and possibly two breaches of the UI Laws, but the correct ruling is still a mystery without knowing exactly what was said and what West understood 2♣ to mean. There are some hints that E/W did not realise what system was being played: perhaps West meant 2♣ as Michaels because he had not realised they were playing Blue Club.

The obvious thing to say is that confused forms are unhelpful and it is unclear whether the ruling and appeal decision were correct or not. The idea of the AC doing the TD's job for him is from a former generation, and I do not like the TD taking no deposit so the AC can sort it out.

Alain Gottcheiner's comments:

We aren't told (and apparently neither was the AC) half that's needed to judge the case.

What does 2♣ mean in E/W's system in this specific case (i.e. 1♣ strong, artificial and forcing) ?

What, in this context, would 3♣ by East mean ?

If "majors" isn't one of the possible meanings, what made West bid 2♣ ?

At first sight, it seems that East didn't alert 2♣ (but is a "cue-bid" alertable in this competition ?), raised partner's "clubs", and that West understood what happened and acted illegally, by giving an explanation that awakened East. But wait ...

Suppose 2♣ meant "some two-suited hand not including clubs".

Now East's bid, West's explanation and the ensuing bidding are plausible, East bidding on the knowledge of some fit.

And the answer about plausibility can vary with every possible meaning of 2♣.

By the way, after North's game-forcing 2NT bid, N/S were bound either to double or to bid some (failing) game, and they declined to do the former in a situation where it would be reasonable to double. So assessing them a positive score (in which contract?) doesn't seem possible, even if some infraction was established.

Confused, certainly, but the AC got it wrong:

Jeffrey Allerton's comments:

As some of the key facts are not clear from the appeals form, it is difficult to be sure of the correct ruling. The TD should ask:

1. At the time he bid 2♣, what did West think the bid meant?
2. Exactly what explanation of 2♣ did East provide?
3. Why did East bid 3♣?
4. Why did West bid 3♥?
5. Why did East bid 3♠?

Perhaps the TD established that East was 'raising' clubs whilst West thought he had shown both majors by bidding 2♣, in which case the TD's ruling looks sensible.

I struggle to understand the AC's adjustment, so it is a shame that they did not explain how E/W might arrive in 3♠x. Their comments suggest that they are allowing the East/West calls to stand, so their adjustment must relate to misinformation. However, the form tells us that "East corrected his explanation of the auction (the 2♣ bid) after West bid 3♥" so what misinformation did South have at the point where he bid 3NT?

Richard Hills' comments:

What was the pre-existing mutual East-West partnership agreement about a 2♣ overcall over a strong and artificial 1♣ opening bid?

Was it:

- (a) the 2♣ overcaller definitely denies 5/5 in the majors (East's initial attempt at an explanation), or
- (b) the 2♣ overcaller possibly could hold 5/5 in the majors (East's second attempt at an explanation), or
- (c) our partnership has neither an explicit nor an implicit pre-existing mutual partnership agreement about the meaning of a 2♣ overcall when the 1♣ opening bid is Blue (the explanation that East did not attempt, but most likely the true one).

However, fortunately the key question is not about the pre-existing mutual East-West partnership agreement for 2♣. Rather, the key question is what West BELIEVED was the pre-existing mutual East-West partnership agreement about East's 3♣ BEFORE West received UI from East's explanation of West's 2♣ overcall. That is, has West infringed the 2007 Law 75A? (Under the 1997 Lawbook then in force, what is now the 2007 Law 75A was then the 1997 Law 75 footnote, but there was not any substantive difference between the two versions.)

So, because of the 1997 Law 75 footnote / 2007 Law 75A, I support the Director's adjustment of 3♣x -4 by East, NS +800. Without the UI from East, West may well have guessed that East's 3♣ showed a seven-card club suit. But after the UI it is all too easy for West to self-delusively believe that East-West have a pre-existing mutual partnership agreement that East's 3♣ has a rolled-gold guaranteed meaning of 'asking for the major', and that there is a rolled-gold guarantee that West will always correctly remember that East's 3♣ denies a seven-card club suit.

Frances Hinden's comments:

This is all very confused, but I think that the AC's ruling was definitely wrong. We don't know what questions were asked when, but it seems that East initially thought 2♣ was natural and raised clubs, then when partner pulled 3♣x to 3♥ he passed in confusion; when that was doubled he decided partner must have a two-suiter and did not want to play in hearts whatever the two suits were. I don't see why the TD was "unhappy that the 3♥ bid revealed to East that West did not hold clubs" - West has pulled a penalty double of 3♣ so it becomes obvious to East that he doesn't have clubs (I assume it was understood as a penalty double although it was not alerted). The TD "could not see" why East did not simply support spades: I can see that from West's perspective 3♣ might ask for the better major, but at the time East thought he was raising clubs; he changed his mind once the double was pulled. In fact, the strangest call is West's 3♥ bid - if he has already shown both majors, why not bid his better major? This is the one call that does seem to be influenced by UI.

There are a lot of unanswered questions, but on the evidence given South bid 3NT in full knowledge of the E/W misunderstanding and hand types, so I think the only two possible rulings are the table result and 3♣x.

Jens Brix Christiansen's comments:

The AC's choice of adjusted score indicates that they have found that N/S were misinformed, and that the misinformation caused them to choose not to double 3♠ for penalties but instead try 3NT, and that E/W's auction to 3♠ does not include infractions related to unauthorized information. It is, however, difficult to see exactly how South was misinformed in such a way when he chose to bid 3NT. Based on this train of thought, I would have expected the AC to let the table score stand.

The TD, on the other hand, has ruled that West's failure to pass 3♣ is an infraction, ruling that East's explanation of 2♣ is unauthorized information to West, that passing 3♣x is a logical alternative, and that the unauthorized information indicates that it is not profitable to pass 3♣x. This is not an easy call, but I sympathise with the TD's ruling.

No adjustment, but penalise:

Paul Lamford's comments:

The statement by West that 3♣ asks for a major does appear to be self-serving, but the TD is wrong to believe that West would pass it, and also wrong to believe that East would get out for -800, as declarer is always five off. However, West has no UI (we are told that 3♣ was not explained until later) so he can view that opposite a passed hand 3♣x is a poor spot and East will indeed then correct 3♥ to 3♠. The AC has now decided that South will double rather than bid 3NT as he did at the table; presumably they thought South, with correct information about the E/W methods, would double instead. That seems implausible, and seems like an attempt to punish E/W rather than correctly work out what would occur without the infraction, with the benefit of the doubt going to the non-offenders. So, I would not adjust the score which seems like a normal action with a combined 26 count, but I would give the standard procedural penalty to E/W for incomplete convention cards.

Heather Dhondy's comments:

I would let the table result stand, but award a procedural penalty to E/W for the poor explanations.

No one forced South to bid 3NT, and at that point he had the correct information.

No reason to adjust:

Robin Barker's comments:

This is a case of discrepancy between a hand and an explanation: such cases can involve misinformation and unauthorised information. The TD appears to have ruled that Pass is a logical alternative to 3♥ (and 3♥ is suggested by partner's explanation of 2♣) – I disagree. The AC also appear to disagree with the TD that this is an unauthorised information case; but they appear to have ruled that when E/W reach 3♠, South will not bid 3NT, instead North or South would double. Since East corrected the explanation of 2♣ before South bid 3NT, this does not appear to be a misinformation case either. There appears to be no damage from unauthorised information or misinformation so the score should stand.

Adjustment looks right:

Tim Rees' comments:

It's not clear from the form whether anyone asked about the 2♣ bid during the auction. If they did, then West has potential UI from East's explanation. East has no UI, as no-one asked about 3♣ (which he intended as conventional, and was alerted).

So the question is whether West is allowed to bid over East's 3♣. As East is a passed hand, I don't see that 3♣ can be an attempt to play there, so E/W should be allowed to find their fit.

Because of the MI, the AC changed South's 3NT bid to a double. This looks right to me.

Final summary by editor:

Very muddled. But most of the commentators seem confident that the AC got it wrong, even though they are not agreed on what should have happened.

APPEAL No 2: Does anyone pass?

08.002 Llandudno Swiss Teams

Tournament Director:

Sarah Amos

Appeals Committee:

Patrick Jourdain (Chairman) David Stevenson Peter Hand

Swiss Teams Board no 21 Dealer North N/S vulnerable	♠ T92 ♥ KT73 ♦ K ♣ AKT94	
♠ AKQ754 ♥ QJ95 ♦ 2 ♣ 52	<i>N</i> <i>W</i> <i>E</i> <i>S</i>	♠ J86 ♥ A64 ♦ QJT863 ♣ 8
	♠ 3 ♥ 82 ♦ A9754 ♣ QJ763	

Basic systems:

North-South play Acol

<i>WEST</i>	<i>NORTH</i>	<i>EAST</i>	<i>SOUTH</i>
	1♣	2♦	4♣
4♠	Pass (H1)	Pass	5♣
Pass	Pass	5♠	All pass

(1) Agreed hesitation before North passed over 4♠.

Result at table:

5♠ -2 by West, NS +100

Director first called:

At end of hand

Director's statement of facts:

The TD was called to the table by East who was unhappy about South's bid of 5♣ after his partner's agreed hesitation. South said he was waiting to see what his partner would do over 4♠ and had decided he would pass if partner doubled and bid 5♣ if partner did not.

Director's ruling:

Table result stands

Details of ruling:

Pass is not a logical alternative (Law 16A).

Appeal lodged by:

East-West

Basis of appeal:

The appellants feel pass is a LA.

Appeals Committee decision:

Director's ruling upheld

Deposit returned

Appeals Committee's comments:

Agree with the TD that pass is not a logical alternative. The debate was sufficient to justify returning the deposit.

We would have preferred N/S to attend in order to answer questions about their system.

5♣ should be disallowed:

Barry Rigal's comments:

Very dubious ruling by the Committee; a small sample would surely show that they were in error. South 'knows' North is short in diamonds and has chosen not to act (maybe ♠Kxx/♥AKxx/♦K/♣xxxxx where 5♣ is quietly down one while 4♠ is quietly down two). Note that ANY hand that bids 4♣ cannot by definition have NO alternative to acting on the next round after passing responsibility for the decision to partner.

Tim Rees' comments:

The question here is whether pass is a logical alternative for a player who has bid 4♣ on the previous round. If South thought that 4♣ described his hand, then pass is clearly a logical alternative. If South bid 4♣ hoping to get information later on about what to do next, then the information he has received is unauthorised.

South appears to be bidding 5♣ as a sacrifice, yet he has an ace and 4♠ could be going off (as here). Alternatively, 5♣ might go for -500. Pass must be a logical alternative here.

The only issue is whether North's hesitation suggests that 5♣ is likely to be a successful action. North might have been thinking about doubling, but his hesitation suggests action, so I'd disallow the 5♣ bid.

Frances Hinden's comments:

A very simple question: is pass on the South cards a LA or not? I think it is, and I would have adjusted to a contract of 4♠, probably making (it's not inconsistent to go two off in 5♠ but make 4♠), but there's nothing demonstrably wrong with the TD and AC ruling. Ideally a poll could be carried out, but the difficulty is finding sufficient of South's peers who both play similar methods and agree with 4♣ on the first round.

In my experience, this type of slow pass from North is not a decision about a penalty double, but thinking of bidding; hence I believe that 5♣ was demonstrably suggested.

Heather Dhondy's comments:

If pass is not a logical alternative, why didn't South bid 5♣ on the previous round? It is clear that West must have a lot of major suit cards and giving them room to find a fit and then "saving" seems odd. I would disallow the 5♣ bid.

Jeffrey Allerton's comments:

Looks like an ideal hand for a poll of peers of South. As far as I am concerned, if I bid 4♣ as South, I am strongly suggesting to partner that he bids on; if he fails to do so, it is undisciplined for me to over-rule his decision now. To make an undisciplined bid after a hesitation from partner, which demonstrably suggests the bid, is illegal (it breaches Law 73♣, whether it breaches Law 16A or not), so I am very surprised to see that the table score was allowed to stand by both the TD and the AC.

The AC "would have preferred N/S to attend in order to answer questions about their system" but if this affected their decision, the benefit of the doubt should have gone against the side which chose not to attend the appeal; there is always the suspicion that the reason for not attending the appeal is that they wanted to avoid being cross-examined to give potentially self-damaging evidence.

Paul Lamford's comments:

I surveyed six members of my club of varying standard, and three bid Five Clubs, and two passed. One hoped that partner had a trump trick and that any heart finesse would be wrong, as East was presumably weak. The other doubled, which he thought asked for a diamond lead, hoping for a trump promotion.

When partner hesitates over 4♠ and then passes, he could have been thinking of doubling, but much more likely when he does pass is that he was thinking of bidding 5♣. The fact that 4♠ can be beaten and 5♣ is actually a phantom is irrelevant. South did not bid 5♣ on the previous round, but when his partner dithers over 4♠ he is happy to do so. I am sure that Pass is an LA which 20% of players would seriously consider (we have to guess at the standard). So, we adjust to 4♠ by West, and have to decide how often it makes; I think it is standard to lead a top club and then switch to a high spade, but this is fatal, and North has to continue with a low club to beat it (on the king of clubs continuation dummy discards and North is endplayed in four suits! So, I would be inclined to give a very high percentage of 4♠ =, perhaps as much as 90%, with 4♠ – 1 making up the other 10%.

Confusing:

Bob Schwartz's comments:

How many clubs did the 1♣ opening guarantee?? What was 4♣? If partner passes 4♠ in tempo—I bet the house that South doubles leaving the decision to North rather than bidding 5♣.

I let the table result stand. TD should never rule for the offending side here-note they didn't show as a result. AC decision to me is wrong.

Correct decision:

David Stevenson's comments:

I dislike players making limit bids and then going on when partner breaks tempo, but on this occasion it appears passing 4♠ cannot really be right.

Robin Barker's comments:

OK. I wonder if Pass is a logical alternative under the new 2007 laws?

The logic was wrong but the result was right:

Eric Landau's comments:

It's far from clear that passing out 5♣ would be illogical, although that's not an unreasonable judgment. South claimed he would have passed if partner had doubled, and, indeed, from his point of view that was quite likely. Likely enough, in fact, for North's hesitation to suggest that he was thinking of doubling, which would have made it less attractive for South to bid 5♣ holding a side ace for his preempt. I'd have let the table result stand on the grounds that North's huddle didn't demonstrably suggest bidding on.

Alain Gottcheiner's comments:

I don't understand South's claim. How on earth did he know that West was going to bid 4♠ over his 4♣ bid? Yet he says he anticipated it.

The main reason in my opinion why we should accept 5♣ is that there is no way to know whether partner hesitated about defending (with the actual hand) or about doubling (with one more spade and one fewer club), where bidding 5♣ would be wrong. Whence the tempo doesn't clearly suggest any action over another.

No merit:

Richard Hills' comments:

In my opinion, the Appeals Committee should have deemed the appeal without merit, because East-West brought no new facts to the appeal, and more importantly because North did not double 4♠. (In my opinion, only if North doubles 4♠ does a pass by South graduate to becoming a logical alternative.)

In my opinion, the Appeals Committee should not have published this obiter dictum:

'We would have preferred N/S to attend in order to answer questions about their system.'

I would prefer to win the Bermuda Bowl. So what? Why should this case's non-appealing side give up their dinner break merely because their appealing opponents launch what could have been deemed a meritless appeal?

As a general rule, if a non-appealing side fails to appear at an Appeals Committee hearing, then the only consequence which naturally follows is this:

EBU White Book, clause 93.4.1:

'Players should be aware that if they do not attend an appeal, even though they are the non-offending or non-appealing side, any doubtful point is likely to go against them.'

In this specific case, however, the Appeals Committee correctly ruled that there were not any doubtful points (except, of course, the doubtful point as to whether the appeal was without merit).

Final summary by editor:

Since I was on the AC it is unsurprising that I think we were right. One interesting thing about this case is that several of the comments from people who think we were wrong suggest a level of competence for the N/S pair that I do not think they attained. So we cannot always blame commentators who see what is written for getting a different feel for a case from the members of the AC.

For example:

As far as I am concerned, if I bid 4♣ as South, I am strongly suggesting to partner that he bids on; if he fails to do so, it is undisciplined for me to over-rule his decision now.

I am quite sure that the pair concerned would have no idea what this means. It is total gibberish to them, and so they do not follow the precepts therein, sensible though they may be.

APPEAL No 3: Chaos in the club!

08.003 BGB Summer Simultaneous Pairs

Tournament Director:

Eric Favager

Referee:

Anne Jones

Note by editor:

A Referee is an Appeals Committee consisting of one person.

This hand occurred in a Simultaneous Pairs, which is a nationally run event but with individual heats in clubs as ordinary club nights. Thus the TD was the TD in the club. However the appeal was made to the WBU.

MP Pairs Board no 25 Dealer North E/W vulnerable	♠ 4 ♥ T8763 ♦ AKQ2 ♣ K62	
♠ AQJ986 ♥ 4 ♦ 865 ♣ QT9	<i>N</i> <i>W</i> <i>E</i> <i>S</i>	♠ T7532 ♥ A9 ♦ 94 ♣ A754
	♠ K ♥ KQJ52 ♦ JT73 ♣ J83	

Basic systems:

North-South play Benjaminised Acol

East-West play Acol

<i>WEST</i>	<i>NORTH</i>	<i>EAST</i>	<i>SOUTH</i>
	1♥	Pass	3♠ (A1)
Pass (2)	4♦	Pass (3)	4♥
4♠	5♥	Dbl	Pass
Pass	Pass		

- (1) Alert made by tapping the table.
- (2) West passed but after realising the tapping was an alert wanted to bid 4♠. This was disallowed by South.
- (3) East wanted to bid 4♠. At this point the playing TD was called but did not arrive and play continued. East was discouraged by South from bidding 4♠ so passed.

Result at table:

5♥ doubled –1 by North, NS –100

Director first called:

After East's pause over 4♦. Actually arrived after play finished.

Director's statement of facts:

East attempted to bid on second round – dissuaded, therefore hesitation.

North clear about alert, West not familiar with tapping table to alert, then tried to bid 4♠.

If director had been called, this may or may not have been allowed. But hand was going to playing director's table next.

West misguidedly bid 4♠ this time, because of intent on bidding 3♠ first time. Hesitation, from attempted bid by East influences this bid.

Strictly speaking the 4♠ bid should be disallowed because there were alternatives (pass, double) which were ignored.

If 3♠ had been allowed the first time round, then I can well see 5♥ doubled being final contract (4♠ is a make).

Director's ruling:

Score assigned for both sides:

5♥ –1 by North, NS –50

Details of ruling:

On discussion with all four players and John Salisbury and inspection of results, I removed the double to restore equity.

This changed the N/S matchpoints from 3/12 to 8/12 – better than 60/40. Most 4♥ contracts were 1 off, some 2 off. One 3♥ just made.

Note by editor:

It is not clear where John Salisbury comes into it: he is not one of the players at the table. He is an excellent player. Bidding boxes were in use and alerts by regulation have to be given by use of the alert card. Prior to bidding boxes, alerting in Wales was by knocking the table but it is many years since spoken bidding was used.

Appeal lodged by:

North-South

Director's comments:

No deposit taken because telephone referee (email).

Comments by North-South:

Over 4♦ East attempts to bid touching cards in box. South said "I think we should call the director now". East went to fetch director. While waiting East said "I'll not bother" and passed.

Director called at end of session. Details for the above bidding given, and director brought it back to 4♥.

...as happy with that decision, then John Salisbury said the ten tricks should be reduced to nine as it doesn't make ten, if de.....upset and sad that wasn't on. North had made ten and ten it should be. I asked East if the spades had not been mentioned would have led and she said exactly the same.

This is exactly as I recall it, your comments would be appreciated.

Note by editor:

Exactly as typed on the form. The typing goes off both sides of the form.

Referee's decision:

Table score re-instated
No deposit taken

Referee's comments:

Alert was tenuous and not understood immediately it was made, so initial pass was under MI. 4♠ bid by West should have been allowed.

It is North's duty to ensure that West has seen and understands that an alert has been made, and this it would appear had not happened, so the 4♠ bid should have been allowed. If this had happened East would not have given the unauthorised information that she did. If North was mindful to stop the 4♠ bid by West they should not have called until a TD had sorted the problem.

I am aware of the unauthorised information given to West by East but I do not think West used it. West was always wanting to bid 4♠ and had made this clear from the start.

I was in some doubt as to who had doubled, but I now understand that it was East. East has no unauthorised information as 4♠ has now been bid in the legal auction, so is under no constraint, and is free to bid whatever they like. (I would not have allowed a double by West, because Pass would be a logical alternative given that West has UI.)

My ruling is that the table result should stand. 5♥x-1.

TD should always be available to give a ruling, even if playing.

N/S should not rule in the absence of the TD especially if such ruling damages E/W.

Good decision by AC, but very poor job by the TD, exacerbated by N/S's actions:

Barry Rigal's comments:

I agree that the failure to alert properly means that the table result should stand. The behavior by N/S was so poor, the whole directing and appeals process (and write-up) so improperly executed that as Sherlock Holmes said 'I think we need an amnesty in that direction.' Next case!

Frances Hinden's comments:

The Referee's bridge ruling back to the table result of 5♥x-1 is correct, although I think it is South's responsibility to check that the alert has been seen (not North's).

As for what happened at the table: the adjustment to 5♥ undoubled makes no sense. South should be told in no uncertain terms to stop making his own rulings, which was where the problems started. Everyone should be reminded to call the TD, whether or not he is playing, whenever there is an irregularity.

Heather Dhondy's comments:

It is not a good idea to have a participating director in this event. This created some of the problem. It appears as though an inexperienced E/W were being bullied at the table into doing things that they did not want to do. It is North's responsibility to ensure that his alert is seen and understood. I would restore the table result.

Paul Lamford's comments:

Certainly there was chaos, and the director should have been called on at least three occasions! North has a duty to ensure that his alert is seen, and if the director had been called he would have allowed West to change his call based on misinformation. [Law 21B1(a)]. He would have either doubled or selected 4♠ and both routes lead to 4♠ by East-West anyway. Do we deny redress to E/W if the director was not called? From the facts as presented it looks like they were bullied into not calling the TD, so I would allow the table score to stand, as I presume N/S would press on to 5♥ in any case.

Robin Barker's comments:

It is difficult to get too excited about the intricacies of this case. North/South were telling East/West what they could and could not bid and then want a ruling when East/West finally get to bid 4♠. I would find a law (something in Laws 9, 10, 11 should do) that allowed me not to change the score in North/South's favour. So I am happier with the AC's ruling than the TD's.

Good decision by AC, but very poor job by the TD:

Bob Schwartz's comments:

Very confusing situation, but I think the referee did a great job in sorting it out and coming to a sensible ruling. The laws say whenever an irregularity occurs—the director must be called. It shouldn't matter that the director is playing—call the director. It is the responsibility for a player to make sure opponents are aware of an alert.

David Stevenson's comments:

The TD seems to have done a poor job, not coming when called and not helping matters. The Referee has got the main point right: with no infractions West would have bid 4♠ and East would have doubled 5♥, so any adjustment is wrong.

Even playing TDs in clubs must attend if called.

Tim Rees' comments:

The TD's statement of facts and ruling are rather confused, and there are some irrelevant statements about results at other tables.

The Referee has summed everything up perfectly. West wanted to bid 4♠ on the previous round, but was stopped from doing so by South. So bidding it on his next opportunity is not only legal, it's what he needs to do to avoid UI.

Jeffrey Allerton's comments:

This incident illustrates one of the practical problems with having a playing director (the norm in most clubs), as players will often decide to avoid calling the TD for what they consider to be minor infractions. The Referee has done an excellent job; she has investigated the facts thoroughly and her final ruling looks sensible.

A disgraceful effort by one of the players:

Alain Gottcheiner's comments:

It's a player's duty to ensure that one's opponent is aware of the alert. North didn't achieve this, and also didn't play the game "according to correct procedure". West could have been wary of what happened, given his holding, but asking questions about a (for him) non-alerted bid is always problematic. How the 4♠ bid was "misguided" eludes me.

But what makes my blood run cold is South's disallowing his opponent an action in an unusual setting without summoning the TD. Especially as it would have been rather easy to explain to him the case and ask his advice without mentioning the exact bidding. This I consider a very serious offence, and after correcting the score (or ruling unplayable board) I would give a strong PP or worse.

A verbose and rambling effort:

Richard Hills' comments:

'This was disallowed by South.' ???

Firstly, South lacks the power to disallow anything.

Secondly, while South is correct in believing that West is not entitled to rectification for West's own error, Law 21A, it was North who was responsible for West's error by North's obsolete tapping table mode of alerting when North had a perfectly good Alert card in North's bidding box. Ergo, West is entitled to change their initial Pass to 4♠ under Law 21B.

The Referee correctly used Law 10B to cancel South's erroneous enforcement of the inapplicable Law 21A, thus the Referee now used the applicable Law 21B to permit West to change their initial Pass to 4♠. Since in this corrected and now legal sequence East did not have any unauthorized information, the Referee correctly ruled that East was permitted to duplicate their table action of doubling 5♥.

The Director's ruling of removing the double 'to restore equity' was also correct, since WBU Directors were empowered to use the now-repealed but then-applicable 1997 Law 12C3:

'Unless Zonal Organisations specify otherwise, an appeals committee may vary an assigned adjusted score in order to do equity.'

However, under the new 2007 Lawbook a Director may no longer equitably stick in a thumb, equitably pull out a plum, and equitably say 'what a good boy am I'. The new instruction to a Director (and/or a Referee) on score adjustment is the new 2007 Law 12B1:

'The objective of score adjustment is to redress damage to a non-offending side and to take away any advantage gained by an offending side through its infraction. Damage exists when, because of an infraction, an innocent side obtains a table result less favourable than would have been the expectation had the infraction not occurred - but see C1(b).'

Final summary by editor:

Rulings with playing TDs are often poor, but here he seems to have done an exceptionally bad job. N/S's bullying tactics were commented on by several. At least everyone agrees the Referee sorted it out excellently.

South's giving wrong rulings also came in for justified criticism.

APPEAL No 4: Of course I have spades!

08.004 Welsh Foursomes

Note by editor:

Laws of Duplicate Bridge 2007 were in force for Appeals 4 onwards.

Tournament Director:

Ted Hill

Appeals Committee:

Tony Hill (Chairman) Paddy Murphy Alan Screen

Swiss Teams Board no 9 Dealer North E/W vulnerable	♠ QT72 ♥ AQT ♦ 97 ♣ QT76	
♠ AKJ ♥ 92 ♦ K8652 ♣ AK3	<i>N</i> <i>W</i> <i>E</i> <i>S</i>	♠ 9653 ♥ 87654 ♦ T4 ♣ 92
	♠ 84 ♥ KJ3 ♦ AQJ3 ♣ J854	

Basic systems:

North-South play Benji Acol, 5 card suits. Play penalty pass and takeout double so long as 2♠ available.

<i>WEST</i>	<i>NORTH</i>	<i>EAST</i>	<i>SOUTH</i>
	Pass	Pass	1♣ (A1)
1NT	Dbl	2♣	Pass (A2)
Pass	Dbl	2♥	Dbl (A3)
2♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

- (1) Could be one card
- (2) Penalty pass
- (3) Takeout

Result at table:

2♠ +2 by West, NS -170

Director first called:

At end of hand

Director's statement of facts:

N/S asked about 2♣ when it was bid, told natural. Convention card checked. No info.

E/W say that, without the double, they play "system on". But with it is "system off" thus both 2♣ and 2♥ by East were natural. West claimed that it was obvious that his partner had hearts and spades – what else could he have had? East said if he had six hearts [note ***] he would have bid 2♥ immediately. If he had clubs he would have stood the double. West's 2♠ was common sense. N/S believe E/W were playing two way bids.

Note ***. When East read this he said this was wrong: he had said "a single-suit hand with hearts" not "six hearts".

Director's ruling:

Artificial score awarded:

Average plus to N/S, average minus to E/W

Details of ruling:

I was not convinced a spade holding by East was clear and consultation did not find a sound player who would bid anything but pass. When East bids 2♣ he is in charge of the auction. I do not accuse E/W of an undisclosed agreement. It "could" be. Law 40A3.

Note by editor:

In Wales if a pair uses an illegal agreement, the board is cancelled and scored as Average Plus/Average Minus (unless the non-offenders got a better result than this).

Appeal lodged by:

East-West

Director's comments:

If I do not adjust I could be setting a dangerous precedent.

Comments by East-West:

East: our agreement in this situation is that bids are natural and redouble is for blood. 2♣ was ostensibly natural. When it was doubled, I ran to 2♥. If I had clubs, I would have left it in 2♣ doubled. If I only had hearts I would have bid 2♥ immediately. By bidding this way, I showed hearts and spades. Although we had no agreement that this was the case, it is the only logical interpretation of this sequence. We fully explained this at the table.

West: I thought partner showed at least 4-4 in the majors and few points. Opponents could have passed 2♣ and collected this in hundreds. Also, opponents should have beaten 2♠.

Appeals Committee decision:

Table score re-instated

Deposit returned

Appeals Committee's comments:

Although the 2♣ bid could have been better explained, E/W made reasonable attempts to explain that the subsequent auction showed two suits, which could be calculated to be hearts and spades.

The committee felt that the 2♣ bid followed by the subsequent actions was a long established manoeuvre in bridge circles and that N/S were experienced enough to recognise the situation.

Excellent job by AC: worrying remarks by TD:

Barry Rigal's comments:

I do not see an infraction, and the TD's attempts to influence the AC seems dangerous and misguided. Good decision, well argued.

David Stevenson's comments:

While East's explanation of the logic is not the only explanation as he avers, it is the most likely, and it is certainly normal for players to make deductions from general bridge knowledge after 1NT is doubled. The AC seems perfectly correct.

The TD's views are confusing: what sort of dangerous precedent does he think he is setting, and why does he not explain it? It is normal enough to rule a concealed partnership understanding based on the evidence without the need for disclaimers but it looks the wrong ruling here.

Eric Landau's comments:

The director was totally out of line here. L40A3 is a very serious law barring undisclosed understandings; there's no "it 'could' be" in L40A3. There was no call, and no evidence, for his, "I do not accuse, but..." His explanation that he was obliged to punish the presumably innocent so as not to set a precedent that might in the future let the guilty go free is just wacky. And if he "do not accuse", then, as the committee realized, there was no infraction. Nobody had any extraneous information. Nobody misdescribed any partnership understandings. East came up with a clever sequence of bids (although hardly an original one, as the committee noted) expecting that West, if it came to it, would work out what was going on, and it did, and he did. This should not have had to go to appeal.

The AC got it right:

Tim Rees' comments:

I agree with the AC here. I think E/W were using common bridge knowledge rather than an illegal agreement.

Frances Hinden's comments:

It's hard to disentangle the TD ruling, because playing 2♣ as 'clubs, or three-suited with short clubs, or both majors' is not an illegal agreement. It is possible that N/S are claiming damage in that if they had known that East might not have clubs, North would have passed out 2♣, i.e. they are claiming that E/W had a concealed partnership agreement. On balance I agree with the AC's ruling as it is general bridge knowledge that 2♣ may be the first move in a rescue sequence and East has bid his hand intelligently.

I would love to know how West made 10 tricks in spades!

Heather Dhondy's comments:

I agree with the AC. This is a matter of bridge knowledge rather than systemic agreement. Table result should stand.

Jeffrey Allerton's comments:

I agree with the AC. Apparently, East/West did not have any agreement about this sequence. It seems that the inference that East may have spades was drawn by West using 'general bridge knowledge' in which case the AC was correct to restore the table result. By the way, if there was a revoke at the table (it is hard to see how 2♠ could make ten tricks otherwise) then this should have been mentioned in the TD's statement of facts.

Robin Barker's comments:

If East/West have an implicit agreement that 2♣ shows clubs or two-suited without clubs then this agreement is not illegal, they were only guilty of failing to disclose this agreement. So I disagree with the TD – even if there was an implicit agreement beyond general bridge knowledge. The AC found that the auction was based on general bridge knowledge, not partnership understanding, so no infraction.

The AC got it right, though the TD deserves sympathy:

Bob Schwartz's comments:

I agree with the AC decision, but sympathize with the TD ruling.

While agreeing with the actual decision, some approaches are somewhat different:

Jens Brix Christiansen's comments:

It seems to me that there is an implicit partnership agreement that East's 2♣ is best explained as "clubs or two other suits", which no doubt requires an alert. N/S were formally misinformed since there was no such alert initially, but that bit of misinformation did not seem to cause any harm. The table result then stands, unless E/W's de facto agreement is disallowed under the regulations published for the tournament.

Paul Lamford's comments:

The appeal was based on a misconception. West did not have any UI, so he can make what he will of his partner's machinations, and East's bidding does show both majors to all but a beginner, so the table score should stand. And how on earth did N/S let through 10 tricks in 2♠, which is beaten easily on most leads?

Richard Hills' comments:

If my partnership had been using the East-West methods, our explanations At The Table (as opposed to After The Hand) would be:

2♣ = initially ostensibly natural, but may be tactical with shortness

2♥ = now shows both majors, and also shows that 2♣ was tactical

So by my principles East-West have given misinformation to North-South, an infraction of Law 40B6(a). But so what? Law 40B6(a) is enforced by Law 40B6(b), which states:

'The Director adjusts the scores if information not given in an explanation is crucial for opponent's choice of action and opponent is thereby damaged.'

The misinformation did not cause North-South to try a rhythm double of the cold 2♠, so North-South were not damaged in the auction. And the misexplained East hand was visible in dummy, so North-South were not damaged in the defence.

Not sure the decision is right:

Alain Gottcheiner's comments:

What if East, holding 55 in ♥ and ♣, had bid 2♣ waiting to see whether he was doubled, then decided to run to 2♥? Perhaps that's not standard, but that's what I would expect from an unknown partner. Whence 'obviously it shows spades' is wrong. If it was common practice in this part of the world, then the 2♣ bid should be alerted.

Anyway, there is something wrong in the ruling: while, in Wales and some other countries, using an illegal convention will cause the assignment of an artificial score, no such thing happened here; I don't think a two-way 2♣ bid, even if alertable and not alerted, could be deemed illegal – that would be a horse of another color, perhaps yellow.

Now, whether there should be an adjusted score because of the non-alert is less obvious.

Final summary by editor:

One way or another, the AC was right. The TD's remarks attracted a fair amount of criticism.

APPEAL No 5: What is a fit worth?

08.005 Welsh Foursomes

Tournament Director:

Ted Hill

Appeals Committee:

Anne Jones (Chairman) Tim Rees Alan Screen

Swiss Teams Board no 2 Dealer East N/S vulnerable	♠ KQ86 ♥ 75 ♦ AJ82 ♣ QJ7	
♠ AJ ♥ 642 ♦ T953 ♣ T854	<i>N</i> <i>W</i> <i>E</i> <i>S</i>	♠ T2 ♥ AT983 ♦ Q76 ♣ A93
	♠ 97543 ♥ KQJ ♦ K4 ♣ K62	

Basic systems:

North-South play Benji Acol, weak NT, transfers

<i>WEST</i>	<i>NORTH</i>	<i>EAST</i>	<i>SOUTH</i>
		Pass	Pass
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♥ (1)
Pass	2♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♠ (H)	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) Transfer

Result at table:

4♠ making by North, NS +620

Director first called:

At end of auction

Director's statement of facts:

I was called at the end of the auction and the hesitation was agreed. I was recalled at the end of the hand because E/W did not think South's bid of 4♠ was evident.

Director's ruling:

Table result stands

Details of ruling:

I thought that, if 2NT showed 11-12 points, then, with 12, most players would raise to game at teams. In any event South must avoid actions indicated by the hesitation as described by Law. Law 16B1A.

Appeal lodged by:

East-West

Director's comments:

After a slow 3♠, South must decide what action is indicated? North may have been considering pass, 3NT or 4♠ so South remains a free agent.

Comments by North-South:

N/S do not break transfers so 3♠ is invitational in spades.

Comments by East-West:

North agreed the hesitation and stated that she was thinking of bidding 4♠. This leaves South with a 'simple' decision when 3♠ is clearly to play.

Appeals Committee decision:

Score assigned for both sides:

3♠ +1 by North, NS +170

Deposit returned

Appeals Committee's comments:

South is limited and hesitation clearly suggests action.

A very poor decision by the TD, corrected by the AC:

Bob Schwartz's comments:

I agree with the AC decision, but have zero sympathy with the TD ruling. South asked North to make a decision and then over-rules that decision. Gee!!! Could a break in tempo have had anything to do with that. I assign a procedural penalty as well. Very poor performance by the TD.

David Stevenson's comments:

An unbelievable ruling by the TD, corrected by the AC. Surely the TD has some idea of the Laws on UI? Does he really believe no-one would stop out of game with bad trumps and a minimum? How can he think this ruling right?

Jeffrey Allerton's comments:

Did the TD consult? If the TD really feels that pass is not a logical alternative for a player who has just limited his hand and left the final decision to partner with his 2NT bid, the TD should perform a comprehensive poll to justify his assertion. Well done to the AC for rectifying the situation.

The AC was correct:

Barry Rigal's comments:

Correct AC decision; inappropriate TD decision. The slow 3♠ call clearly points to choice between 3♠ and 4♠.

Alain Gottcheiner's comments:

Pretending 3♠ is invitational in spades is self-serving: how do N/S sign off in spades after this bidding? Easy case.

Tim Rees' comments:

Again, the form filling leaves a bit to be desired. I was on this AC, and it took some time for us to realise what the TD had ruled. The ruling was that there was UI, that pass was a LA, but that the 4♠ bid was not suggested by the hesitation.

It did not take long for us to overturn this, as we felt the hesitation did suggest that 4♠ would make (and this is what North said she was thinking about). The statement that 3♠ is invitational is clearly self-serving.

Frances Hinden's comments:

It is irrelevant whether 'most players' would bid game with 12 points at teams. This South player didn't, (s)he invited with a non-forcing 2NT bid.

It is possible to argue, as the TD did, that the hesitation did not demonstrably suggest bidding game and hence South was not constrained. However, I don't think that this is the case and agree with the AC.

Heather Dhondy's comments:

I agree with the AC. I do not accept that South is a free agent. This type of hesitation occurs, more often than not, when a player is thinking of bidding more. 3♠ is not invitational and South, having treated the hand as not worth an opener (I disagree) and only worth an invite over 1NT, must accept partner's decision. The 4♠ bid is naughty.

Paul Lamford's comments:

The question is whether the slow 3♠ demonstrably suggests that 4♠ is more likely to be successful. North was either thinking of passing 2NT, correcting to 3♠, making a game try or bidding 3NT or 4♠. Quite a few things he could have been considering. However, the slow 3♠ indicates that North is likely to be considering another forward-going action, and this demonstrably suggests bidding 4♠ to South, as the selected 3♠ bid is usually terminal. The fact that 4♠ is a lucky make is not relevant, and I agree with the adjusted score of 3♠ + 1. This "free agent" term seems to have popped up again in a director statement, and I am not sure what is meant by it, and wonder if it is something from a directors' course. South's ethical duties are unchanged by the fact that North could have been thinking of making various other bids. He must carefully avoid taking ANY advantage of the UI.

Robin Barker's comments:

I disagree with the TD that North may be choosing between Pass and 3♠. The normal reason to hesitate here is whether to accept the invitation: choosing between 3♠ and 4♠ (or between Pass and 3NT). I agree with the AC that the hesitation suggests 4♠ over Pass and that Pass is a logical alternative (I think Pass is the normal action). It is possible, given what both the TD and N/S have written, that these players have the agreement that Pass is any minimum (may have spade support) and 3♠ is invitational. But the TD needs strong evidence of such an agreement to rule on that basis.

Close decision:

Eric Landau's comments:

Another close call. Assuming North's 1NT guaranteed at least 12 HCP (not addressed in the write-up), South's hand evaluation -- game invitation in NT, but game drive if a spade fit is found -- and corresponding bidding sequence would be normal, and would be chosen by most players. Planned multi-step sequences, once committed, are not logically deviated from. South gets the chance to convince the committee that having already bid 2♥ and then 2NT, he had no logical alternative to raising 3♠ to game -- which, of course, doesn't mean that the committee need agree. The key factor in deciding this one could be how liberal this particular jurisdiction is in defining what constitutes a "logical alternative".

General remarks:

Richard Hills' comments:

I hate the word 'evident', which apparently was common parlance amongst players and Directors of England and Wales to define 'only logical alternative'.

However, to coincide with the new 2007 Lawbook's new definition of 'logical alternative' (in the new 2007 Law 16B1(b)), the EBU Laws and Ethics Committee has chosen, in effect, to abolish my hated word 'evident' by more narrowly restricting the concept of 'only logical alternative'.

Final summary by editor:

A poor ruling by the TD, a good decision by the AC.

General comments

David Stevenson's comments:

In no case has an AC or Referee clearly gone wrong: all the decisions look reasonable or better.

However, the standard of tournament direction shown in these five cases is awful. Only Sarah Amos in the second case has both given the details correctly and given a sensible ruling.

Alain Gottcheiner's comments:

Why do I have the feeling that there is less and less good faith in players' explanations? I hope the answer isn't that ACs help them do so. They accepted E/W's claim much too easily in case #4. Did they poll any other players in order to check whether ♥♠ was that obvious?

In such a situation, a well-known Belgian expert, holding an unexpectedly good hand for hearts, bid 2♣, was doubled, corrected to 2♦, was doubled, corrected to 2♥, was doubled, and made his contract. He didn't hold 4 spades.

Also, in #1, either the AC didn't enquire deeply enough about E/W's agreements, or they forgot to mention it. That's at least twice the AC made the matter a bit light.

Jeffrey Allerton's comments:

There were only five appeals in the WBU in 2008. Ignoring Appeal 1, where the facts are unclear, I agree with the AC on three out of the four remaining cases.

We have not seen details of any of the Welsh rulings which were not appealed, but the Welsh TDs should be encouraged to take polls in all standard hesitation situations to justify their rulings, particularly when it is considered that there may be no logical alternative to the action chosen. Under the 2007 Laws, a logical alternative is an action which "among the class of players in question and using the methods of the partnership, would be given serious consideration by a significant proportion of such players, of whom it is judged some might select it". In Wales, "significant" is defined as more than 25%. I recommend that TDs ask as many players as possible (preferably, at least ten) for the results to be statistically meaningful.

Jens Brix Christiansen's comments:

This small sample of appeals seems to indicate that the WBU appeals process is fulfilling its purpose.

Paul Lamford's comments:

The grounds for appealing in the WBU appeals seem particularly weak, although I think in one case the benchmark for an LA was not judged well.

Richard Hills' comments:

I believe that the new 2007 Lawbook will, on balance, give much greater assistance to Directors and Appeals Committees than the overly terse and ambiguous 1997 Lawbook did.

See, for example, the help the new 2007 Law 12B1 would have given to the Director had it been in force for Appeal 3 -- the Director would no longer have had to consult the strong player John Salisbury about the meaning of the overly terse and ambiguous word 'equity'.

Robin Barker's comments:

The appeals committees (and the referee) have done a good job.

Tim Rees' comments:

The ACs generally did a good job here. I thought that all five of the TD rulings were wrong, and the AC adjusted correctly in four of the cases.

The form filling could do with some improvement, though.

Final summary by editor:

General satisfaction was shown with the decisions by ACs. Not only the rulings by the TDs but their ability to complete forms came in for criticism.