

APPEAL NABC+ TWO

Subject: Unauthorized Information (UI) and Misinformation (MI)

DIC: Roger Putnam

Event: Vanderbilt Knockout Teams

Session: Round of 32, April 4, 2006

Board 5	Mike Shuman
Vul: N/S	♠ 7
Dlr: North	♥ T 7 6 5
	♦ 8 3
	♣ K T 8 6 5 4
Larry Cohen	David Berkowitz
♠ J T 6 3	♠ 9 8 5 2
♥ K 9 8 2	♥ A Q
♦ J 9 2	♦ A K T 7 6 4
♣ J 2	♣ 7
	Tony Kasday
	♠ A K Q 4
	♥ J 4 3
	♦ Q 5
	♣ A Q 9 3

West	North	East	South
	P	1♦	1NT
P	2NT ¹	P	3NT
Dbl	4♣	AP	

(1) 2NT was not Alerted – partnership agreement is that it is a transfer to clubs, or a good 4441 hand.

The Facts: The director was called after the 4♣ bid. The table result was 4♣ down one, E/W +100. The director spoke to West away from the table. At that time West said that if 2NT had been alerted, he would not have doubled 3NT. Away from the table, East revealed to the director that if he had been alerted, he would have bid 3♦ over 2NT. North told the director that if 3NT had not been doubled, he would have passed. South said that if his partner had passed 3NT doubled, he would have pulled to 4♣.

The Ruling: The director determined that the failure to Alert constituted unauthorized information and that it demonstrably suggested pulling 3NT doubled to 4♣ (i.e. South was likely not to hold the perfect hand for making 3NT opposite North's hand). Since there was a logical alternative to pulling to 4♣, North would not be allowed to do it, and South had no reason to pull to 4♣ if North had a quantitative raise to 2NT. Therefore, the table result was adjusted to 3NT doubled, down four, N/S minus 1100 and E/W +1100.

The Appeal: North said that he thought he was entitled to pull 3NT doubled to 4♣ because it was very unlikely that 3NT would make opposite any normal 1NT opener, especially when his top-flight opponents had doubled to tell him that 3NT would not make. South said that he would have pulled to 4♣ had North not done so because he was practically wide open in two suits.

The Decision: There were two infractions for the Committee to consider – (1) The misinformation from the failure to alert 2NT and (2) the unauthorized information to North that allowed North to remove 3NT doubled. Before considering the first question, a sample was taken of ten of North's peers who were still in the Vanderbilt. Nine of them passed 3NT doubled, saying that their source of tricks in clubs was what partner might be expecting. The Committee believed that without the unauthorized information, pass was a logical alternative for North. That being said, South would be deprived of his chance to be brilliant by removing 3NT doubled to 4♣ had North passed. Even if he believed he might have done so, the action on the deal stopped at the infraction of the removal to 4♣ by North. From that point on, the requirements of 12C2 (a heart lead against 3NT doubled) would produce plus and minus 1100. [The Committee determined that had the removal from 3NT been accepted, West's statement that if he had been properly alerted he would not have doubled 3NT would have been considered.] The Committee issued an Appeal Without Merit Warning to each member of the N/S pair (Note: An AWMW is issued to the team captain also in a team event.). The director's ruling was:

- Well-stated.
- Clearly supported by law.
- Clearly stated why Law 16 was applied in this case.
- Explained why a logical alternative existed for the North player.
- Why it would be improper to presume that South (who didn't know that North had clubs) would have pulled to 4♣.

The Committee: Barry Rigal (Chair), Jeff Akers, Michael Huston, Bob Schwartz and Ellen Wallace.

Players consulted: Ten unnamed players still in the Vanderbilt of equivalent ability to the players involved.

Commentary:

Gerard

I would have added a couple of points. The result is clear enough; just trade South's pointed suit queens for the diamond king to see why all those experts passed. But whatever happened to misinformation? That occurred first so it should have been considered first. Well the misinformation hurt E/W, without it they would have been minus in 3♦, so there was no damage resulting from it. Then proceed directly to UI. And the Committee missed a rare opportunity in describing the reason that South couldn't pull 3NT doubled. It was because he couldn't profit from the UI that partner improperly beat him to it, a putative third infraction that would have been blatant misuse of UI. They sort of suggested this by saying there was a stop sign when North pulled to 4♣, but I would have confronted South with "So, you would have pulled to 4♣ because you were awoken to the fact that 2NT showed clubs by partner's action that was based on the fact that you didn't alert 2NT?" But the AWMW is right on, for the same reason as in the previous case. If this is a pattern, it's okay with me.

Goldsmith

Well written report, but I don't buy the primary premise. That 2NT convention (Walsh) is extremely common in California. I have seen 3NT be bid over 2NT without confusion exactly once, and it had no play. In theory, I think 3NT is an impossible bid, because the bidder can't have AKx(x) of clubs and all three other suits stopped. If he has a super accept of clubs, he has to bid some other suit to make sure that stoppers are present. So I think North had authorized information (AI) to tell him the same thing the UI did. Moreover, how can partner be able to bid 3NT without the ♣K? Five clubs to the ace? (That's the holding the person had who bid 3NT and went down, by the way.) Even if so, it's likely that 5♣ is a better spot than 3NT.

Add in that West doubled and North knows what has happened. Finally, North knew that South would never think of bidding 3NT with Axxxx of clubs. For South, 3NT is an impossible bid. Even if behind screens or in a world where 2NT isn't Alertable, only the most ingenuous North would be under any misapprehension that South knew what 2NT meant. If we allow 4♣, then what about the MI issue? East is welcome to bid 3♦, but if he does, he'll play it there (possibly doubled) and get a minus score. So that won't improve N/S's score. West wouldn't double 3NT if he knew there was a bidding misunderstanding going on, but by that time, North was already clued in by the 3NT bid. Result stands.

Polisner

A well reasoned ruling and decision.

- Rigal:** The ruling here seems entirely logical (notwithstanding my own participation in it). The expert opinions polled made it clear that passing 3NT was a logical alternative, and that North had breached Law 16 by his taking advantage of UI when he bid 4♣, that being so, the rest of the decision was straightforward.
- Wildavsky** Perfect performances by the tournament directors and the AC.
- Wolff** Nothing extraordinary here, except to show the pattern of how hard it is to fairly adjudicate convention disruption (CD).
- Zeiger** If N/S were warned in screening about the player poll, their pursuit of this appeal was silly. Excellent write up. Obvious AWMW. Two for two by Committees so far. What a relief after Atlanta. I was still too shaken to comment on Denver cases.
Side issue: If I, with my 2000 masterpoints, had conducted the same auction with my 1200 mp partner, would we have won our case because the peers consulted would have bid 4♣ since "We couldn't possibly have enough HCP for game?" Just wondering.