

APPEAL NABC+ FIVE
 Subject: Misinformation (MI)
 DIC: Roger Putnam
 Event: Vanderbilt KO Teams
 Session: Round of 32, April 4, 2006

Board # Bruce Rogoff
 Vul: ♠ K x
 Dlr: ♥ J T 9 x x
 ♦ x x
 ♣ K T x x

Marcin Lesniewski	Peter Weichsel
♠ Q 9 x x x	♠ J T x
♥ A Q x	♥ K x x x
♦ K 8	♦ A T 9 x x
♣ x x x	♣ x

Josh Parker
 ♠ A 8 x
 ♥ x
 ♦ Q 7 4 3
 ♣ A Q J 9 x

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1♦ ¹
1♠	Dbl	2♣ ²	Pass
2♦	2♥	2♠	All Pass

Note: The written hand record was misplaced along with the board number. Therefore, this is the closest approximation to the hand that is available.

- (1) May be short
- (2) Alerted as a transfer to ♦

The Facts: 2♠ made three for an E/W score of +140. The director was summoned after the auction because of the misAlert. The director determined that 2♣ showed a good spade raise, not a transfer to diamonds. East did not have a weak 2♦ bid available to him. East's possible responses to 1S were 2N, showing a four-card limit raise or better; 2♠ showing a 5-7 raise; 2♥ showing 8+ to 10- three-card raise; 2♦ showing Hearts, 2♣ showing a three-card raise with a better hand than the 2♥ bid.

The Ruling: The director, after a discussion with N/S and E/W at the table, had assumed that N/S was comfortable with the table result. Because this hand was from the fourth quarter and neither pair had requested a ruling let alone an appeal, the table director left after all the results had been submitted. About 15 or 20 minutes after the session, the N/S pair lodged an appeal with the DIC. The DIC called the table director to find out the facts. After determining that no ruling had been made, the DIC ruled that the result stood because there was no damage from the misinformation and let the table result of 2♠ making three, E/W +140 stand.

The Appeal: N/S argued that if 2♣ had been properly explained, South would have had a clear 3♣ bid over 2♣, since his partner would have at most two spades, and the hands would fit well. 3♣ would quite possibly have ended the auction. E/W said that South had ample opportunity to show his clubs but failed to do so. East said that he would have competed to 3♠ over 3♣ and neither North nor South had a 4♣ bid.

The Decision: The Committee ruled that N/S's result was due to South's excessive caution in neither doubling 2♣ nor bidding 3♣. Thus, the table result was allowed to stand.

The Committee considered the impact of the unauthorized information (UI) that East possessed. He was not allowed to know that his partner was unaware of his spade support, and he was required to assume that his partner's 2♦ bid was some kind of game try. However, since East had a bare minimum for his 2♣ bid, his 2♠ bid was entirely proper.

The Committee: Adam Wildavsky (Chair), Bart Bramley, Dick Budd, Doug Doub (scribe) and John Solodar.

Commentary:

Gerard

Curious. West thought it was diamonds, East might have meant it that way. If so, 2♠ was the completion of a planned two-step so there was no UI. However, assume East knew the system. Then the issue wasn't whether the backtracking 2♠ was "entirely proper", it was whether anything else was a logical alternative (LA). Granted that the peer group is small, but would they have felt 2♣ was such an overbid for a 3-card raise? Prime red suit values, two trump honors and a singleton in South's likely suit? Isn't that at least a solid 10-point supporting hand? If you're so ashamed of 2♣, why bid it in the first place? Could partner have done anything to improve your hand by more? OK, so East can't blast 4♠ in light of his previous "overbid", but wouldn't a reasonable number of East's peers have bid 3♦ as a further game try? No extra credit for guessing why that didn't happen. And, what about the difference between 2♠ and pass? Any agreement about which was stronger? Do you really believe 2♠ was fast arrival? I lost the Vanderbilt on this kind of sequence when partner was supposed to have a reason to bid a 2♠ equivalent rather than passing to show a minimum but his reason was that he never liked to pass. I think E/W should have been adjusted to 3♦. Giving North the Jx of diamonds, I can't come to more than six tricks whether East draws two trumps or not. That would be down three for the offenders, whatever the vulnerability. N/S's adjustment is much more complicated. Whereas E/W's adjustment is due to UI, N/S suffered from MI and any damage to them would have to be the result of the latter, not the former. I agree with N/S about bidding 3♣ over 2♣, if East has a raise N/S had at least an 8-card minor fit. Of course he could have doubled, but after 2♦ - 2♥ - 2♠ or 2♦ - 3♣ - 3♠ it's not clear that anyone would bid 3♣ or 4♣. So give South his 3♣ bid, isn't it interesting that East would have competed to 3♠ with his backtracking hand? But the bottom line is that "excessive caution" didn't cause N/S's result, MI did. Doubling wouldn't have necessarily changed the contract and South's best chance to bid 3♣ was over a properly alerted 2♣. "No one had a 4♣ bid" is just noise, under 12C2 it was likely that 3♣ or 4♣ would have been the contract. So E/W -150, N/S +130 and apply Law 86. If the Committee treated South's excessive caution as an egregious failure to play bridge, they confused the two infraction standards since +150 was never really available to N/S solely as a result of the MI.

Goldsmith

Assuming that E/W had notes to document their methods, this looks right to me. I don't think we can ask East to accept a game try when he has an 8-count and has already promised a good ten. Yeah, it's a great 8, but...

Polisner I think that the AC gave too little consideration to the UI aspect of this case. East, possessing an ace, king and singleton along with a presumed big diamond fit has much more than a "bare minimum" and at least should bid 3♦ having already shown a three-card spade raise. All partner needs to have a decent play for game is something like KQxxx, Ax, QJxx, xx or AQxxx Ax Jxxx xx. It would be nice to know if E/W were vulnerable which would make at least a game try mandatory.

Rigal This was to my mind the most unfortunate ruling from Dallas. I believe East was obligated to do something other than bid 2♠ here after the UI he had received. My view (supported by the blind poll from AC members not in Dallas) is that East is closer to a four-level action than 2♠. The committee appeared to focus too hard on South's failure to bid more, and not enough on the other concerns on the deal.

Wildavsky This was a poor performance by the AC for a number of reasons. First of all, N/S do not have to play perfectly in order for their rights to be protected. Perhaps South ought to have acted over 2♣, but neglecting to do so was scarcely "failure to play bridge."
Second, even if N/S were injured primarily through their own error subsequent to the infraction we must still adjust the E/W score per Law 72B1.
Third, even if we do not adjust because of MI we must still take UI into account. What are East's LAs over 2♦? I think that 3♦ is not only logical, it is the best call. It has two ways to win, by reaching a game on a perfect fit or by improving the part-score. With a double-fit game has play opposite as little as KQxxx, x, Kxxx, xxx; and West must have more -- he would never make a game try with so little. East need not be concerned about his lack of a fourth trump, he's already denied one!
Jeff Polisner mentioned to me that, if asked to place the final contract, he'd rather play at the six level than the two level! Indeed, give partner; AQxxx, Ax, Kxxxx, x;
and you'd want to play slam with the finesse coming through the opening bidder, but partner will pass 2♠ without regret. Even this misfit would make 6♦ with a spade finesse and a 2-1 diamond break;
AQxxx, x, Kxxxx, Ax.
Both the tournament director and the AC ought to have adjusted the contract to 3♦ – it looks as though it's likely to go down a couple.

How could the AC have done better? My opinion was a minority of one. I could have been more forceful as chair, but I might have been outvoted anyway. I think there are a few things I ought to have done:

1. Given the East hand to the other AC members as a blind preview with only the authorized info that 2♣ shows a spade raise. I think at least one or two, and perhaps all four, would have realized then and there that 3♦ is logical. Even if they wouldn't bid it they'd have had to strongly consider it.
2. Commissioned a poll of East's peers, either before or during the AC hearing, as to the best action over 2♦.

3. Explained to the AC that since I would have bid 3♦ that makes it logical in and of itself. I've written before that ACs should take a more expansive view of LAs, and in particular should not choose LAs by a strict majority vote. If an AC member asserts that he would make a call then absent compelling evidence to the contrary that call must be logical.

This case was from the same match as NABC+ 3. In order to lose the match the N/S team here (they were E/W in case 3) had to find themselves on the losing end of both decisions. I think each ruling was unjust -- that they occurred in the same match was even more unfortunate. I can't think of any way to deal with the problem other than to try to make better rulings in the future.

Wolff

Another convention disruption (CD) case, but this time EW got lucky with the committee when they ruled that the CD involved didn't hurt the victim. What this committee doesn't know is that CD is usually the result of a "home brew" convention or treatment which sometimes startles the opponents into poor judgment. When South didn't show his clubs, it probably was because he was startled. If there was nothing else in the case then NS should have been found negligent, but here there was also negligence by EW which should switch the blame back to EW. At the very least EW should get a procedural penalty for their CD and both sides should probably get a bad board. Since it was KO team it might have turned out that the ruling should be close to no IMPs exchanging hands. Se la vie!

Zeiger

Easy decision. Easy AWMW. Oh wait. They didn't get one? You're kidding!! Whenever a team comes up with a ridiculous appeal, after the fact, clearly trying to steal in Committee what they couldn't earn at the table, an AWMW is absolutely mandatory! This was a solid, experienced Committee. They covered all the bases, including the UI East possessed. How could they miss the AWMW? Say it ain't so.