

Subject of Appeal:	Unauthorized Information	Case:	N8
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Event	Reisinger BAM Teams	Event DIC	Matt Koltnow
Date	12/01/2017	Session	First Qualifying

Auction

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	1NT ¹
Pass	2♣ ²	Pass	2♦ ³
Pass	2♥ ⁴	Pass	2♠ ⁵
Pass	2NT ⁶	Pass	3♣ ⁵
Pass ⁷	3♠ ⁶	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: Semi-forcing
2: 6+ ♠ minimum, or 16+ HCP
3: 8+ HCP
4: 16+ HCP, shape descriptive
5: Relay bid
6: Shape Descriptive
7: Asked for explanation

Hand Record

Board	21	N	Alejandro Bianchedi	
Dealer	N	♠ AQ98432 ♥ AK65 ♦ A K 4		
Vul	N/S			
W	Jerry Stamatov		E	Divan Danailov
♠ J10 ♥ Q92 ♦ Q83 ♣ AQ972			♠ 76 ♥ J104 ♦ J10752 ♣ J83	
		S	Agustin Madala	
		♠ K5 ♥ 873 ♦ K964 ♣ K1065		

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
4♠ by N	Made 5	N/S +650	♣3

Facts Determined at the Table

The director was called at the end of the play. During the auction, all bids from 2♣ through 3♠ were alerted. The bids of 2♥, 2NT, and 3♣ had defined the North hand as holding 16+ HCP, with six or more spades and four hearts. The director was told that, over the 3♣ bid, West asked the meaning of the entire auction to that point. N/S thought the timing of the question suggested a club lead, and without it they would have scored another trick.

Director Ruling

The director ruled that, because West had asked a legal question following an Alertable bid and was careful not to ask specifically about the 3♣ bid, there was no unauthorized information transmitted and the table result stood, per Law 20F1.

Director's Ruling	4♠ by N, Made 5, N/S +650
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The Review

N/S appealed the director's ruling. The reviewer spoke to North and South together, and later to East and West together. N/S were told that by regulation they were expected to show some error that the director made in order to win their appeal.

South said after 3♣, West asked about the whole auction and he thought it was apparent he wanted to double. He said neither opponent had asked any questions before that point. He thought that East's club lead against 4♠ was reasonable but made much easier after the timing of West's question.

West said he did not ask about the early alerts because he thought he was familiar with the N/S methods. When they kept alerting, he was no longer sure what their bids meant. He said he wanted to know the meaning of the auction not for the purpose of doubling 3♣ (since he thought the most likely contract of 3NT would be declared on his right), but because he wanted to be prepared in case their bidding went beyond 3NT. Despite that, he offered that he understood why the opponents after seeing his hand thought he was showing interest in the club suit.

West also said he thought that his partner's most likely winning lead with declarer being a probable 7-4 in spades and hearts was a short suit club rather than a lead from his longer diamond suit. East agreed with West regarding the lead and thought a diamond lead was more likely to give up a trick.

Panel Findings

Law 20F1 states: "During the auction and before the final pass any player may request, at his own turn to call, an explanation of the opponents' auction." Later in the same section is a statement that notwithstanding that right, Law 16 (unauthorized information) may apply. Further, ACBL management policy for directors states: "The tournament director will rule that no unauthorized information has been transmitted by a player who asks in the proper manner about an alerted call at his or her turn immediately following the alert (unless that player shows a pattern of being selective about which alertable calls are questioned)." Since West was selective about when he asked, the panel believed unauthorized information from the question was possible.

Four expert players were given East's hand as a lead problem to 4♠. Two led a diamond; one thought it was a guess between clubs and diamonds but leaned towards a club; another led a club thinking that his relative minor length made declarer more likely to be shorter in diamonds than clubs.

After choosing their lead three of those players were asked if they thought a question about the whole auction by partner at the point 3♣ was bid was suggestive of anything. All three thought it showed interest in doubling 3♣, and two added that the probable reason it was not doubled was hearing that North could still have a strong hand containing four clubs. Three other players were given the auction without a hand and asked if they thought the question was suggestive. All thought the question indicated an interest in doubling 3♣.

As a result of the polling, the panel decided that East did have unauthorized information from his partner's question; that information suggested a club lead; and a diamond lead was a logical alternative. The score was adjusted to 4♠ by North, made six, N/S +680, per Law 12C1.

Experts consulted: Ron Pachtmann, Piotr Pawel Zatorski, Johan Sylvan, Louk Verhees, Allan Graves, Mark Itabashi, and Roy Welland.

Panel Decision	4♠ by N, Made 6, N/S +680
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Panel Members

Reviewer	Matt Smith
Member	Jenni Carmichael
Member	Kevin Perkins