

Subject of Appeal:	Tempo, Deceptive Action	Case:	N3
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Event	Mitchell Open BAM Teams	Event DIC	Matt Koltnow
Date	11/27/2017	Session	First Final

Auction

West	North	East	South
	1♣	Pass	1♥
Pass ¹	1NT	Pass	Pass
Pass ²			

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: Disputed Break in Tempo
2: Agreed Break in Tempo

Hand Record

Board	21	N	Ron Gerard		
Dealer	N	♠	A62		
		♥	63		
Vul	N/S	♦	A1092		
		♣	AQ97		
W	Nicholas Stock			E	Michael Yuen
♠	J753			♠	K984
♥	K104			♥	AJ9
♦	QJ63			♦	54
♣	42			♣	KJ86
		S	Adam Wildavsky		
		♠	Q10		
		♥	Q8752		
		♦	K87		
		♣	1053		

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
1NT by N	Down 3	E/W +300	♠4

Facts Determined at the Table

The Director was called at the end of the hand. All of the players agreed that West had taken about thirty seconds before making his final Pass. N/S also felt that West had hesitated slightly at his first turn to call, but E/W did not agree to this. East led the ♠4 and North played for West to have the King. North used his only entry to dummy to take a club finesse through West, which failed. This led to a result of down three. North felt West had no bridge reason to think as long as he had before passing and that it led North to misplay the hand

Director Ruling

The Director spoke with West. West knew his partner had some values and felt that in a Board-A-Match event, it was a close decision whether to balance with such a light hand. He decided not to after giving it considerable thought. The Director ruled that this is a legitimate bridge reason to break tempo and ruled that the table result stood.

Director's Ruling	1NT by N, Down 3, E/W +300
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The Review

N/S requested a review of the ruling and were the only players who met with the Reviewer. North argued that the longer West thought, the more deceptive he was being. North also felt that many partnerships would not play Double as takeout, making the bid even more outlandish and should have been given much less consideration.

North was appealing based on Law 73E2: "If the Director determines that an innocent player has drawn a false inference from a question, remark, manner, tempo or the like, of an opponent who has no demonstrable bridge reason for

the action, and who could have been aware, at the time of the action, that it could work to his benefit, the Director shall award an adjusted score.”

Panel Findings

The Reviewer consulted with six experts, five of whom felt that Pass was the only option and no other option should be considered. The sixth expert considered bidding and felt it was close between Pass and Double. The Reviewer then consulted with eleven other players who had around 10,000 masterpoints, as that was closer to West's peer group. Of those polled, four of them doubled and another one gave it serious consideration prior to passing.

Given that a third of those polled considered taking an action, the Panel ruled West had a legitimate bridge reason to think and that the original ruling stood. The appeal was judged to have merit, as polling showed this to not be a clear cut bidding decision, with experience level being a relevant factor.

Experts Consulted: Curtis Cheek, Huub Bertens, Dan Korbel, Steve and Kitty Cooper, Hjördis Eythorsdottir

Panel Decision	1NT by N, Down 3, E/W +300
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Committee Members

Reviewer	Jenni Carmichael
Member	Matt Smith
Member	Kevin Perkins

Commentary

Goldsmith: Did anyone ask West what he was considering doing? If he had 2♣ for takeout available, acting seems pretty reasonable.

I think the ruling is good. Why was there no poll done by the Director? If he had given the hand to five of West's peers and was told, "bidding would be absurd," by all of them, wouldn't he have ruled differently?

Marques: The TD's decision is correct, in my opinion. This looks like a typical "this is easy" case that, on second thought, needs a bit more digging to consolidate the decision. The crux of the case is simple: "Is there a bridge reason to think?" West gave his reason. The polling should have been done by the TD, to confirm his affirmative opinion, and if that had been the case probably the appeal would never have happened. Great job by the Reviewer.

Meiracker: I don't think that West was aware of the fact that he was misleading the declarer in playing 1NT. The poll between players who had around 10,000 masterpoints proved that West had a legitimate bridge reason to think.

Wildavsky: Having been an appellant, I cannot be objective about the matter. It does seem unfortunate that the TD did not ask E/W what West's Double of 1NT would have shown in their partnership, and that the Panel had no opportunity to ask. Many play the Double for penalties, a trap Pass with five good hearts.

Willenken: Good job by the Panel in trying to understand the thinking at West's level. I'd have been upset too if I were North, and hopefully N/S filed a recorder form in case West's hesitations are a matter of habit.

Woolsey: I wouldn't think that West had much of a problem. West apparently did. Regardless, I don't see what difference it makes. West can't possibly have any idea at this point in the auction that a huddle at this point would cause declarer to misguess the hand, so his huddle couldn't be with any attempt to deceive. Declarer draws his inferences at his own risk, and this time he misread the hand.

Thus, I definitely agree with letting the table result stand, although not necessarily for the reasons given.