

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

### Auction

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	1NT <sup>1</sup>
Pass	2♣ <sup>2</sup>	Pass	2♦ <sup>3</sup>
Pass	2♥ <sup>4</sup>	Pass	2♠ <sup>5</sup>
Pass	2NT <sup>6</sup>	Pass	3♣ <sup>5</sup>
Pass <sup>7</sup>	3♠ <sup>6</sup>	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
<b>Dealer</b>	<b>N</b>	♠	AQ98432
		♥	AK65
		♦	A
<b>Vul</b>	<b>N/S</b>	♣	4
<b>W</b>	Jerry Stamatov		
♠	J10		
♥	Q92		
♦	Q83		
♣	AQ972	<b>E</b>	Divan Danailov
		♠	76
		♥	J104
		♦	J10752
		♣	J83
		<b>S</b>	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.

<b>Director's Ruling</b>	<b>4♠ by N, Made 5, N/S +650</b>
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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.

<b>Panel Decision</b>	<b>4♠ by N, Made 6, N/S +680</b>
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### Panel Members

<b>Reviewer</b>	Matt Smith
<b>Member</b>	Jenni Carmichael
<b>Member</b>	Kevin Perkins

### Commentary

**Goldsmith:** Why didn't West Double? If "shape descriptive" means naturalish, North can't have long clubs. South is pretty unlikely to have a redouble after starting with a semi-forcing 1NT. What was West hoping to hear that would cause him to Double? If not this, then why ask?

The reasoning behind the Panel's ruling is sound, but if a player can't ask about the whole auction without giving UI, this game is pretty tough. I guess you just have to Double unless you are given information that makes it clear not to, and in those cases, partner's not going to lead the suit once he hears the explanation anyway.

**Marques:** West's statements are a bit self-serving. I see no reason to expect 3NT to be the final contract, having heard the start of the auction (and West was apparently aware of at least part of N/S methods).

The TD went by the book, and I understand why. It is difficult to go against a player who apparently followed what Law 20F1 states. West asked about the whole auction, not a single call, and that is what he is supposed to do. However, the UI did not arise from the question itself, but from its selectiveness.

It was good that the Panel decided to poll about what could be deduced from West's actions, and even if the main question in the poll can be considered a little biased, the responses by the pollees overwhelmingly demonstrate that UI was transmitted. The conclusion is easy. I'm with the Panel on this one.

**Meiracker:** The poll showed that the Panel decision was right. The timing of West's question demonstrably suggested a club lead, and other leads were logical alternatives.

**Wildavsky:** Excellent work by the Panel, correcting an injustice. Repeating the speculation regarding West's failure to Double 3♣ is unnecessary, though. We can and should find West's explanation regarding the reason for his question and its timing 100% candid and still adjust the score.

**Willenken:** Correct ruling as far as it goes, but we need a better overall answer when players are using relay systems without screens. In such auctions, it is highly likely that the defensive side will want to make a lead-directing double at some point if they know what the auction means. As things stand currently, they would need always to ask about every bid in order to find all their doubles without transmitting UI-- an untenable approach from a time perspective.

**Woolsey:** It doesn't matter that West worded his question in a general form. Unless West is asking about every alertable bid when it is his turn, he can't selectively time his asks without risking giving his partner UI. That is exactly what happened here. The Director was wrong, and the Panel 100% right.