

Subject of Appeal:	Misinformation	Case:	N7
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Event	Spingold Knockout Teams	Event DIC	Matt Smith
Date	07/27/2016	Session	Round of 32, Second Session

Auction

West	North	East	South
	1♥	2♣	2♥
Db1 ¹	4♥	Pass	Pass
5♦	Pass	Pass	Pass

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: 10+ HCP, No Alert

Hand Record

Board	29	N	Mustafa Cem Tokay
Dealer	N	♠	AKQ7
		♥	KJ10642
Vul	Both	♦	(void)
		♣	974
W	Hua Poon		
♠	42		
♥	875		
♦	AK106543		
♣	K	E	Choon Chou Loo
		♠	53
		♥	3
		♦	QJ2
		♣	AJ108652
		S	Antonio Sementa
		♠	J10986
		♥	AQ9
		♦	987
		♣	Q3

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
5♦ by W	Down 1	N/S +100	

Facts Determined at the Table

By agreement, West's double shows any hand of 10+ HCP; any other bid denies 10 HCP. Video recording of this match showed that West made no Alert. East (screenmate to North) made a gesture, pointing to the bid shortly after the tray was passed and as North was bidding. There was no discernable acknowledgement that North had seen any Alert by East. North claimed that had he been Alerted to the meaning of the double, he would have bid 2♣. South would know of the double fit and compete successfully to the five level, rather than defend 5♦.

Director Ruling

East/West's agreement of the double is a low-level double showing values, which the Alert chart defines as "competitive." As such, it does not rise to the level of highly unusual or unexpected, and therefore does not require an Alert.

Director's Ruling	5♦ by W, Down 1, N/S +100
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The Appeal

North/South requested a review of the ruling. Their argument was that the hand held by West would never be expected by players. To them, that meant that this agreement is so odd it rises to the level of highly unusual or unexpected.

Panel Findings

The ACBL Alert procedures have admittedly vague guidelines in defining the Alertability of doubles. Further defining them would quickly produce an unmanageable list or many caveats and exceptions. Law 40 defines partnership understandings and gives redress to a side damaged as a consequence of its opponents' failure to explain their agreements as required by Law and regulation (our Alert procedures). The review staff had two tasks: 1) trying to find out how unusual or unexpected the agreement by E/W was, to determine its Alertability; and 2) try to determine whether there was damage as a consequence of not having this information.

If the double was Alertable, and failure to Alert it damaged N/S, then the score needed to be adjusted. Polling was conducted, giving players the North hand and the auction up to the double. Players were asked what they believed was an expected meaning of the double.

Players consistently said that, with this being a classic responsive double situation, four or more spades was an expectation. Some were asked if any other holdings might be expected; some volunteered other meanings without prompting. One player polled commented that a European trend in doubles (ones that might be taken as having more rigid shape requirements in the U.S.), is to be less rigid, more off-shape, and with hands simply with values, possibly at least 10 points.

Next, if the use of the double showing values had yet to be mentioned, players were asked whether the use of the double in this manner was odd or unexpected. One player thought that this might be a good way to play. Others said that they didn't think it would be that unusual for the double to have fewer than four spades, suggesting some hands with support may start with a double.

Players were asked about the effect of screens on the expected responsibility of players to Alert or ask about bids. The overwhelming consensus was that the use of screens makes the issue of disclosure very different from non-screen use. ACBL screen procedure strongly encourages the players to ensure the opponents understand their auction. By the same token, since asking questions behind screens does not generate UI, players feel much less constrained about asking the meaning of the opponents' auction. Many felt it was incumbent on themselves to ask the meaning of the double if the answer would have any bearing on their call.

Next, the players were asked what call they would consider, and whether the meaning of the double had any impact on the decision. A majority bid 4♥. Of those that considered other options, many made a game try, opting for 3♣ or 3♦, depending on partnership method. A few did bid 2♠, because in their methods, they would bid suits where they had values. Those who did reiterated that they certainly would ask for the meaning of the double. Two of them felt that the answer would not likely affect their decision; the other felt that knowing the double showed values rather than spades made 2♠ marginally more attractive.

Other players were asked about the possibility of bidding 2♠. Some thought the bid was a poor choice. A few thought it might be a good bid if they ended up defending, in order to suggest a spade lead. Many said that the idea of introducing spades was misguided if an attempt to try to play in spades. Finally, all the players were shown the West hand; they were all amused or surprised to see West's actual holding

The review panel, in consultation with the Director in Charge, thought that expert testimony suggested that the E/W agreement about this double was not highly unusual or unexpected and therefore not Alertable. While play behind screens gives both sides greater latitude to Alert more calls and ask about more calls than they would across the table, there is no requirement to Alert a call not otherwise defined as Alertable. Similarly, while players behind screens are not required to ask more questions than they might across the table, they are still required to protect themselves. Since the double did not require an Alert, Law 40B4 does not apply and the result was allowed to stand.

Experts Consulted: Bart Bramley, Bartosz Chmurski, Geir Helgemo, Justin Howard, Nick Jacob, Ralph Katz, Eric Kokish, Nick Nickell, Johan Sylvan, Piotr Tuczynski, Federic Wrang

Panel Decision	5♦ by W, Down 1, N/S +100
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Panel Members

Reviewer	Kevin Perkins
Advisor	Matt Koltnow