

Subject of Appeal:	Tempo/Unauthorized Information	Case:	N2
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Event	Platinum Pairs	Event DIC	Terry Lavender
Date	03/11/2016	Session	Second Qualifying

Auction

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♠	Dbl
2♥ ¹	4♥ ²	Pass ³	Pass
4♠	Dbl	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Explanation of Special Calls and Points of Contention

1: Constructive ♠ raise
2: No Stop Card
3: Break in Tempo

Hand Record

Board	21	N	Jonathan Steinberg
Dealer	N	♠ K87 ♥ K9862 ♦ Q ♣ A873	
Vul	N/S		
W	Cristal Nell		E
♠ QJ109 ♥ 104 ♦ K875 ♣ 962			Igor Savchenko ♠ A6432 ♥ J5 ♦ AJ943 ♣ 10
		S	Alex Hudson
		♠ 5 ♥ AQ73 ♦ 1062 ♣ KQJ54	

Final Contract	Result of Play	Score	Opening Lead
4♠X by E	Made 5	E/W +690	♣ K

Facts Determined at the Table

North/South summoned the director following the 4♠ bid by West. North said that East had hesitated for a significant time (20+ seconds) before passing following the 4♥ bid. East said he had paused for about 10 seconds following the skip bid. The Stop Card had not been used, and he was trying to follow the skip bid regulations. South had not really noticed how long the hesitation had been, but felt it was more than 10 seconds. West said she had not noticed any exceptional hesitation.

Additional Factors Determined Away from the Table

The director gave West's hand to four players, along with the details of the auction without the hesitation. Three of the four passed, while the fourth called 4♠ but did consider pass to be a logical alternative.

Director Ruling

Based upon the player statements and the nature of East's hand, it was ruled a significant hesitation had occurred that had provided West with Unauthorized Information. This UI suggested action would be more successful than passing, which was established by the player poll to be a logical alternative. Therefore, per Laws 16B and 12C, the result was changed to 4♥ by North, making 5, N/S +650.

Director's Ruling	4♥ by N, Made 5, N/S +650
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The Appeal

E/W appealed the ruling and all four players attended the hearing. East explained that the Stop Card had not been used and he did his best to pause the ten seconds expected following a jump bid. He did consider bidding 4♣ himself at that point, but felt that making that contract was against the odds, while setting 4♥ was certainly possible with his two aces opposite his partner's constructive raise.

West believed her spade holding to be more offensively oriented than defensive, and judged 4♠ to be more likely to be successful than defending. She did not notice a BIT by her partner.

North estimated that East took about 20 seconds before passing, and believed that passing was a logical alternative with the West hand. Because of the hesitation, he had called the director once West bid to protect his side per Law 16. He admitted that he did not mentally count off seconds while East was thinking.

Committee Findings

Disputed Break in Tempo cases are often very difficult. Ten seconds seems like a long time when waiting on someone, but can fly by when you are trying to figure out the proper action. Had North used a Stop Card, it would have given East a couple of extra seconds to prepare for the 4♥ bid and put everyone at the table on notice of an expected pause by East. (Aside: The AC believes the European procedure of leaving the Stop Card on the table for ten seconds might have been very helpful with this particular situation.)

After much discussion, it was not clear to the AC whether a BIT had taken place at the table. Using a secret ballot, and in a split decision, the AC decided that East did break tempo when they passed over 4♥. The BIT demonstrably suggested bidding whether than passing, a logical alternative established by the player poll.

The AC also considered the likely results of play in 4♥, as the number of tricks taken would vary depending upon the opening lead. But consultation with the tournament directors concerning the result indicated that a change in the result from the original director ruling would not change the event standings. Therefore, the AC confirmed the original director ruling in its entirety.

Committee Decision	4♥ by N, Made 5, N/S +650
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Committee Members

Chair	Douglas Doub
Member	Ed Lazarus
Member	Mark Bartusek
Member	Eugene Kales
Member	Riggs Thayer