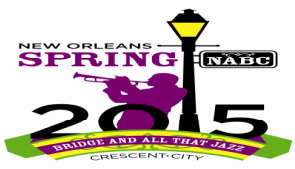


APPEAL	NABC+ EIGHT
Subject	Misinformation
DIC	Candace Kuschner
Event	Silodor Open Pairs
Session	Second Qualifier
Date	March 19, 2015

BD#	21
VUL	N/S
DLR	N

William Hall	
♠	K10752
♥	1095
♦	84
♣	Q42

Daiva Vitukynaite	
♠	J
♥	J7
♦	AKQJ10932
♣	53

	
Ron Westwood	
♠	AQ96
♥	A8642
♦	7
♣	1096

Gediminas Poska	
♠	843
♥	KQ3
♦	65
♣	AKJ87

West	North	East	South
	P	1♣	1♥
X⁽¹⁾	2♥	3♣	P
3♦	P	3NT	P
P	P		

Final Contract	3NT by East
Opening Lead	♥4
Table Result	Made 5, N/S -460
Director Ruling	3NT by E, Made 5, N/S -460
Comm. Decision	N/S +50, E/W +460

(1) By partnership agreement, denies four spades, not alerted

The Facts: The director was summoned after the conclusion of play on the hand. South had checked the opponents' convention card prior to making his opening lead. The card was marked with Negative Doubles through 3♣. South stated if he had been aware that the Double denied spades, he would have made a different lead.

The Ruling: The director consulted with senior staff as to the requirements concerning this particular sequence. While the partnership agreement does seem "highly unusual and unexpected", the opinion of the directors consulted was that the Double did not require an Alert under ACBL regulations. Accordingly, the director ruled that the table result stood: 3NT by East, making 5, N/S -460.

The Appeal: N/S appealed the ruling, and both attended the hearing. E/W did not appear as they were not available when the appeal was filed.

Screening Director's Statement:

The E/W convention card was marked Negative Doubles through 3♠. Their agreement (not noted on the card) was that a Double of 1♥ overcall shows fewer than four spades. The directors attempted to determine if this treatment was alertable. They found that a negative double by a pair using negative free bids was alertable, but most doubles are not. They ruled that the Double of 1♥ was not alertable.

Statements made by the Appealing Side:

N/S were surprised when the Dummy was faced. South said that he might have led a spade had he known that the Double denied a spade suit rather than showed a spade holding as he expected.

The Decision: The directors were correct in their finding that most doubles are not alertable. In that class are takeout doubles, negative doubles, card showing or "balance of power" doubles, lead directing/penalty doubles of artificial or cue bids, penalty doubles of no trump bids, and Lightner doubles.

Doubles that are alertable have an uncommon meaning that the opponents would not expect. Examples are doubles showing any good hand by a pair using negative free bids, doubles showing a specific suit not expected (for example: 1♣ - 1♠ - 2♣ - X showing diamonds by a pair using transfer advances), anti-lead directing doubles and doubles of splinter bids that ask for the lead of a different suit (which must be alerted whatever the level of the bid).

The committee ruled that E/W's treatment of a double of a 1♥ overcall to be in the same class as a pair using negative free bids. Thus, the double required an Alert, and E/W was guilty of misinformation.

N/S were therefore entitled to the most favorable result that was likely absent the misinformation. A spade lead is a reasonable alternative to a heart lead given the correct explanation of the double. Spades were led at two tables where members of the committee played. Given a spade lead, however, the committee did not judge it at all likely that South would risk a sure set for a chance at down two. He would almost certainly win the second round of spades with the 9 and then cash out. Thus N/S were awarded the score for 3NT by East, down 1, NS +50.

E/W, through no fault of their own, were not given a chance to argue their case. They may have been told, incorrectly, by a director that they should not alert their version of a negative double. The committee decided to rule "director's error" for E/W and let their table result stand, 3NT by East, made 5, E/W +460.

The Committee: Doug Doub (chair/scribe), Gail Greenberg, Craig Allen, David Caprera, Tom Peters

Commentary:

Wildavsky – What a mess. As I understand things TDs are the final arbiters of law and regulation and cannot be overruled on these points. But here the TDs tell us that a double by a pair using negative free bids is alertable. Do E/W use negative free bids? The auction makes it appear that they do, but the write-up does not tell us either way. If so, though, why did the TDs not adjust the score? E/W's failure to note this agreement on their CC is also an irregularity.

The AC decision seems just, but I do not know whether it was legal. The TDs must have judged it so, else they would not have accepted it.

One thing that seems clear is that our alert regulations need some work. This is a common sequence. It is unconscionable that neither the players nor the TDs know whether it requires an alert.

Martel – Directors should do better knowing this required an alert. Committee was too generous to E/W. First, to presume the pair was given wrong info by a director prior to this is a leap. Second, even if that were true, not telling N/S more about what W showed is not very forthcoming.

Marques – Rules about alerts should not raise so many difficult questions. Potentially having two TDs saying different things is worrying.

This said, after a decision that the double is alertable, the spade lead is a logical alternative. Having decided to lead a spade, the ace looks like a possible technical option, with West having shown a strong hand with diamonds. This would end up in -2, as long as South avoids blocking the suit. A poll about the lead would have been useful in this case.

Regarding the decision for E/W, it sounds odd to let them keep their score with the argument that they *might have been told* that the double was not alertable. At the table, N/S complained about the lack of alert. If E/W had been instructed by a TD not to alert, even considering possible language difficulties they would have said something about it at the table. I don't see a reason for a split score.

Kooijman – This is an incredible ruling for me. The committee decides that this double is alertable, that the opponents were damaged, that a spade lead becomes more attractive, that 3NT then will not make and decides to retain the table result for E/W. This really doesn't make sense, to say it mildly. The case looks like one where a weighted score should be considered, a heart lead not being a rare choice, partner did support hearts!

Goldsmith – This ruling was wrong. Whether Walsh Doubles are alertable or not is a matter of regulation, not bridge judgment, so the AC is expected to accept the directors' ruling on that. Furthermore, there is precedent for this ruling; an earlier NABC appeal was rejected, because Walsh doubles are not alertable. (See Fall 2006, Case 4.) The ruling should be result stands. Ruling Director's Error is inappropriate. If you feel that the rules are unfair, get the rules changed; don't overrule them.

That said, I think the ruling that Walsh Doubles are not alertable is stupid, unplayable, and unfair. It's not practical to ask about doubles there every time, and if advancer has spades, he needs to know, and just to ask with spades causes UI problems. I'd like to propose that the ACBL agree that Walsh Doubles are alertable and post that

information in the Bulletin. Then we can rule that failure to alert there causes MI and get these goofy rulings behind us.

Woolsey – I agree 100% with the committee. Any bid which conveys an unexpected meaning or inference should be alertable. That includes doubles. The director did not have the bridge knowledge to understand that this agreement is an unexpected meaning.

What I would like to know is exactly why the pair was unavailable. Did N/S wait until after the game to appeal? If so, should the appeal be allowed? It isn't as though N/S couldn't see at the time the potential for injury. It seems to me that if N/S had received the unfavorable ruling they got that they would have immediately told the director that they were appealing the ruling.

Or could it be that this was another classic case of a director not giving a ruling at the table, and by the time he gives a ruling the session is over. This must be stopped. The director should give a ruling asap, and always before the session is completed.