

APPEAL	Non-NABC+ Twelve
Subject	Claim
DIC	Harry Falk
Event	Thursday Side - Swiss Teams - AX
Session	Evening
Date	November 29, 2007

BD#	29
VUL	Both
DLR	North

Mike Ventri	
♠	A K J 7 2
♥	Q 9 2
♦	T 8 5
♣	J 4

Matt Haag		Fall 2007 San Francisco, California	Phil Clayton	
♠	T 5 4		♠	Q 8 6 3
♥	8 7 5		♥	4 3
♦	J 6 4		♦	A K Q 9 2
♣	T 8 5 2		♣	A 6

Ravi Bhalla	
♠	9
♥	A K J T 6
♦	7 3
♣	K Q 9 7 3

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

Final Contract	4♥ by South
Opening Lead	♥7
Table Result	4♥, making 4, N/S +620
Director Ruling	4♥, making 4, N/S +620
Panel Ruling	4♥, making 4, N/S +620

The Facts: The director was called at trick seven. Declarer had stopped pulling trumps to try to ruff out the ♠Q and to set up clubs. Declarer claimed by showing his hand to his LHO at this point but made no statement. The director instructed the table to play the next board taking the current board to discuss with others. When the director returned and inquired about declarer's line of play, the line of play did not involve drawing the last trump

The play went as follows:

1. ♥7 ♥9 ♥3 ♥6
2. ♥A ♥5 ♥2 ♥4
3. ♠A ♠3 ♠9 ♠4
4. ♠K ♠6 ♦3 ♠5
5. ♠2 ♠8 ♥T ♠T
6. ♣3 ♣2 ♣J ♣A

This left the below end position:

BD#	29	Mike Ventri			
VUL	Both	♠	J 7		
DLR	North	♥	Q		
		♦	T 8 5		
		♣	4		
Matt Haag		Fall 2007 San Francisco, California		Phil Clayton	
♠				♠	Q
♥	8			♥	
♦	J 6 4			♦	A K Q 9 2
♣	T 8 5			♣	6
		Ravi Bhalla			
		♠			
		♥	K J		
		♦	7		
		♣	K Q 9 7		

The Ruling: Since it seemed very likely that declarer would win five of the remaining seven tricks (three trump tricks and two club tricks). The director judged that had the hand been played out, the result would be 4♥ by South making four, N/S plus 620.

The Appeal: E/W maintained that, since declarer made no statement when he claimed, he could have played the hand several ways. He might have drawn the last trump and played for clubs to be three-three. He might have forgotten there was a trump out. East was going to lead diamonds, which would require South to trump in hand. Since considerable time had passed before South had to state his line of play, he had time to think of the winning line.

Declarer said he had always planned, at that point, to set up clubs. He would play the club king and queen, trump a club from hand, trump a diamond or spade back to hand and concede the last trick. He repeatedly said, "My trumps are high. I'm not going to draw the last trump."

The Decision: The panel decided that declarer's intent was never to draw the last trump. He drew only two rounds before stopping to try to set up spades. When that didn't work, he tried to set up clubs, hoping to cash two club tricks before cross-ruffing for ten tricks. It would be irrational for him to draw the last trump if the opponents tap him by playing on diamonds thereby voiding himself of trumps and having to rely on three-three clubs. If he intended to rely on three-three clubs, he would have drawn the last trump before driving out the ♣A.

Given the director's unusual handling of this case, the panel decided not to award an appeal without merit warning (AWMW).

The Panel: Jean Molnar (Reviewer), Mike Flader and Candy Kuschner.

Players Consulted: None.

Commentary:

Polisner Excellent ruling and decision in conformance with Law 70C.

Rigal Declarer's decision to draw a second trump before taking the two top spades does not look like much of a line. And cashing the top clubs while leaving a trump out is not exactly 100% either. That said, I think declarer indicated his plan well enough to get the best of any doubt.

Smith The first thing that should have happened in this case was for the table director to determine if a claim had occurred. Law 68 A states: "Any statement to the effect that a contestant will win a specific number of tricks is a claim of those tricks. A contestant also claims when he suggests that play be curtailed, or when he shows his cards (unless he demonstrably did not intend to claim)."

We need to know what South intended when he showed his cards to West (but not East). If he had intended to claim, why didn't he show everyone? It seems he thought that West's plays were irrelevant so showing him his cards might just speed things up later. The director should have investigated all of this before stopping play, and the panel should have addressed it during the interview.

My guess is that South was not trying to claim. If the ruling had been "no claim", then play would simply proceed from the point the director was called. Given the ruling of "claim," then I agree with the adjudication of the directors and the panel. Perhaps South was confused, but, even so, his confusion could only have been forgetting another outstanding trump. For a player believing that, drawing an extra round of trumps would be worse than careless or inferior. So he should get it anyway, if perhaps in spite of himself.

Wildavsky Good work all 'round.

Wolf A difficult claim hand. I think plus 620 is about what N/S deserved, not minus 100 or plus 650. Sort of "off the wall" but a compromise result was called for.