

APPEAL	Non NABC+ EIGHT
Subject	Claim
DIC	Molnar
Event	Monday A/X Daylight Pairs
Session	Second Session
Date	July 26, 2010

BD#	23
VUL	BOTH
DLR	S

2274 Masterpoints	
♠	T9752
♥	A8
♦	T53
♣	J95

16993 Masterpoints		Summer 2010 New Orleans, LA	3065 Masterpoints	
♠			♠	AKJ63
♥	JT32		♥	654
♦	KJ874		♦	AQ962
♣	T843		♣	

10730 Masterpoints	
♠	Q84
♥	KQ97
♦	
♣	AKQ762

West	North	East	South
			1♣
P	1♠	2♦	2♥
5♦	P	P	6♣
P	P	6♦	Dbl
P	P	P	

Final Contract	6♦ Dbl by East
Opening Lead	♣A
Table Result	Down 1, NS +200
Director Ruling	6♦ doubled E down 1, NS +200
Panel Ruling	6♦ doubled E down 1, NS +200

The Facts: In the two-card end position, West (Dummy) had ♠T8, North had ♦T5, and East (Declarer) had ♦Q9. Declarer was in the Dummy and called for a club and North played the 5♦. There was a dispute about which diamond Declarer played from his hand, NS insisted that he played the ♦Q making North's ♦T win the last trick. Declarer denied playing his ♦Q. Declarer said since he had played a round of diamonds earlier and knew North still had the remaining two diamonds, he would not play his Q if North played the 5. Declarer kept saying he had a "high crossruff."

The Ruling: The Director ruled that since East couldn't prove which diamond he played as a result of scrambling his cards, he was deemed to have played the ♦Q under Law 65. Therefore, the Director ruled that declarer was down one in 6♦ doubled.

The Appeal: East-West appealed the ruling and South, East, and West attended the Panel hearing. East reported that he had set-up a high cross-ruff and would never have had played the ♦Q in that situation. West reported that he thought declarer was claiming. South reported that declarer definitely played the ♦Q and denied that he was claiming.

		North			
		♠			
		♥			
		♦	T5		
		♣			
West		Summer 2010 New Orleans, Louisiana		East	
♠		♠		♠	
♥		♥		♥	
♦		♦	Q9	♦	
♣	T8	♣		♣	
		South			
		♠			
		♥	Immaterial		
		♦			
		♣			

The Decision: The Panel decided that the dummy’s comment about thinking that declarer was claiming is highly suggestive that the ♦Q had been played. The Panel was also persuaded by both defender’s cards were in order, but declarer’s cards were scrambled. Law 65 provides that a player who mixes up his cards may lose the ability to claim a doubtful trick. The Panel also stated that because both defenders were stating that the ♦Q had been played and only declarer disputing their claim, the statements are 2-1 in favor of the ♦Q having been played. Therefore, the Panel ruled that the final result was 6♦ doubled down 1.

The Panel: Bill Michael (Chairman), Tom Marsh, and Nancy Boyd.

Commentary:

Bramley: Yuk. Disputed claims are difficult to adjudicate. Forcing declarer to play the queen looks irrational from here, since declarer showed that he knew South had no more trumps. However, his statement about a “high” crossruff suggests that he thought his trumps were equals, so maybe he did play the queen. Or maybe not, since in a looser sense he did have a high crossruff, as he could score all of his trumps separately without impediment.

Regardless of the decision, I disagree with every point the Panel makes: (1) Dummy’s comment about declarer claiming doesn’t suggest anything about which card declarer played. He DID have the rest, and he could KNOW he had the rest. (2) If declarer was

claiming he wouldn't play either of his cards, so scrambling them is irrelevant. (3) Declarer is always outnumbered 2-to-1. Does he therefore lose all disputes to the defenders?

One side or the other should have conceded gracefully. If declarer really thought both of his trumps were high, he should have admitted so. Otherwise, the defense should have relented. I dislike imposing a ludicrous result, so since it's too close to call I'd have given the trick to declarer.

Rigal: Frankly, I don't know how I would have ruled here; I think either way the decision was going to be very harsh on someone. For what it's worth, I think I'd have gone the other way. We all know what the 'bridge' result was but occasionally players do depart from double-dummy I've heard.

Goldsmith: There really is not enough information to judge. When exactly was the director called? How and when were declarer's cards mixed up? If the director was called immediately, and declarer mixed his cards after the director call, down one seems clear. If the director was not called until after declarer put his cards back into the board, and he did so not knowing there was a dispute, I'd judge to let the contract make. In these cases, the table director usually knows a lot more than is written down, so it takes exceptional circumstances to overrule him or the Panel, as they have contemporary access to the table director.

Wildavsky: I see no merit to this appeal. The ruling is cut and dried.

Wolff: To me it is not a case of 2 to 1 saying how the card was played, but rather in the real doubt of establishing equity, at least to me, is to allow declarer to not have to be subject to doing something off the charts stupid, as long as some evidence showed he knew what he was doing. To rule otherwise doesn't make sense to me since it downgrades bridge to a lottery type game. Having respect for the game is to expect normal plays to be made rather than ridiculous ones. I blame the TD Panel for not having the experience to be able to recognize what is involved.