

APPEAL	NABC+ ONE
Subject	Unusual Bid After Psych
DIC	Henry Cukoff
Event	Open LM Pairs
Session	First Final
Date	November 24, 2007

BD#	2
VUL	N/S
DLR	East

Andrew Gumperz	
♠	A Q T 8
♥	A Q
♦	J T 9 8
♣	6 4 2

Bobby Levin		Fall 2007 San Francisco, CA	Roy Welland	
♠	7		♠	K J 9 4 2
♥	K 7 5 4 3		♥	J 9 8 2
♦	A Q 7 5		♦	K 3
♣	J 9 3		♣	K Q

Michael Corey	
♠	6 5 3
♥	T 6
♦	6 4 2
♣	A T 8 7 5

West	North	East	South
		1♣	Pass
1♥	1♠	Pass	Pass
Dbl	Pass	Pass	Pass

Final Contract	1♠, dbld by North
Opening Lead	♣K
Table Result	N/S down 1, -200
Director Ruling	1♠ dbld, N/S -200
Committee Ruling	1♠ dbld, N/S -200

The Facts: The director was called after the afternoon session. 1♣ was, by agreement, natural.

The Ruling: In accordance with law 40 A, a player is permitted to make an intentionally misleading call. Since there is no evidence of a concealed understanding and West's double is considered to be a normal action, the table result of 1♠ doubled, down one, N/S minus 200, was allowed to stand.

The Appeal: North said that he believed West's double was very unusual, since West would not be interested in defending 1♠ doubled. He said he had given West's bidding problem to three "nationally experienced" players and no one chose to double as West had done. He said, "If I thought double were a usual bid, I wouldn't be here." East made no assertion that his hand was missorted. The 1♣ bid, by agreement, was natural.

The Decision: While recognizing the eccentricity of East's bidding, the committee noted that law 40 (noted by the director) gives a player the right to make intentionally misleading calls. As a matter of bridge judgment, the committee found nothing abnormal about West's reopening double. Accordingly, the committee could find no infraction or impropriety on which to base an adjustment.

Although East's opening 1♣ bid was eccentric and his pass of the 1♠ overcall arguably unusual, there was nothing to indicate they were predicated on any impropriety or infraction. West's 1♥ bid was ordinary and his double was hardly unusual, so there did not appear to be "fielding of a psych." The director informed North that if he felt there should be a record of this E/W's bidding, a player memo would be appropriate. The committee believed that a bridge appeals committee was not the proper venue to air this matter. Therefore, an appeal without merit warning (AWMW) was issued to N/S.

The Committee: Barry Rigal (Chair), Michael Huston, Eugene Kales, Ed Lazarus and Chris Moll.

Commentary:

Goldsmith The AC missed one major issue: How often does Welland open 1♣ on a two-card suit? I know he did it against me the in the same event. If the answer is "once in a while," which it appears to be, then regardless of his partner's knowledge of the tendency, that creates an implicit partnership understanding. The understanding is legal, but it must be alerted. It seems likely that if North knew about that understanding he might well not have overcalled a four-card suit. If 1♣ were Alerted and explained as "a balanced hand, possibly as few as two clubs, could have a five card major," many Norths might pause before entering with his hand, even those who would bid without the Alert. In that case, North was damaged by MI and an adjusted score is required.

We don't, however, know the answer to the first question. If the appeals committee (AC) had asked and Welland had answered "it was an experiment; I'd never tried it before," then there's no adjustment. If he had answered, "I do that once or twice a session on whim," then there was MI and the score is adjusted, probably to 4♥ E/W down one.

On Page 5 of the February 2008 Bridge World, Barry Rigal reports Welland opening a 5332 hand 1♣. It's possible that the partnership so reported is playing different methods than Levin-Welland, but we have prima facie evidence that Welland does this when playing with Levin, even if they haven't discussed it expressly. I'm sure it has come up enough times that Levin could know about it, even just from playing against Welland. As long as Levin doesn't base his actions on the possibility, the only issue is MI. If he does, it's a major violation. We have no evidence hereof; doubling 1♠ for takeout in a support double situation is normal. All in all, since I now have seen three instances that suggest that Welland does this often enough that his partner is aware of it, I'd rule MI and adjust the score.

By the way, this is not a psych, and has nothing to do with psyching. The AWMW was inappropriate.

- Polisner** On the surface, the appeal is without merit. However, N/S was focusing on the wrong bid as West's double was completely normal. My 50 years of experience tells me that if East opened this hand with 1♣, it was not an aberration, but likely to be a part of an undisclosed "understanding." I would have wanted to check with the Recorder to see if this East had bid this way in the past.
- Rigal** Since I was on the committee I suppose I'll go along with the decision. Had it been made clear to us that this was not the first 'short' club by East during the event in partnership with Levin we might have considered making sure that E/W were told to Alert their club openings. But we weren't aware of this at the time.
- Smith** I agree with the directors and the committee. West did nothing unusual (despite the surprising results of North's poll), so there is no evidence of an undisclosed agreement. This kind of incident needs to be recorded, not appealed. I am impressed with the committee for awarding an AWMW.
- Wildavsky** Welland often makes unusual bidding decisions. No one appeals when they work poorly! I agree that a Player Memo was the appropriate avenue if N/S wished to pursue the matter.
- Wolff** Good ruling.