

CONGRESS DIRECTOR COURSE
By REG BUSCH

LESSON 6B

Here is the recent ruling problem I presented to you.

Bd 19 Dlr S Vul EW

		K852	
		2	
		K74	
		KJ932	
A10943			Q76
Q874			KJ9653
95			Q63
A8			Q
		J	
		A10	
		AJ1082	
		107654	
W	N	E	S
			2NT#
P	4C	P*	P
4S	All pass		

Result: EW –300.

5 / 5 in minors, 6-10 HCP

*Asked about the 4C bid, told it was pre-emptive, thought for some time before passing.

At the end of the hand, North calls you to explain that South has misinformed opponents. 4C was not pre-emptive but constructive and invitational, which is correct systemically.

How do you rule?

Comment:

Let's follow our usual formula.

1. Was there MI? Clearly there was in this case. NS agree that South's explanation was incorrect.

2. Were EW damaged? Obviously a score of –300 would be a probable bottom score.

3. Was the damage caused by the UI? It's true to say that, had EW been given the correct information, then they would probably have not got their bad score. However, this does

not yet prove cause and effect. East's question is UI to West. West's action in bidding 4S is a clear violation of Law 16. West's LAs were to pass, double or bid. His 4S action could demonstrably have been suggested by East's question. This becomes a situation where the EW damage was subsequent, but not consequent, to the MI. The EW damage was caused by their own infraction of Law 16, not as a direct result of the MI.

So EW keep their score. They have lost their right to redress. But what about NS? Law 12C2 explains how the TD will award an adjusted score after an irregularity. EW have lost their right to an adjustment, but NS are still subject to adjustment. In this case, I would adjust the NS score to +130, the probable result in 4C. So we are awarding a split score: NS +130, EW -300.

Incidentally, how do you cope with this in matchpoint pairs scoring? Which score do you use for matchpointing the whole field on this board? This is a decision for the TD, and he should inform the scorers what is to be done. In general, my preference is to enter an average for this board so that the result is not included in the matchpointing for the whole field. Then you will need to work out the matchpoints for NS with +130, and for EW with -300, and adjust accordingly. Where it is clear that one score rather than the other is a quite realistic one, you might include this score for matchpointing the whole field.

Two other points need to be made here. Remember our rule: when there is MI, there is usually also UI. Before making a final decision on this board, we should analyse the NS bidding to make sure there was no use of UI. North is in receipt of UI that his partner believes that his 4C bid was pre-emptive. Has he taken any action possibly influenced by this knowledge? He must act on the assumption that South knows that his 4C bid was invitational. South has declined the invitation, so North has acted quite properly in not bidding on.

What do you think of East's question and slow pass. This was extremely unwise, and illustrates what I am always preaching to players. East asked about the 4C bid and got the answer most favouring action by him. What possible point is there in asking this question when, no matter what answer you get, you intend to pass? All such questions achieve is to limit partner's options, and make it possible for uncharitable opponents to question one's reasons for asking the question.

Reg