

2019 Michael Seamon Junior US Bridge Championships Under 26 USA2 Quarterfinal Wolff v Stephani, 4th quarter

Board 27 ♠ J
 South Deals ♥ 10 9 7 4 2
 None Vul ♦ K 8 7 4 2
 ♣ 6 3

♠ 7 3 ♥ 6 3 ♦ A Q 10 9 3 ♣ K 10 8 5	<div style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 10px; width: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ Q 9 8 5 4 2 ♥ A K Q ♦ J 6 ♣ J 7
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♠ A K 10 6
 ♥ J 8 5
 ♦ 5
 ♣ A Q 9 4 2

West	North	East	South
<i>Soukup</i>	<i>Finkle</i>	<i>Berk</i>	<i>Wolff</i>
			1 ♣ ¹
1 ♦	Dbl ²	2 ♣ ³	Dbl ⁴
2 ♦	2 ♥	2 NT ⁵	Pass
3 ♦	Pass	Pass	3 ♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. Either clubs or balanced 11-13/17-19
2. 4+♥
3. West to South: Good ♦ raise; nothing asked/answered NE
4. Three card ♥ support
5. West to South: Undiscussed; nothing asked/answered NE

3 ♥ by North
 Down 3 — NS -150

The Ruling

The director was called at the conclusion of play. South felt that West's description of 2 ♣ as a diamond raise was misinformation, and said that had he been told that 2 ♣ may just be a good hand that was ambiguous as to diamond fit he would have defended 3 ♦.

The director asked E-W about their agreements and system notes. They did not have system notes covering this auction, but both felt strongly that 2 ♣ promised a diamond fit, and in their ~10 years as a partnership this was the first time they could remember when a cuebid didn't deliver a fit of the overall suit.

Law 21B1(b) states "The Director is to presume Mistaken Explanation rather than Mistaken Call in the absence of evidence to the contrary". In the director's opinion the explanation of partnership methods did constitute "evidence to the contrary", and ruled that this was a Mistaken Call (therefore no adjustment), but felt that the judgment was close enough that he recommended an appeal if the difference from the board was within the margin of the match.

The Appeal

Committee:

Chair: Michael Rosenberg; Adam Kaplan; Sam Dinkin

Presenting Director, Scribe: McKenzie Myers

Players present:

Hakan Berk, David Soukup, Isaac Stephani (team captain), Ilan Wolff, Nathan Finkle

Wolff, South, reiterated that it was the opponents' supposed diamond fit that was his deciding factor to bid on to 3♥. Additionally, he felt that with more accurate information about the East hand he could have taken one more trick in 3♥ - when he found the opponents holding only seven diamonds between them, he played East for holding real clubs and played a club to the queen rather than pitching a club on the second high spade.

Berk-Soukup, East-West, discussed their agreements and long partnership history. In this auction, 1♠ by advancer would have been natural and nonforcing; XX by advancer would have been value-showing.

Stephani raised the possibility that North's failure to double 3♦ may have been an "extremely serious error".

[Law 12C1(e): (e) If, subsequent to the irregularity, the non-offending side has contributed to its own damage by an extremely serious error (unrelated to the infraction) ... then:

(i.) The offending side is awarded the score it would have been allotted as the consequence of rectifying its infraction.

(ii.) The non-offending side does not receive relief for such part of its damage as is self-inflicted.]

The Decision

The use of Law 12C1(e) was dismissed, as the standard for "extremely serious error" is "failure to play bridge", say, a revoke, and it was not felt that passing 3♦ was close to that standard.

The committee found the E-W arguments about partnership history and relevant agreements compelling; the availability of redouble to show general values strongly suggested that 2♣ would have a diamond fit an overwhelming amount of the time, and therefore 2♣ fit the definition of Mistaken Call. West's 3♦ bid was further evidence that at least that player strongly believed that 2♣ showing a fit was their agreement. Additionally, some on the committee felt that it was likely that South would have continued to 3♥ even if he had been told that 2♣ was ambiguous about a diamond fit. The table result of 3♥-3 stands. There was no discussion by the committee of appeal without merit as the players had been advised by the Director (and the committee agreed) that it was worth pursuing.