

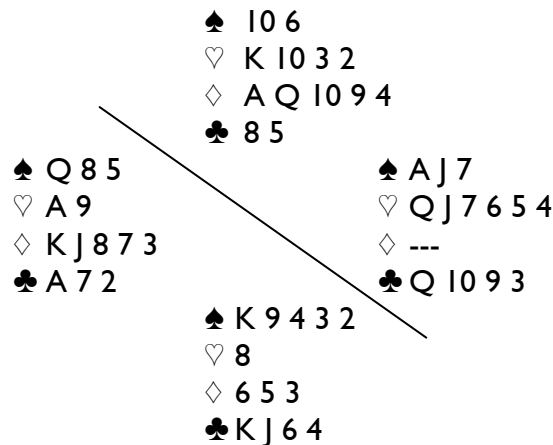
Appeal No. 1
South Africa v New Zealand

Appeals Committee:

Jean-Paul Meyer (Chairman, France), Rich Colker (Scribe, USA), Jim Kirkham (USA), Dan Morse (USA), Mario Reis (Portugal)

Bermuda Bowl, Round Robin

Board 17. Dealer North. None Vulnerable.



West	North	East	South
<i>Martin Reid</i>	<i>Tim Cope</i>	<i>Peter Newell</i>	<i>Glen Holman</i>
	Pass	1♦	1♠
Dbf	2♦	2♥	Pass
2♠	Pass	4♦	Pass
5♥	All Pass		

Comments: 1♦ showed five-plus hearts, West's double was a relay, 2♥ showed extra heart length, 2♠ was another relay, 4♦ showed precisely 3=6=0=4 distribution, and 5♥ was a signoff (4♥ by West here would have been a further relay, not to play) but was not Alerted on either side of the screen.

Contract: 5♥ by East.

Result: Down three, +150 for N/S.

The Facts: The Director was called by South after play ended on Board 19, when he discovered that the 5♥ bid on Board 17 had not been a slam try but rather a signoff. North told the Director that had he been Alerted about the meaning of the 5♥ bid he *might* have doubled the final contract.

The Director: After consulting several other Directors and expert players decided that there had been no damage — the experts said that they would not have doubled 5♥ with the North hand even with an Alert.

Ruling: Table result stands.

Relevant Laws: Law 40C

Appellants: North/South

Present: All four players and both team captains.

The Players: North said he could not state for certain that he would have doubled 5♥, even had he been properly Alerted that the bid was a signoff and not a slam try of some sort, as he assumed at the table. But he thought that with an Alert he would have at least considered the possibility of doubling and perhaps might have done so. In further support of this possibility he pointed out that 4♥ had been doubled and beaten one trick at the other table.

East said that at the end of the auction North asked him what 5♥ meant and he told him that it was a signoff. North said nothing further at that point and made no attempt to call the Director. It was only when South called the Director two boards later that North voiced the opinion that he might have doubled if he had been Alerted.

The Committee: While the Alert of 5♥ as a signoff might have made a double by North more attractive, the likelihood that doubling would disclose the trump position and allow declarer to hold his trump losers to a minimum (perhaps even allowing him to avoid any trump losers) made doubling unattractive. Given the additional expert opinion that none of them would have doubled with the North hand even with an Alert further established that North had not been damaged by the failure to Alert 5♥.

The Committee also noted that the failure to Alert a bid (like 5♥) that sounds like a slam try but is systemically played as a signoff is a serious infraction which, even though (in our opinion) it did not result in actual damage to the opponents, required a lot of time and effort on the part of a lot of people to resolve.

The Committee's decision: The Committee upheld the Director's ruling and allowed the table result to stand. However, E/W were assessed a 1 VP procedural penalty (not to accrue to N/S) for their failure to properly Alert the 5♥ bid.

Deposit: Returned