

## Sharpen your technique

By Barry Rigal

On this board from the first qualifying session of the Silodor Open Pairs, the defenders to 3NT by West generally did a very bad job.

Dlr: South ♠ K 8 2  
 Vul: Both ♥ K Q 4  
 ♦ A 10 6 5 3  
 ♣ 7 4

♠ A J 4 ♠ Q 7 6 5  
 ♥ A 9 ♥ 6 3 2  
 ♦ K 7 2 ♦ Q 9  
 ♣ A 9 8 5 2 ♣ K Q J 6

♠ 10 9 3  
 ♥ J 10 8 7 5  
 ♦ J 8 4  
 ♣ 10 3

A heart lead beats the game out of hand, but most defenders led a low diamond, giving declarer nine tricks plus play for more in the spade suit.

As the cards lie, all roads lead to plus 630, but it strikes me that you should cash one top club in case someone shows out. Then the right play in spades is to run the queen, not lead low to the jack. The suit might be 3-3 with the king in the South hand, perhaps in this layout:

♠ A J 4 ♠ Q 7 6 5  
 ♣ K 9 3

In that case, running the ♠Q is likely to keep South off play in the spade suit when leading low to the jack, won't do the trick.

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# TOURNAMENT APPEALS



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## APPEAL CASE 6

**Event:** Vanderbilt  
**Session:** Afternoon, March 21, 2013  
**Subject:** Misinformation  
**Bd:** 21 Sabine Auken  
**Vul:** N-S ♠ A 3  
**Dlr:** North ♥ K 10 4  
 ♦ 9 8 7 4 3 2  
 ♣ J 10

*Gier Helgemo*  
 ♠ 10 9 6 2  
 ♥ A Q 7 6 2  
 ♦ —  
 ♣ 9 8 5 2

*Tor Helness*  
 ♠ K Q J 7  
 ♥ 9 8  
 ♦ A K Q J  
 ♣ K 7 6

*Roy Welland*  
 ♠ 8 5 4  
 ♥ J 5 3  
 ♦ 10 6 5  
 ♣ A Q 4 3

West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	1♦	Pass
3♦(1)	Pass	3NT(2)	All Pass

(1) Shows five hearts and, according to East's explanation, denies four spades; forcing.  
 (2) West to South: No three hearts or four spades. East to North: No three hearts.

**Contract:** 3NT by East

**Opening lead:** ♠5

**Table result:** Making three, North-South minus 400

**Director ruling:** Making three, North-South minus 400

**Committee ruling:** Down one, North-South plus 50

**The facts:** The director was summoned at the end of the hand. West told South that 3NT denied three hearts or four spades. East said he may or may not hold four spades. South said he might have led a heart with the correct information.

Five expert players were polled and all said that a heart lead was out of the question.

North won the opening lead with the ♠A and led the ♦8 (second highest, by agreement). East won the trick perforce and South played the ♦6. East then led the ♥9 to the queen, losing to North's ♥K. North led another diamond. East led a second heart, South played the ♥J and declarer ducked, making three. After the dinner break, South said he would have played the ♦10 (upside-down carding) on the first round of diamonds had he been given the correct information.

**The ruling:** The director ruled that South is unlikely to choose a heart opening lead. Despite further discussion of the play and the director's attempt to discuss the hand at the session, South never mentioned the play of the ♦10. Therefore the ♦10 play was ruled unlikely and the table result stands, 3NT, making three, East-West plus 400.

**The appeal:** South explained that his defense was predicated on the information that East had at most three spades. All his efforts were channeled into making sure his partner not play a second spade. The ♦8 promised a higher card, so he knew declarer could not come to nine tricks without help. North-South give suit preference in the first suit declarer plays, so he was concerned that covering the ♥8 with the ♥J might be interpreted as suit preference for spades. He was likewise concerned that discouraging with the ♦10 might result in partner playing spades. He also asserted that although he understood that none of the players polled chose a heart lead, he leads declarer's short suit much more often than most players. He noted that had he covered the ♥8 or discouraged with the ♦10, the contract would almost certainly

have been defeated, and that both those plays would have been substantially more attractive with correct information.

East-West told the Committee that while they have no system notes, their agreement is in fact the one East provided to North, that 3♦ asks only about heart support, and that West's explanation to South was erroneous. East-West also asserted that North ought to have known that her defense would prove ineffective. She was playing declarer for three spades. East-West open 1♣ with 4-4 in the minors, so East's shape was by implication 3=2=5=3. South's play of the ♦6 was thus likely to have been forced, and could not be relied on as a signal. East-West also noted that covering the ♥9 could be dangerous, sparing declarer a heart guess when he holds 10 9 doubleton and needs only a second heart trick for his contract.

North-South countered that with ♠K Q J x, declarer would almost certainly have unblocked before leading a heart, and also that with ♥10 9, he would likely have started with the 10 to entice a cover.

**The decision:** The committee had no reason to doubt East-West's testimony that East's explanation was correct and West's incorrect.

The facts of the case made it clear that the misinformation made a heart lead less attractive than it would have been with correct information, but the committee agreed with the TD that a heart lead was unlikely in any case.

The facts of the case also made it clear that the winning defense would be more attractive had South had correct information. In effect he was defending in "three spade world" and gave no consideration to "four spade world."

The committee discussed whether the North-South argument was timely, in that the argument regarding South's carding was advanced only after the dinner break and that the initial basis for the appeal was only the possibility of a different opening lead. We found that North-South had no need to make the basis for their appeal known to the TD, just the fact that they wish to appeal. North-South might indeed have only realized at dinner the implications of the correct information on South's defense, but the argument they made stands or falls on its own.

South might have a stronger case if he immediately told the TD how and why he would have defended differently with different information, but that is not what he is, or ought to be, concentrating on during the session or even before the short dinner break.

East ought to have realized when he saw the dummy that South had likely received inaccurate information. At that point, he could have and probably should have informed South of the actual East-West agreement. Not many players would realize this, and the committee judged that the failure to do so did not warrant a procedural penalty.

Neither North's nor South's defense may have been best, even given the information they had, but the Laws do not require perfect play in order to receive redress for damage. In particular, the mistakes, if any, did not rise to the level of "serious error" per Law 12.

The committee found that MI was present and that it led to damage. We judged that given accurate information, the most favorable result that was likely for North-South was plus 50, and that this was also the most unfavorable result that was at all probable for East-West. Accordingly, we adjusted the score per Law 12, to 3NT by East, down one, East-West minus 50.

**DIC:** Olin Hubert

**Chairperson:** Adam Wildavsky

**Committee members:** Michael Huston, Craig Allen, Craig Ganzer and Chris Moll