

CONGRESS DIRECTOR COURSE  
By REG BUSCH

LESSON 11B

Comments on the problems set in Lesson 11.

**Question 1**

E/W Vul  
Dealer S

			N		
			3		
			7543		
			AQ876		
			632		
	8762				KQJ94
	98				AJ1062
	J102				93
	KQJ5				10
			A105		
			KQ		
			K54		
			A9874		
Bidding:	S	W	N	E	
	1NT	P	P	2C	
	X	P	2D	2S	
	X	All pass			

Nothing alerted. 2 Clubs systemically was Landy (showing majors). E/W inexperienced players, N/S experienced. West forgot they were playing Landy.

Result: EW +670. NS claim damage because of failure to alert.

How would you rule?

**Answer:**

Obviously one would need to have been at the table to clarify this situation. For example, does West's pass after the double of 2C mean anything systemically? Does it mean tolerance for 2C or does it mean 'no major preference? What does South's double of 2C mean? Penalty? Extra values?

So, whilst these examples all come from real life, any comments have to be related to a theoretical situation, making certain likely assumptions. Comments would in no way reflect on the specific players concerned at this particular table.

What infraction has occurred? West has failed to alert a conventional bid, the 2C bid showing majors. So failure to alert = MI. Remember, when there is MI there is also UI. East has the UI that partner failed to alert, so has possibly forgotten their agreement.

Have NS been damaged? Certainly, -670 will be an awful score whether in pairs or teams.

Was the damage consequent on the infraction (i.e. directly resulting from the infraction), or merely subsequent to (i.e. following but not resulting from the infraction). Remember the WBF's dictum that, where the non-offenders find themselves in a position they would not have been in without the infraction, they won't lose their right to redress purely because of subsequent poor bidding or poor play. They lose their right to redress only where their subsequent actions are wild, gambling or irrational, and specifically where the non-offenders have taken a 'double shot'.

Let's examine this situation more closely. What does South's double of 2C mean? I suspect penalties. He doesn't have any more values than he has advertised by his 1NT opening. Further, did South (an experienced player), with his holding in clubs, not wonder about the genuineness of East's 2C call? Did he not wonder again when East pulled the 2CX to 2S?

What about East's UI that partner has probably forgotten the system? I don't believe that any East would pass 2CX, even if West's pass meant a tolerance for clubs. I don't consider that East's 2S bid could have been at all influenced by his UI, and that his action to bid rather than stand the double was a 75% action.

What would be my decision here? I suspect that South has been having a double shot. It is likely that West has failed to alert because he has forgotten the system. Whilst South has reasonable grounds for thinking that 2C might fail, he has no reason to believe that 2S will not make. Partner has not shown any values. I suspect that South has sensed that MI is likely to have occurred, and is taking a gamble in the hope that it may come off, but, if it doesn't, the Director will come to his rescue and adjust the score on the basis of MI. Even if the possibility of a failure to alert had not occurred to South, I still see his double of 2S as wild and gambling.

I would leave NS with their table result. But EW may not be allowed to benefit from their infraction, and I would adjust their score to 2S undoubled making, on the basis that, had the bid been alerted, then South may not have doubled..

**Question 2.**

Bd 14 Nil vul Dlr E.

		5	
		K65	
		QJ1084	
		J832	
AQ84			K1072
AQ42			J9
96			A73
A74			KQ106
		J963	
		10873	
		K52	
		95	
West	North	East	South
		1C	P
1H	P	1S	P
3S	P	4S	P
4NT(1)	P	5D(2)	P
5S	All pass.		

- (1) Simple Blackwood
- (2) One ace

Result: EW +450.

NS call you to the table at the end of the hand. They claim that East's 5D bid was significantly slow, and East's mannerisms suggested discomfort and disapproval of West's 4NT. West got the most favourable answer he could to his enquiry, yet he signed off in 5S. East admitted a hesitation, but said that they nearly always use 4C Gerber for aces, and she had to think a little before answering. West made a similar explanation – being used to Gerber, he made the mistake of thinking that 5D showed no aces. He wasn't aware of any mannerisms from partner.

How do you rule?

**Answer:**

This is a common and typical directing problem. You are called to the table with one side alleging transmission of UI by facial expression or a break in tempo, the other

side denying it or at least minimizing it. Not that either side is consciously lying. It's just that we tend to believe what we want to believe, and one side perhaps maximizes the problem and the other side minimizes the problem. It's my experience that players rarely call me for UI when there has not been any. There may be a few players who are quick on the trigger to call for small changes in tempo, but one gets to know these and apply a little scepticism to their claims. In this case, EW admitted to some break in tempo, but no facial or bodily expressions. East and West gave what could have been a reasonable explanation for their actions. But one must realize that their explanations are what are called 'self-serving'. That is, their explanations, whilst explaining and perhaps justifying their actions, are not capable of objective corroboration. Whilst one must not ignore such self-serving explanations, one must approach them somewhat critically.

The Law says that, when a player has UI, he may not choose from among logical alternative actions one that could demonstratively been suggested over another by the extraneous information. If one accepts that West had UI, then his bid of 5S is one that could demonstratively been suggested by the UI. A player who uses Blackwood and finds the partnership with all four aces does not sign off at the 5 level.

Note that the Laws do not require me to decide that West's decision *was* influenced by the UI; only that it *could* have been. The only judgments I have to make are:

1. Was UI available to West (I don't have to decide that West even was aware of it), and
2. Was West's action one that could have been influenced by the UI.

So, in making a decision to adjust the score to the result in 6S off one, I am making a technical decision. I am in no way impugning the ethics of the EW players. Understand that, in all these judgment situations, the Laws never require the Director to make judgments about the ethics of the individual players concerned. These decisions are technical not personal, and we should always go to some trouble to make this point to players.

Reg.