

Ruling Report National Competition

Division : III D

Date : 7 October 2023

Match : Lier 2 – Argayon 1

Open/~~Closed~~ Room

Players: NS Yves Meyus – Marc Van Leuven (Lier 2)

EW Pascaline Leblu – Daniel Hocq (Argayon 1)

Board : 19 Dealer : S Vulnerability : EW

Bidding

<p>♠ A K 7 4 3 ♥ 2 ♦ A J 6 4 ♣ A 5 2</p>	<p>N W E S</p>	<p>♠ Q J 5 2 ♥ K J 10 8 4 ♦ Q ♣ 9 8 7</p>	<p>♠ 10 8 6 ♥ 9 6 3 ♦ K 10 8 7 5 2 ♣ 4</p>
<p>♠ 9 ♥ A Q 7 5 ♦ 9 3 ♣ K Q J 10 6 3</p>			

West	North	East	South
			1 ♣
1 ♠	Pass	Pass	2 ♣
2 ♦	2 ♥	3 ♦	4 ♥
X	Pass	Pass	Pass

Playing

	W	N	E	S	W	N	E
1			♠ 6	♠ 9	♠ A	♠ 2	
2	♦ A	♦ Q	♦ 2	♦ 3			
3	♦ 4	♥ 4					
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12							
13							

Result and score :

4 ♥ X = by N → 590 for NS (Lier 2)

Result and score in the other room :

4 ♠ X = by W → 790 for EW (Lier 2)

Balance : 1380 or 16 IMP for Lier 2

Result of the match with this board

IMP : 112 – 48

Result of the match without this board

IMP : 96 – 48

Remarks from team A (Lier 2)

I [North, the declarer] was drinking my soup with my cards on table. Pascaline [East] attended me that a card was played. I took my cards in hand and say sorry to Pascaline and played my card.

Remarks from team B (Argayon 1)

After hesitating a long time – showing 2 cards in D on the Ace of D – North plays the Queen of diamonds. If he hadn't hesitated that long, West wouldn't have played diamonds back, but the Ace of clubs and clubs again, which East would have ruffed, bringing the contract down.

It is very unfair by North to hesitate with a single in his hand.

Analysis

A player may not attempt to mislead an opponent by the hesitancy of play as in hesitating before playing a singleton (law 73.D.2). North's excuse that he was drinking his soup is a further violation of procedure, namely as a matter of courtesy a player should refrain from paying insufficient attention to the game (law 74.B.1). North's conduct is reprehensible especially as we are at trick 2 and he is the declarer.

West, who is sitting at the other side of the screen, doesn't know what North is doing. From West's point of view he might very well be thinking with his cards folded.

North was aware at the time of his action that it could work to his benefit, as he tried to mitigate the consequences by saying sorry to East. However, as it was up to West to lead at the next trick, there was no mitigation whatsoever. If NS have gained an advantage through the irregularity, EW are entitled to rectification through the award of an adjusted score (law 73.E.2).

To determine if there is a causal relationship between the hesitation by North and the card led by West in the third trick, I have consulted 5 expert players (Honour division).

Without the hesitation they unanimously would continue with a small diamond. They all provided a similar justification to continue diamonds, which can be summarised as follows. *"Following the auction and the lead, partner probably has a 2-3-5-3 distribution. If he has a 3-card spades, why didn't he support my spades and if on top of that he has a singleton clubs, why didn't he lead his singleton which is much more interesting than leading from a 3-card against 4M. Consequently continuing diamonds is the only logical and obvious play."*

Based on the advice of the experts, I can only conclude that NS didn't gain an advantage through the irregularity. Therefore EW are not entitled to a rectification.

Deliberately misleading an opponent during the play e.g. by a hesitation normally merits a disciplinary penalty (reference White Book of the EBU). However, I am of the opinion that North didn't deliberate hesitate but that his hesitation was rather a consequence of paying insufficient attention to the game. Therefore I am giving North a serious warning instead of a penalty of a number of VPs. This kind of reprehensible conduct should not be repeated.

Decision

There was a clear hesitation by North for which he had no demonstrable bridge reason. As EW were not damaged as a consequence of the hesitation, they are not entitled to a rectification of the score.

The result on the board 19 in the open room is maintained.

The result of the match Lier 2 – Argayon 1 remains 112 – 48 in IMP or 18,69 – 1,31 in VP.

Additionally I give a serious warning to the North player for paying insufficient attention to the game, hereby hesitating with a singleton.

Both teams can file an appeal against this decision within 7 calendar days. Please refer to the new regulations for the treatment of an appeal, which can be consulted on the website of the RBBF.

Done at Ruisbroek (Puurs-Sint-Amands) on 10 October 2023

Robert Ketels

Tournament Director for the national competition