

# Ruling Report National Competition

Division : III D

Date : 14 October 2023

Match : Argayon 1 – Smohain 2

Open/~~Closed~~ Room

Players: NS Daniel Hocq – Pascaline Leblu (Argayon 1)

EW Jean de Villenfagne de Vogelsanck – Hedwig Fiems (Smohain 2)

Board : 26 Dealer : E Vulnerability : All

Bidding

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

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
1 ♦	Pass	1 ♥	Pass
2 NT	Pass	3 NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

## Playing

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

Result and score :

3 NT = by W → 600 for EW (Smohain 2)

Result and score in the other room :

3NT **+2** by W → 660 for EW (Argayon 1)

Balance : 60 or 2 IMP for Argayon 1

Result of the match with this board

IMP : 69 – 55

Result of the match without this board

IMP : 67 – 55

### **Remarks from team A (Argayon 1)**

After playing the second round of spades, West hesitates for about 30 seconds before finally playing the Queen. For North, the distribution of the spades is 3-4-3-3 and North decides not to play them any longer.

This behaviour is not admissible, even though the result remains the same. West deserves a serious warning.

### **Remarks from team B (Smohain 2)**

I [West] have not the slightest impression to have hesitated. In any case, even if he [North] continued spades, this does not change one trick in the result.

### **Analysis**

Once more, both teams give a different version of the facts and leave it to the tournament director, who was not present at the venue, to determine who is wright.

There are some particularities that all point in one direction.

- Why would the team Argayon, who obtained a positive balance on the board and clearly stated that it did not affect the result, request for a ruling?  
The only reason that I can think of, is that they found it very unfair by West to have hesitated with a singleton.
- On the ♥ return by North in trick 6, why did the declarer play the ♥ A and not a small ♥? South is not the dangerous hand as there is still a stop ♠ in dummy.  
With the ♥ K on side he now has easily 11 tricks. Why is he giving away 2 tricks and potentially 2 IMP? Is he hoping that NS will not request a ruling in this case?
- At the end of play, the declarer (West) concedes the last two tricks. According to Law 68.C, the player making the concession must face his hand. Instead of doing so, West folds his cards and puts them back in the board. Only after North's request to see West's hand, it became clear that, at the end of play, West still held a small heart and club and not a spade. Was West trying to conceal an infraction (violation of Law 72.B.3)?

Based on the above and in line with Law 85.A, I asses that there was a clear hesitation by West with a singleton.

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). West might have been aware at the time of his action that it could work to his benefit, as afterwards he managed to mitigate the consequences by giving away two tricks. Consequently, EW have not gained an advantage through the irregularity, and therefore NS are not entitled to rectification through the award of an adjusted score (law 73.E.2).

Deliberately misleading an opponent during the play e.g. by a hesitation normally merits a disciplinary penalty (reference White Book of the EBU).

As I see no firm proof that West's hesitation was done deliberately, I am giving a serious warning instead of a penalty of a number of VPs. This kind of reprehensible conduct should not be repeated.

## **Decisions**

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

The result on the board 26 in the open room is maintained.

The result of the match Argayon 1 – Smohain 2 remains 69 – 55 in IMP or 12,78 – 7,22 in VP.

Additionally, I give a serious warning to the West player as he misled an opponent by hesitating before playing 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-Amunds) on 25 October 2023

Robert Ketels

Tournament Director for the national competition