

Report on a ruling

Team NS Begijntje 1
N Piet Vandereet
S Dirk Van Compennolle

Team EW BBC 1
E Valérie Labaere
W Alain Labaere

Honour Division, round 5; November 18, 2023; Cercle Perron, Liège

		North	
		♠ A 8 2	
		♥ –	
		♦ A 10 9 4 3	
		♣ A 8 6 5 3	
West		East	
♠ Q J 9 3		♠ 10 5	
♥ 8 2		♥ A K Q 10 7 6 5	
♦ 7 2		♦ Q J 8 6	
♣ Q J 10 4 2		♣ –	
		South	
		♠ K 7 6 4	
		♥ J 9 4 3	
		♦ K 5	
		♣ K 9 7	

Board: 7 Dealer: S Vuln: All

Bidding

West	North	East	South
–	–	–	pass
pass	1♦	4♥	dbl
pass	pass	pass	//

Dbl is explained by North to East as take out.

Table result: 4♥x -2 (♦K)

Other table: 4♥x -2 (♦K)

Facts, decision:

At the end of play, East called the TD and told that the tray had come back very quickly with dbl and West's pass. She thought the given explanation did not match with North's decision to pass, and that the tempo might have indicated that it was not a real take out double but rather penalty orientated.

North did not object to the remark about the tempo; he explained his decision to pass because he had three aces in defence.

I explained to South and West they should try to vary and/or randomise the speed of the tray; West claimed he had no influence on that but I told him he could put his bidding card in front of him to release it on the tray just a little later.

As the facts seemed clear, I polled a variety of players; mostly Dutch but also some other nationalities, all of comparable standard to the player in question. Before making a decision, I got seven replies: only one player might pass (considering the 'vibes' at the table, otherwise bid 5♣), three others choose 5♣ and one even bid 6♣. I therefore decided the tempo of the bidding might have given unauthorised information (UI) to North that suggested to pass over any other call.

(Later, five more players responded to the question: two would pass, three would bid 5♣, only one of those considering to pass.)

North is therefore supposed to bid 5♣, if not using UI. This would go round to West, who might double but I decided he might as well pass as there is much less defence against a potential 5♦ contract, that might be bid after a double of 5♣.

Final decision is an adjusted score for both NS and EW: 5♣ by North, down two, NS -200.

Marc van Beijsterveldt, November 21, 2023