

August Quiz

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Here are two rulings I faced recently. Decide your ruling before reading my discussion.

Ruling 1.

Bd 7 / All / S

	♠ Q754	
	♥ KQJ1082	
	♦ void	
	♣ AK9	
♠ 863		♠ J1092
♥ A9		♥ 6
♦ KJ94		♦ A1076532
♣ 10542		♣ 8
	♠ AK	
	♥ 7543	
	♦ Q8	
	♣ QJ763	

West	North	East	South
			1C
P	1H	2D	2H
3D	4D	P	P
P			

At this stage, South called, claiming inadvertency. She had misread North's 4D as 4H, which she realised as soon as she put her correct glasses on. How do you rule? Would your ruling be any different had West not passed when you were called?

Ruling 2.

South is declarer in 4H. West leads the ♠ A, then a small spade. East, with ♠ KQx, plays the ♠ Q, which declarer ruffs. Declarer now leads the ♥ 5. But East, thinking she has won trick two, leads the ♣ 3. It is agreed that South's trump lead and East's spade lead are simultaneous. Meantime, West, not noticing East's lead, has followed to the trump lead with the ♥ 6.

How do you rule?

Ruling 1: Though very sympathetic to South's plight, one is unable to accept a claim of inadvertency. The essence of inadvertency is that it was never in South's mind to pass, but somehow this had appeared on the bidding sheet. In this situation, South had meant to pass when she wrote pass, even though under the mistaken impression that partner had bid 4H.

If South had had a valid claim for inadvertency, the fact that West had since called would not have affected the claim. An inadvertent bid may be changed until partner has called.

How would you rule, having disallowed the claim of inadvertency, if West had not yet passed? Law 25B now makes provision for a purposeful change of call provided LHO has not passed, but with certain penalties prescribed. The question arises: is the Director obliged to offer this option? This has been discussed previously in these pages, but I believe he is. Some will disagree. But Law 10C1 says: *>When these Laws provide an option after an irregularity, the Director shall explain all the options available.* South has an option to change her bid here to 4H. LHO may accept this, and some sporting Wests would, in which case bidding proceeds without penalty. If West refuses, then South may (a) let her pass stand (North passes at next turn) or (b) make any other legal call (including the 4H call). In this case bidding proceeds (with any withdrawn calls being unauthorised information) but NS are limited to a 40% score on the board. EW keep their table result. So in this case, had West not already passed, I would have to offer this option to South, who no doubt would have welcomed the chance of a 40% score rather than the zero they got in 4D. North would no doubt have bid on to the slam.

Supposing you were in the middle of explaining all this to South, and got as far as saying >You may change this call provided LHO has not bid= when West immediately writes in a pass! Well, West has been too smart for his own good. He is in flagrant violation of Law 9B2 which says: *No player shall take any action until the Director has explained all matters in regard to rectification and to the assessment of a penalty.* I would rule that West's pass was out of turn (South has not yet made a decision as to her final call in this situation), and I would award a procedural penalty against West for violation of 9B2.

Ruling 2: A messy situation. Let's look at possibly relevant Laws.

Law 58: A lead or play made simultaneously with another player's legal lead or play is deemed subsequent to it. If only the table had agreed that the ♣ 2 play even slightly preceded the legal trump lead, then the ruling would have been easier. Under Law 53C, the trump lead would stand as the lead, and East's card would be withdrawn without penalty. However, this is not the case here. So, under Law 58, West's ♣ 2 is regarded as played after South's lead, but before West's play of the ♥ 6. So now we have to move on to **Law 57**, which covers situations where a defender has played prematurely to a trick before his partner has played. So South can demand that West play his highest or lowest heart, and East's ♣ 2 becomes a major penalty card. If declarer demands that West play his highest card, then West's ♥ 6 is withdrawn and is replaced with the ♥ 10, his highest heart. Then the ♥ 6 also becomes a penalty card. (West can be deemed to have played the ♥ 6 before a penalty was assessed for East's illegal play of the ♣ 2).

It does seem rather nonsensical to apply Law 57 for a situation it doesn't seem to have been intended for. East's ♣ 2 was in practice a lead out of turn, not a premature play to trick 3. And the ♣ 2 even becomes an unestablished revoke to trick 3! But I can see no other appropriate Law. I put this to the director's forum on the Net. The overall consensus was that the above interpretation was correct. This very situation had been discussed in an EBU directors' workshop with the above conclusions reached. One well-credentialed director suggested that Law 57 was not relevant, and that the only Law applicable here was Law 49 i.e. the ♣ 2 becomes a major penalty card. I must say that this interpretation appeals to me in a commonsense sort of way, even though the majority were for the more complex interpretation.

It's impossible to draft a set of Laws for every conceivable situation, and there are times when directors

must make their own interpretations, just as judges sometimes in courts must make their own interpretations of how law applies to a particular situation. I ruled as described in a recent event, but, if I ever have to face an identical situation again, I'll opt for the more sensible and more just simple penalty card ruling.

Reg Busch