

BIDDING AFTER A PLAYER ' S HESITATION –BRIDGE ETHICS

Sanju's Question :-

N-S VUL	North xx 10xx QJ10XX AJX		Bidding South 1Club 13-18 No 5 card major West 4 Heart North Passes after long thinking East Pass South double, director was called by East.
WEST Q10XX AKQJXX XX X		EAST JXX KXX Q10XX	
	SOUTH AKXX 10 AXX KXXXX		

The contract went 4 down and the director gave the ruling as 4 down undoubled. In the other room contract was 4 Heart un-doubled and went 2 down.

Appeal was filed against director's decision and it was allowed by the Appeal's Committee. Who is right?

Shaju V Mathew

Sridhar's views :-

In such cases the committee considers whether (a) North had a genuine bridge problem that caused him to think (and hence it was not a hesitation , but a bridge reasoning that required expenditure of time) ; (b) South misused his perceived information as a result of the hesitation . If EW were affected as a result of such infraction the committee will rule in favor of EW, if not, allow the result to stay.

In arriving at their conclusion on point (b) , the committee will usually consider what will 80 per cent of his peers bid when faced with the situation that South faced (in the absence of any hesitation , of course) ; if the committee concludes that South took the decision that 80% of peers will take , then there is no adjusted score .

- (a) In my opinion there is no real bridge reason for North to think in this hand ; he has to pass without any hesitation whatever .
- (b) As far as south's action is concerned we need to know whether the Double, according to their (NS) methods , is for take out OR penalty oriented. If it is for penalties which he expects his partner to pass then I will conclude that there is an infraction and rule in favor of EW by removing the Double, as the Director did. However , if NS play doubles in this situation as primarily for take out , I believe South did the right thing – 80% or more of his peers will DOUBLE there – South has the right shape for take out double ; prime controls in the form of aces and kings that will help in both defense and offense , whether his partner bids or chooses to defend . Hence the Committee is likely to rule in favor of NS if the Double was systemically for take-out.