A "word" from Mike Bitonti !

Invariably in bridge, there are bound to instances where incorrect information is provided to the opposing side. The majority of those instances result in a “no harm done” scenario and both sides just move on. But occasionally a situation occurs where one side feels they were harmed by the misinformation. Today I’m going to address how a Director should proceed when a damage claim is made. I’ll use a recent instance, but will change the names to respect all the individuals involved.

John and James (sitting N/S) and playing opposite Sally and Sarah (sitting E/W). Sally opens 1NT in first seat, John makes a 2H direct overcall which is alerted by James. When asked, James responds that the 2H call shows hearts + minor. Sarah calls 3NT to play and the auction passes out after that. Pretty simple auction, but unknown to Sally and Sarah, the information that James provided was incorrect per the John-James partnership agreement.

While it seems that John should have corrected their partners incorrect explanation when it was made, or at least after the auction, John in fact took the

proper action in NOT correcting partner. Law 20.F.5.b says: “The player must call the Director and inform his opponents that, in his opinion, his partner’s explanation was erroneous (see Law 75) but only at his first legal opportunity, which is (i) for a defender, at the end of the play. (ii) for declarer or dummy”. This means that John can not correct the explanation until the end of the hand, and any damages that the opposing side accrues during the play will be rectified once the hand has been completed.

Sally somewhere in the middle of the play of the hand Sally now realizes that her LHO didn’t have hearts + minor but rather hearts + spades. At the end of the hand, John now appropriately corrects the explanation of his 2H call. John also has to accept the fact that if the opponents can prove damage by the initial incorrect explanation, then redress may be awarded by the Director.

Several important points to consider here. First, the onus of responsibility to show damage occurred is on the non-offending side. The benefit of doubt as to whether the damage really exists or not will favor the non-offending side, but there still needs to be some form of proof of damage in the form of different line of play, different card(s) played to tricks, and/or different discarding. Additionally, a Director will consider if the non-offending side “knew” or “could have known” the explanation was incorrect, but again the benefit of doubt goes to non-offenders.

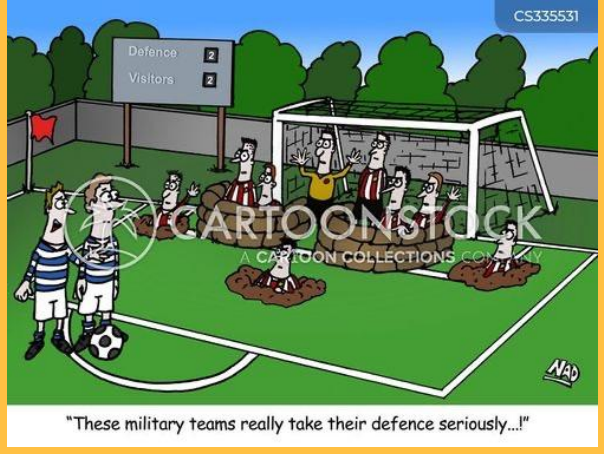
Back to our scenario, Sally takes a line of play based on the information she received during the auction and only discovers too late that a different line of play would have gained her one more trick. Sally is off 1 in 3NT, but she and her partner are now permitted to collaborate to determine if the misinformation potentially caused the wrong choice in line of play. We go back to the benefit of doubt siding with the non-offending side. The Director agrees a damage occurred, but it’s not 100% clear that declarer would have taken that better line of play or not. Time for a consult!

After hearing statements from both sides and having no clear-cut resolution path, it’s always good for Directors to get additional opinions from other Directors, and even other experienced players. Those options are just that – opinions. They are not votes and hold no legal sway in the matter. In the end, the Director’s ruling it all that matters and it final at the club level. In this case, after the Director made a consult they opted to change the result to an Avg+/Avg- score favoring the non-offending side as it was not crystal clear that declarer would/should have known, nor would have taken the winning line of play had they known.

There are always going to be disagreements in bridge and it’s impossible for Directors to please everyone. Our job is to gather the facts, listen to others opinions as when necessary, apply the Laws appropriately, and make as fair rulings as possible. I’ll be happy to discuss this, or any other Director related topic further.

Play well!

Michael Bitonti
Head Director - CBC



Many of us use a convention to overcall when a 1 NT is open. The most common at CBC are DONT (or varieties of), and Cappelletti.

This month I am listing a variety of ways to interfere with a 1 NT opener. Copied from: Bridge Bum. Please research more on these conventions for a better understanding. A brief explanation of **Astro** is below.
To be continued....each week....

ASTRO

- A defense to 1NT in which a double is for penalty, and 2/ overcalls are artificial.
- **Brozel**
- A defense to 1NT in which a double shows a one-suited overcall, and all 2-level bids show specific 2-suited hands.
- **Cappelletti (Hamilton)**
- A defense to 1NT in which double is for penalty, and 2-level overcalls are conventional.
- **DONT**
- A defense to 1NT in which double shows a one-suited hand, and 2-level overcalls show the bid suit + a higher suit.
- **Gates Double**
- An artificial double of 1NT by a passed hand.
- **Landy**
- A (very old) defense to 1NT in which a 2 overcall shows both majors.
- **Multi-Landy (Woolsey)**
- A very scientific defense to 1NT.
- **Pinpoint Astro**
- A variation of the **Astro** convention, using double as penalty.
- **Ripstra**
- A slight variation of the **Landy**convention.
- **Roche**
- A (very old) defense to 1NT in which a 2 overcall shows 12-14 points and 3+ clubs.
- **SCUM**
- A defense to 1NT that shows two-suiters by Shape, Color and the Major suits.
- **Suction**
- A restricted defense to 1NT that uses ambiguous overcalls.

ASTRO: Astro was invented by American players Paul Allinger, Roger Stern, and Lawrence Rosler. The first letters of each player's name are concatenated to form "A-ST-RO"

2Hearts and a minor (at least 5-4 or 4-5). 10+ points.

2Spades and another suit (at least 5-4 or 4-5). 10+ points.

2Natural, 5+ hearts. 10+ points.

2Natural, 5+ spades. 10+ points.

2NTClubs and diamonds (at least 5-4, usually 5-5 or better). 10+ points. Partner should take his preference by replying 3 or 3.

CONGRATULATIONS !!

Silver Life Master Glenn Mitchell
Adv NABC Master "Sam" Siavash Karbasizadeh
NABC Master Sarah Bannister
Randy Cannon
Club Master Philip Philipoom
Gerald Callahan

Thanking each of you who bring snacks for CBC games.Your participation is much appreciated. Be sure to take what is left home with you so we can keep our kitchen clean. We had a beautiful Halloween table for our Sunday Mentor/Mentee game! Thanks to Laura, Lee and Judy Rockwell and anyone else who contributed. It takes a village..

It's never to early to get a partner and mark your calendar...See you in the spring.

APRIL 4-6 2025

COLUMBIA SPRING SECTIONAL

Friday, April 4 10/2:30
Single Session: $28 pair per session*
Stratified Open and 0-499 Pairs
**Regionally rated games to benefit ACBL Grass Roots Fund*

Saturday, April 5 10/2:30
Single Session: $26 pair per session
Stratified Open and 0-499 Pairs

Sunday, April 6 9:30/TBD
2-Session Stratified Open Swiss Teams - $136 *(incl. Lunch)*

OPEN STRATS: 0-1000, 1000-3000, 3000+

499ER STRATS: 0-100, 100-300, 300-499

Stratification by team/pair averages: strats *may be adjusted at the Director's discretion*

Pasta 2GOGO food truck available for lunch Friday and Saturday Preorder from menu, $8-$12 before first session

STAYBRIDGE SUITES
1913 Huger Street, Columbia, SC 29201
Phone (803) 451-5900
Cut-off date is March 25 • Free parking, downtown location and free breakfast • All rooms are suites with full kitchens • $145 per night
Link: Bridge Sectional 2025

DISTRICT 7 GRAND NATIONAL TEAM FINALS

Friday, April 4 10/2:30
One-day event:
Flight C (0-750 MPs AND a Non-Life Master)

Saturday, April 5 10/2:30
Two-day event ending on Sunday:
Flights: Champion (Unlimited), A (0-6000), & B (0-3000)

Sunday, April 6 9:30/TBD
Flights: Champion, A, B

Championship flight does not have to prequalify at the club level, all other flights must prequalify at the local club.

The winning team in each flight will compete at the July 2025 Summer NABC in Philadelphia and receive a $3,600 stipend per team when they compete at the NABC and when *District 7 Conditions of Contest* have been met. Flight eligibility is established by ACBL's September Masterpoint cycle produces on Aug. 6, 2024

Fees: Championship $21 per person per session
Flights A, B, & C: $15 per person per session. Lunch available for $5 between sessions

All teams MUST preregister by 5 pm on Thursday, April 3, 2025. Send roster with player ACBL #s to:
Martha Meyer: mdpmeyermm@gmail.com

Direct questions to: Martha Meyer,
D7 GNT Coordinator, Phone: (336) 416-3049

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