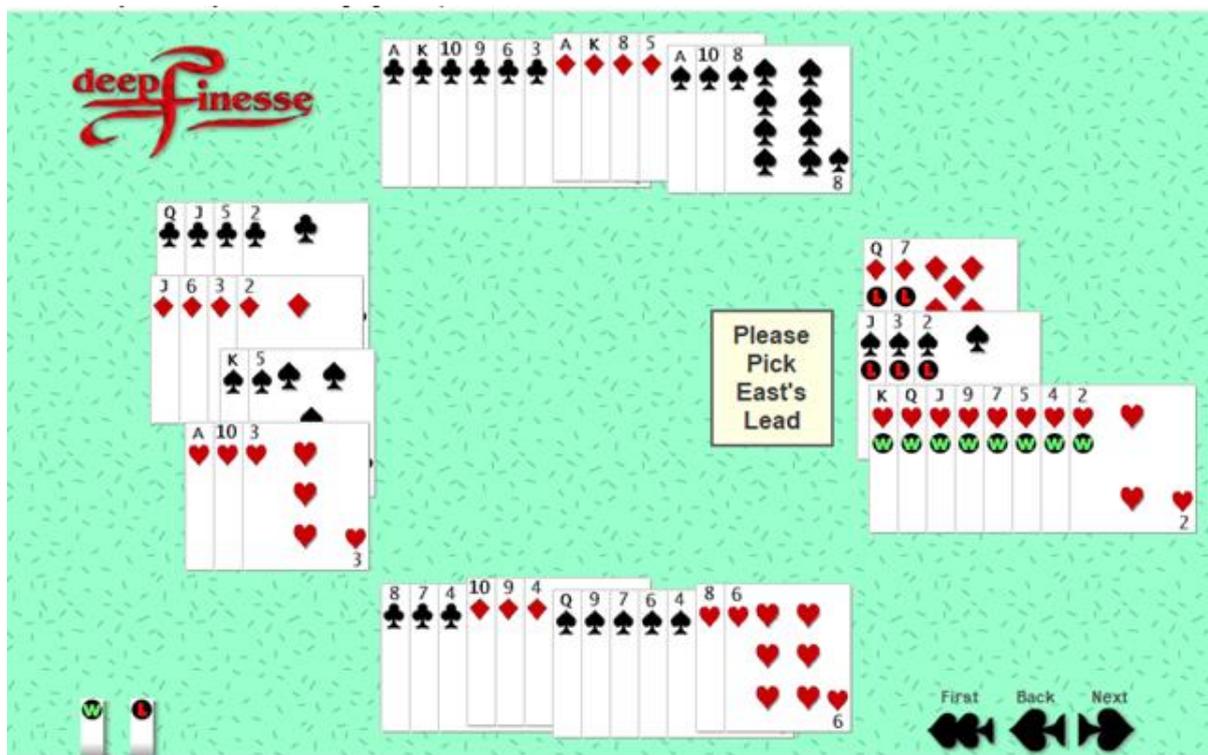




## 2019-2020 Season Ruling No 3



On the board above the bidding is as follows :

North	East	South	West
1C	3H	Pass	Pass (H)
4D	4H		

Table Result East made 4H +1 after a spade lead.

Statement of Facts: Agreed hesitation/enquiry before West passed.

NS asked for a ruling as they felt that after West's hesitation, East did not have a right to bid 4H.

An experienced County Director, was asked to rule.

The ruling and explanation is reproduced below.

**TD Adjusted Result North 5C – 2.**

I am ruling that East's 4H be disallowed and the contract be changed to 5C – 2 by North.

The basis for this ruling follows.

**Basis of Ruling**

**Law 16B1**

Any extraneous information from partner that might suggest a call or play is unauthorized. This includes remarks, questions, replies to questions, unexpected alerts or failures to alert, unmistakable hesitation, unwonted speed, special emphasis, tone, gesture, movement or mannerism.

(a) A player may not choose a call or play that is demonstrably suggested over another by unauthorized information if the other call or play is a logical alternative.

(b) A logical alternative is an action that a significant proportion of the class of players in question, using the methods of the partnership, would seriously consider, and some might select.

**Law 16B3**

When a player has substantial reason to believe that an opponent who had a logical alternative has chosen an action suggested by such information, he should summon the Director when play ends. (Footnote: It is not an infraction to call the Director earlier or later). The Director shall assign an adjusted score if he considers that an infraction of law has resulted in an advantage for the offending side.

**Law 73D**

It is desirable, though not always required, for players to maintain steady tempo and unvarying manner. However, players should be particularly careful when variations may work to the benefit of their side.

As a matter of course, North/South should have reserved their rights at the table (Law 16B3), however failure to do so is NOT an infraction and it is often the case that a side may not realise there may have been damage until well after the hand.

Here, there is an agreed hesitation/enquiry by West providing unauthorised information (UI) to East so applying Law 16B1, we must decide whether there is damage. West's action does strongly suggest that he has some values and his only likely action would be raising hearts. East has logical alternatives of Pass or 4H. Here, it seems clear that East's choice of 4H bid instead of Pass has been influenced by the UI hence we disallow the 4H. I have consulted with two other TDs and we are all in clear agreement on this. Although, 4H seems the normal action for most players over 1C, here East has viewed to overcall 3H and there does not seem any reason to bid again without the UI from West's action.

After East passes, the normal action would be for South to bid 5C which should end the auction. I have considered other potential sequences e.g. South passes out 4D, North gets doubled in 5C by West, or

East/West continue to 5H but they are very unlikely continuations in practice so I have discarded them in the adjusted score. With precise play, North can go one down in 5C, however it is much more likely he goes two down (losing spade, diamond, two clubs or similar) and he could even end up three down. For simplicity, I have ruled as two down.

This is a ruling of the first instance and there is a right of appeal although based on my own conversations with two qualified TDs, I would discourage that action.