

Oh, Shit!

by Rich Waugh

The infamous “Oh, Shit!” case from the March, 1999 Vanderbilt Knockouts in Vancouver. The contestants were Bobby Wolff and Dan Morse vs. JoAnna Stansby and Michael Shuster.

Board 10
East Deals
Both Vul

	♠ A 10 8 4										
	♥ K Q 9										
	♦ K J 9										
	♣ Q 10 4										
♠ J 9 5 3	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto; text-align: center; font-size: 8px;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ K 7 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ 7		♥ J 10 6 4 3									
♦ Q 10 7 6 2		♦ A 8 5 4 3									
♣ J 9 7		♣ —									
	♠ Q 6										
	♥ A 8 5 2										
	♦ —										
	♣ A K 8 6 5 3 2										
West	North	East	South								
<i>Wolff</i>	<i>Shuster</i>	<i>Morse</i>	<i>Stansby</i>								
		Pass	1 ♣								
Pass	3 NT	Pass	4 ♣								
Pass	4 ♥	Pass	6 ♣								
All pass											

Although Wolff and Morse originally received the correct ruling from the Tournament Director, it was later reversed. Inexcusable! There oughta be a law against it.

Here is what happened: Wolff led his singleton heart against 6♣, won by declarer in dummy. She then led a diamond from ♦KJ9 and when Morse, fearing a singleton ♦Q, popped up with his ♦A declarer ruffed. All she had to do was pull trump and claim her slam as she had a discard for her losing spade on the ♦K.

However, instead of the rest of the hand being a pianola, Stansby must have had a “senior moment” (not uncommon, even at the high levels). After ruffing the diamond, she played a low trump to dummy’s ♣Q and then played a spade away from the ♠A and Morse hopped up ♠K and gave Wolff a heart ruff for down one. As she led the low spade (and *after* Morse won the ♠K), her universally quoted comment was echoed, “Oh, Shit!” Wolff described it later, “It was a phrase that was to become so famous that those two words will always be synonymous with the most ludicrous appeals decision that ever came down the pike.”

After the play was over, declarer’s partner suggested they call the Tournament Director, Stan Tench, to the table who ruled that the result would stand as played. Ten minutes later he was coerced into reversing his ruling, after Chief Tournament Director, Henry Cukoff became involved. Unfathomable as it is, declarer was allowed to take back her card and 6♣ was chalked up as making. Yes, read it again. You are not seeing things!

UNBELIEVABLE!