



# Special Cases

Where the right question is the solution

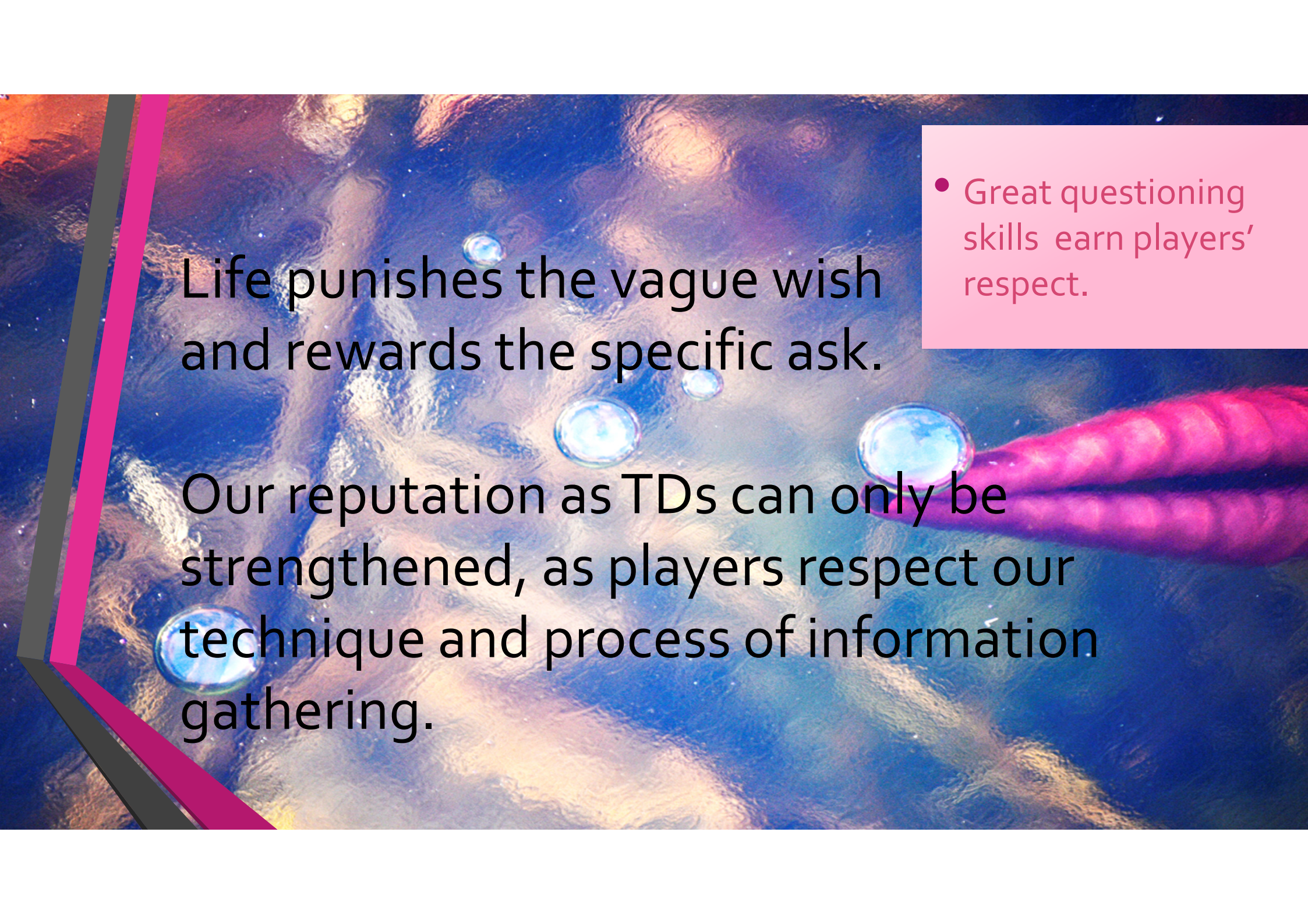


A hand holding a globe of Earth against a background of water ripples. The hand is positioned on the right side, with the thumb and index finger gripping the globe. The water surface is textured with ripples and reflections, creating a shimmering effect. The globe shows the Earth's continents and oceans. The overall scene is set against a dark, possibly night-time, background with some light reflections on the water.

**A problem well put,  
is half solved.**

- The best TDs ask & listen to answers.



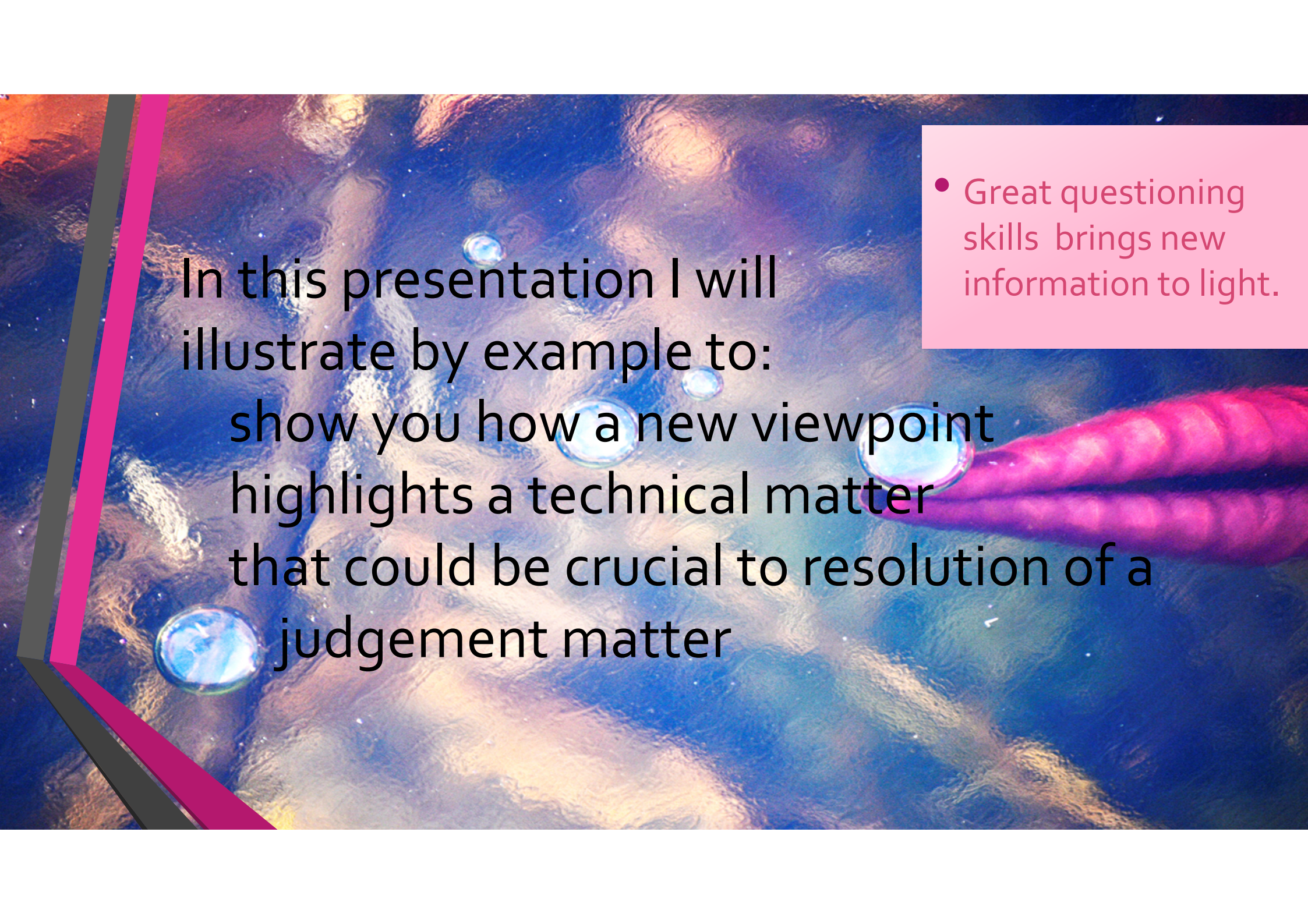


Life punishes the vague wish  
and rewards the specific ask.

Our reputation as TDs can only be  
strengthened, as players respect our  
technique and process of information  
gathering.

- Great questioning skills earn players' respect.





In this presentation I will illustrate by example to: show you how a new viewpoint highlights a technical matter that could be crucial to resolution of a judgement matter

- Great questioning skills brings new information to light.





Do you agree that a TD with bridge playing expertise is better placed to:

- Investigate technical details at the table?
- Quickly grasp arguments being presented?
- Anticipate problems ahead of players and colleagues?

- Great questioning skills anticipate & challenge



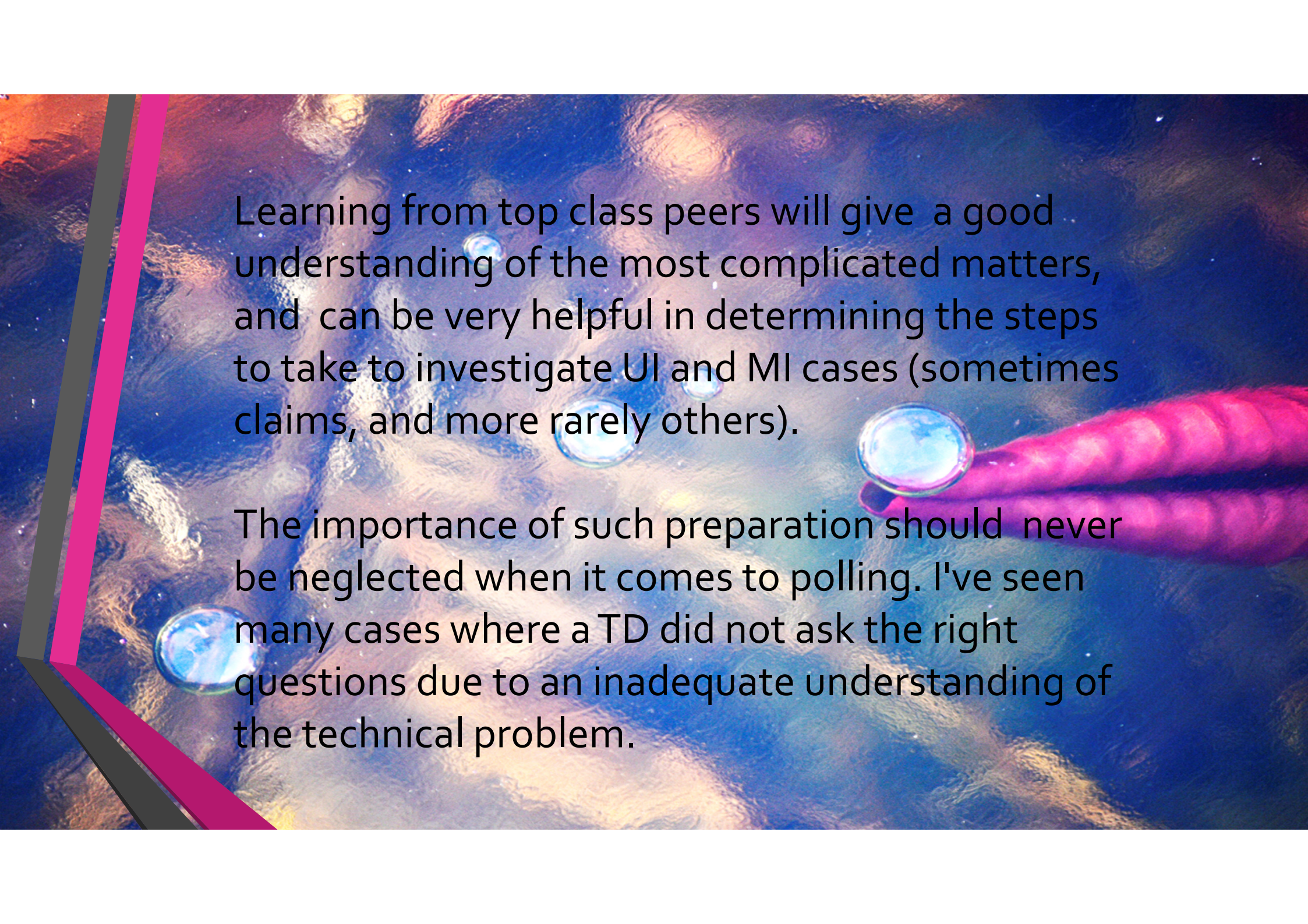
A close-up photograph of a hand holding a pool cue, with a pool table and billiard balls visible in the background. The image is used as a background for the text.

Yet we all know top class TD's whose playing skill is not that of their players.

These directing experts have honed their competence to a deep knowledge of the technical aspects of the game.

- Great questioning skills can be developed.





Learning from top class peers will give a good understanding of the most complicated matters, and can be very helpful in determining the steps to take to investigate UI and MI cases (sometimes claims, and more rarely others).

The importance of such preparation should never be neglected when it comes to polling. I've seen many cases where a TD did not ask the right questions due to an inadequate understanding of the technical problem.





Let's now consider 3 cases

- As I talk I want you to think about what goes through your mind.
- We are here to learn today.
- Notice your preconceptions and weaknesses.
- Later we will talk about them if you are willing.



## 2018 European Open Teams

♠ K Q J 7 6 5

♥ A 8 7 2

♦ A 10 4

♣ —

♠ A 4

♥ 5

♦ 9 8 5 3 2

♣ Q 10 9 8 3

N

W

E

S

♠ 10 9 3

♥ Q 6

♦ Q 7 6

♣ J 7 6 4 2

♠ 8 2

♥ K J 10 9 4 3

♦ K J

♣ A K 5

TD called at the end of the auction after South raised partner's slow 5♥ to 6♥

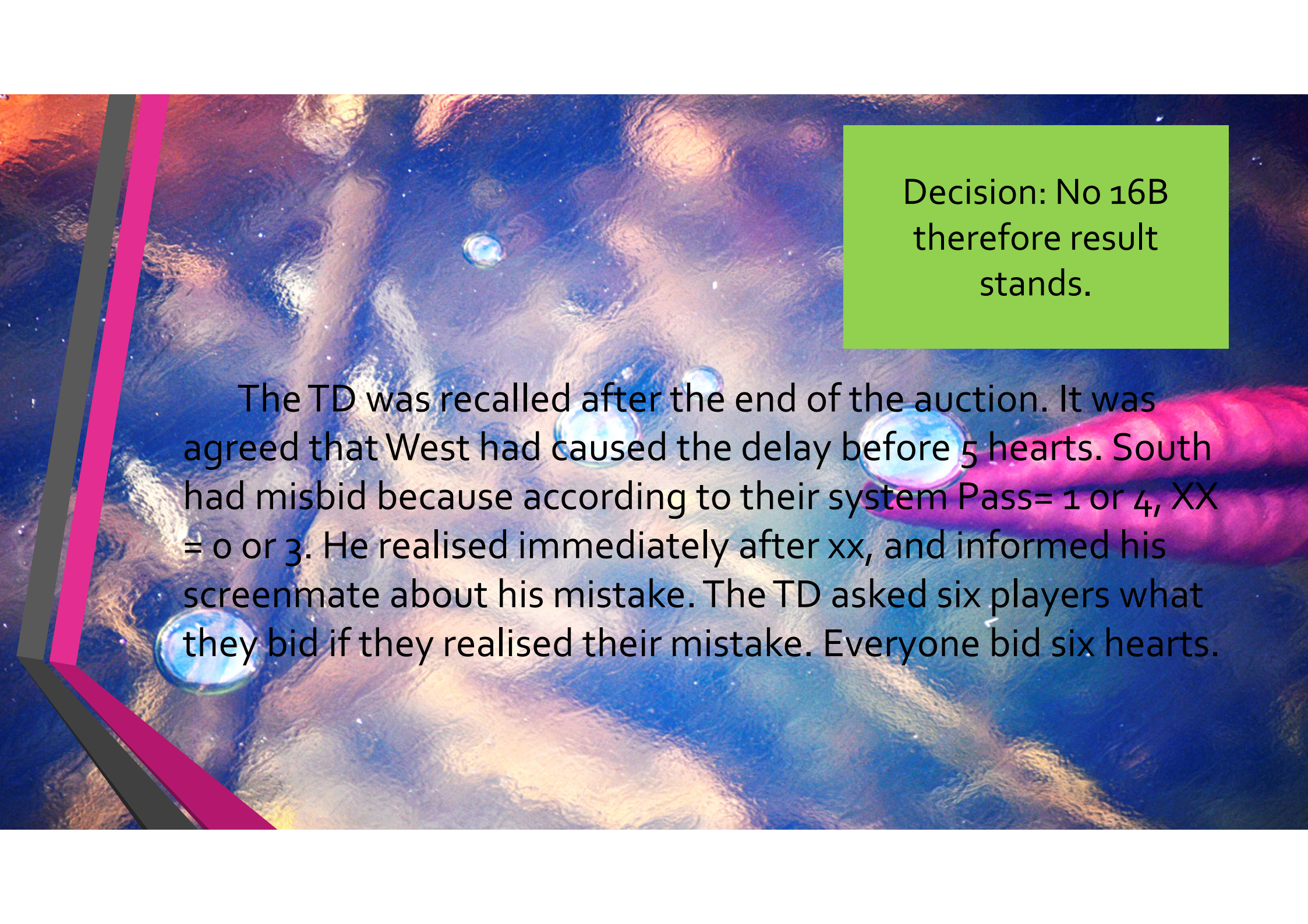
West	North	East	South
<i>Molenaar</i>	<i>Helness</i>	<i>Verbeek</i>	<i>Helgemo</i>
	1 ♠	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	5 ♣ <sup>1</sup>	Dbl	Rdbl <sup>2</sup>
Pass	5 ♥	Pass	6 ♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. Exclusion Blackwood

2. 0-3

## Case 1: Murky Seaside Mistakes





Decision: No 16B  
therefore result  
stands.

The TD was recalled after the end of the auction. It was agreed that West had caused the delay before 5 hearts. South had misbid because according to their system Pass = 1 or 4, XX = 0 or 3. He realised immediately after xx, and informed his screenmate about his mistake. The TD asked six players what they bid if they realised their mistake. Everyone bid six hearts.



The TD was instructed to poll further, asking:

East West  
asked for a  
review

What do you bid if XX shows one keycard and partner bids 5♥?

6 players replied *"I can't really understand partner's bid but I must trust my partner and pass"*, Pass is definitely a logical alternative to six hearts.

Does North's hesitation suggest six or five hearts? The hesitation could well have woken South to his mistake and led to the 6♥ bid.

**Decision: Result adjusted to 5♥H +1**



## Is that all?

- A player who jumps to the five level on the second round of bidding is clearly only interested in key-cards, but if so, it doesn't make sense for him to think after the answer.
- While he does think, his partner is certainly wondering about why he's thinking, and there's only one possible answer: he cannot believe what he's seeing, and is probably wondering whether South could have forgotten the system or not.
  - This is the UI South received.





This establishes a link between the UI and South's action

- So how do we as TDs identify the causal link?

Step 1: Interview one or more good players BEFORE polling.

*This is essential to understand all the various technicalities of a problem, and to prepare a better organised poll. Also, it helps in finding out whether all information needed was asked of the players involved.*



## Bermuda Bowl 2015

♠ J 8  
♥ A 9 7 6 5 3  
♦ 10 5  
♣ 8 6 5

♠ A K 10 5 4 3	N	♠ Q
♥ K 4	W	♥ Q 2
♦ A 7	S	♦ K Q J 8 6 3
♣ J 7 2	E	♣ A Q 9 4

♠ 9 7 6 2  
♥ J 10 8  
♦ 9 4 2  
♣ K 10 3

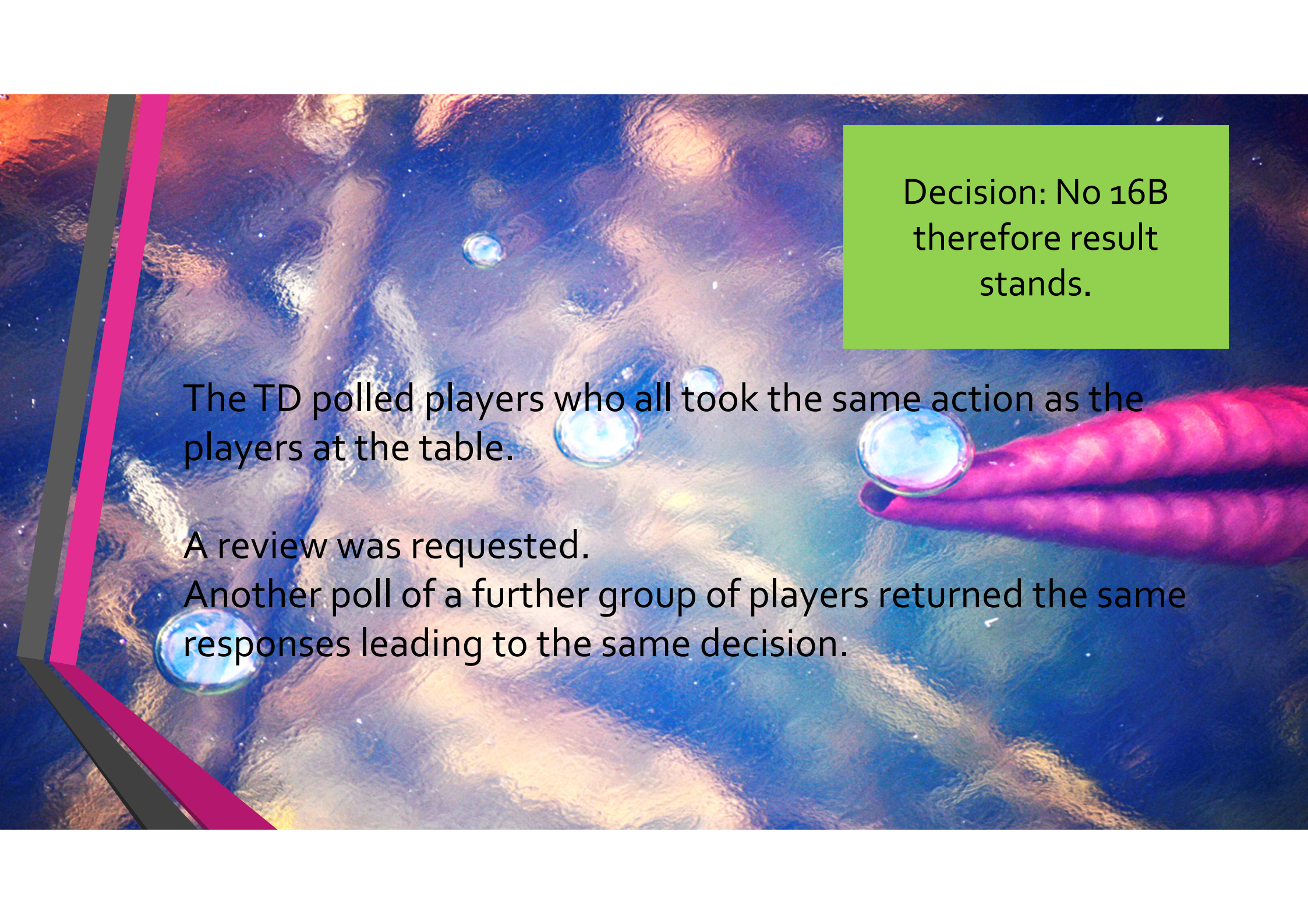
TD is called by North after a significant pause before 4♦.

West	North	East	South
<i>Klukowski</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Gawrys</i>	<i>Bakhshi</i>
1 ♠	Pass	2 ♦ <sup>1</sup>	Pass
2 NT <sup>2</sup>	Pass	3 ♦	Pass
3 ♠	Pass	4 ♣	Dbl
Pass	Pass	Rdbl <sup>3</sup>	Pass
4 ♦ <sup>4</sup>	Pass	4 NT	Pass
5 ♦	Pass	6 ♦	Pass
Pass	Pass		

1. Natural 11+ not game forcing
2. 13+ artificial game force
3. 1st round control clubs
4. 1st round control diamonds (6 min 20 screen delay)

Case 2: Moments of Gold





Decision: No 16B  
therefore result  
stands.

The TD polled players who all took the same action as the  
players at the table.

A review was requested.

Another poll of a further group of players returned the same  
responses leading to the same decision.






Is that all?

- After the event - a new poll was conducted (too late to adjust the result), with a previously unnoticed and crucial aspect. All the experts newly interviewed, immediately said that there was only one possible reason for West to think so long: he did have the heart control, but was uncertain whether to show it or not because he held the lower limit of the strength he had already shown.





So how did the pollees miss this? Can you always rely on your pollees – are they hurrying to dinner, react lazily, trusting the TD – seeking to please/humour the TD?

- **So how do we as TDs check the validity of our pollees opinions**

Step 2: Develop good relationships with a neutral expert you trust and can rely on.

*This can identify issues you and others might miss, at the very least it helps you be prepared to answer pollee questions you might not have anticipated.*



**Board 13**

Dealer North

Both Vul

♠ J 10

♥ A K J 7 5

♦ K 8 6 4

♣ 9 8

♠ A Q 6 5 4

♥ 3

♦ Q 3

♣ A Q J 10 7

N

W

E

S

♠ K 9 8 3 2

♥ Q 4

♦ 7 5

♣ K 6 5 4

♠ 7

♥ 10 9 8 6 2

♦ A J 10 9 2

♣ 3 2

West	North	East	South
	1 ♥	1 ♠	2 ♥
3 ♥	4 ♥	Pass	Pass
4 ♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

TD is called by South because West bid following a hesitation by East after 4♥.

Case 3: Obvious? Ever say Never.



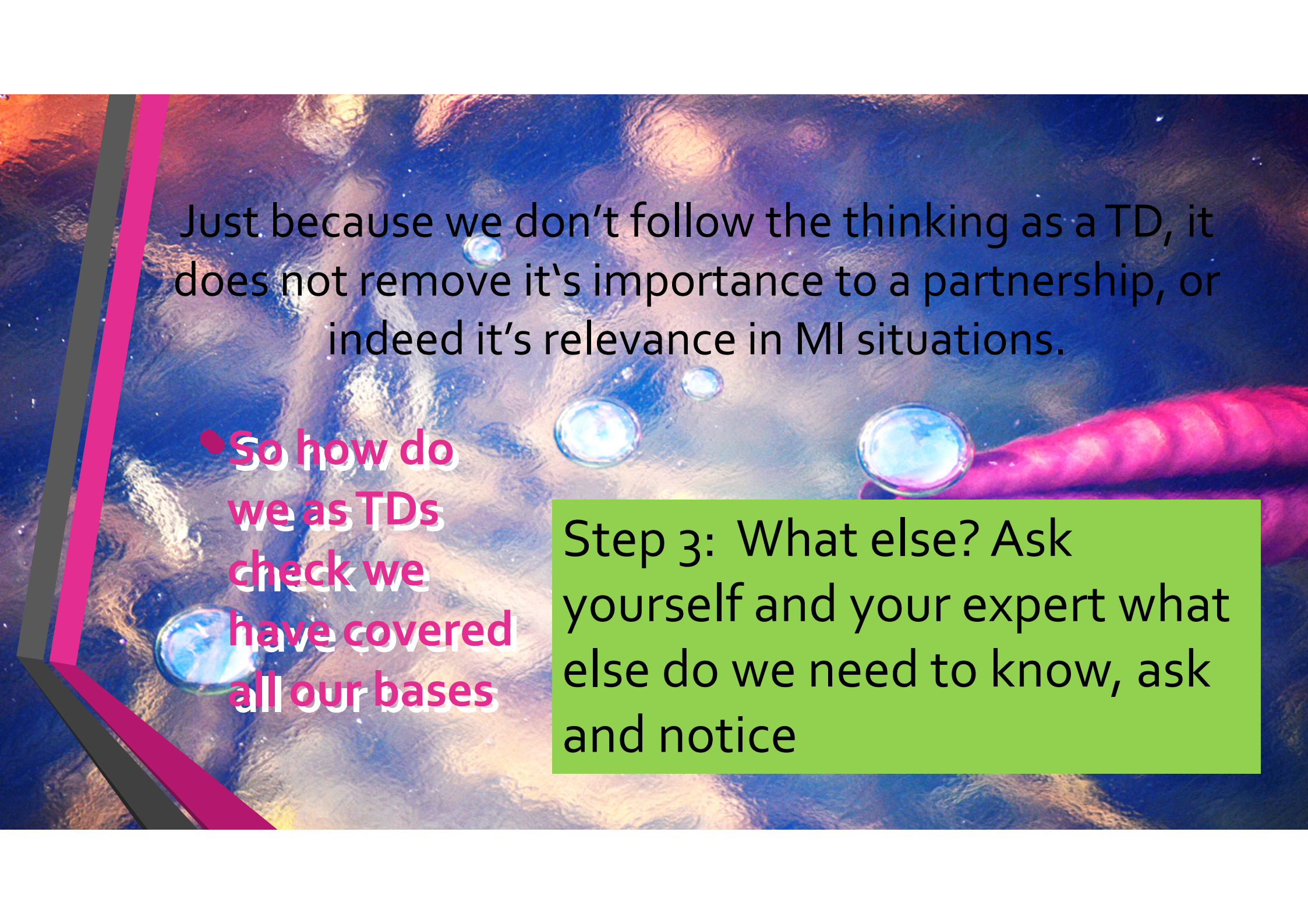
S complains about the slow East's Pass (undisputed). Pollees would all bid  $4\spadesuit$  or  $5\clubsuit$  with West's cards

Decision: A hypothetical case? What is your thinking?

It that sufficient to let the result stand? NO

Now we should ask if settling in  $4\spadesuit$  has been helped by the hesitation in which case we adjust to  $5\spadesuit -1$ . If the poll determines that the hesitation did not help to choose between  $4\spadesuit$  and  $5\clubsuit$  do we let the result stand, or must we consider a weighted adjustment to  $5\spadesuit$ ?





Just because we don't follow the thinking as a TD, it does not remove its importance to a partnership, or indeed its relevance in MI situations.

- So how do we as TDs check we have covered all our bases

Step 3: What else? Ask yourself and your expert what else do we need to know, ask and notice





## My top TD tip for the key to making your expert judgement rulings more powerful

- PrePoll with an open mind
  - Put your one mouth in check and listen with two ears
  - Ask questions with interest.
  - Suspend your opinions.
  - And ask “What else do I need to know at this time”?





In summary – information gives you the power to get into the minds of our expert players.

- To be a top TD value every piece of information you are given.

Universal step: Treat all questions as information, and all answers as facets of the bigger picture





*10,000 hours practice is considered the minimum for mastery*

- **Experts are made not born**

You are all qualified TDs.  
*What is your thinking on this matter?*