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# United States Steel Corporation Tubular Operations Lorain Works and United Steelworkers of America Local Union 1104

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BOARD OF ARBITRATION

Case No. USS-5250-T

December 30, 1965

ARBITRATION AWARD

UNITED STATES STEEL CORPORATION  
TUBULAR OPERATIONS  
Lorain Works

and

Grievance No. T-L64-711

UNITED STEELWORKERS OF AMERICA  
Local Union No. 1104

Subject: Suspension.

Statement of the Grievance: "The Company has given me an unjust suspension for a leaky joint on a runner.

Facts: I had to hang a runner where there was only one lug to hang it on.

Remedy Requested: I be paid for the day lost by suspension."

This grievance was filed in the First Step of the grievance procedure November 4, 1964.

Contract Provision Involved: Section 8-D of the April 6, 1962 Agreement, as amended June 29, 1963.

Statement of the Award: The grievance is sustained.

BACKGROUND

Case No. USS-5250-T

Grievant, a Second Helper in the Open Hearth Department of Lorain Works, protests that his one-day suspension for poor workmanship was not for proper cause and therefore was in violation of Section 8-D of the April 6, 1962 Agreement, as amended June 29, 1963.

1

On the 11-7 turn of October 22, 1964, grievant repaired and hung the runner for Heat No. 2643. The tap hole had been prepared, and the charge placed, by a previous crew. When the heat was tapped, the jet failed, and a lance was used. During the "good, fast" tap a leak developed in the joint between the runner and the furnace when the ladle was only about one-third full, causing the loss of 50 tons of molten steel. Grievant, as Second Helper, had prepared the joint, and was suspended for one day, November 4, 1964, for poor workmanship in making the joint.

2

A steel runner is a simple, trough-type device used to bridge the gap between an open hearth furnace and the receiving steel ladle during the tapping process in which the molten steel is removed from the furnace. The steel leaves the furnace through a tap hole, flows through the runner, and goes into the ladle. The runner is removed after each heat has been tapped and must be put back into place before the next succeeding tap. At one end, the runner has two projecting lugs. Matching lugs are on the body of the furnace, located at either side of the tap hole. This design assists in positioning that end of the runner which must abut the furnace. The joint between the furnace and the runner must be filled and packed with a refractory material, commonly referred to as mud.

3

Due to the nature of the operation, particularly the eroding or washing action of the molten steel in and around the tap hole area, it is a common experience to find that the tap hole has gradually been displaced from its design location. Indeed, it is not at all uncommon to find that the lugs at either side of the tap hole have also been burned away. This

4

will often entail improvising some other means of supporting the end of the runner abutting the furnace. Oftentimes in such situations, the runner will be reversed, so that the end without the lugs can be lodged against the furnace.

In this case, one lug was missing, and the tap hole was on the low side. Also, the so-called casting was badly worn. 5

The Superintendent for the Open Hearth Department stated in the Step 4 Meeting held on May 18, 1965: 6

"Mr. Svete stated that it is a common Open Hearth operating practice to hang a runner with only one lug and that it isn't rare to hang runners where the furnace doesn't have any lugs at all. He stated that the Second Helpers have always worked with this type of situation and have always been expected to make good joints. He stated that although it is desirable to have two lugs on the furnace because of the extra stability in positioning the runner, there are other aspects that must be considered in making a good runner. He pointed out that the old mud which may build up around the tap hole should be cleaned, the condition and position of the tap hole must be considered, the accumulation of a whisker beneath the tap hole must be examined, the runner must be solidly positioned, the application of mud between and around the tap hole and the runner must be performed carefully, the condition of the mud has to be examined for wetness and consistency, the joint must be given ample opportunity to dry, and other variables which may influence the hanging of the runner must be considered. With this background, Mr. Svete reiterated that the lugs are not the primary consideration for the proper hanging of a

"runner, but a combination of all the details that make up this function. He stated that this fact is born out in the instant case since 16 subsequent heats were tapped from the furnace in question without experiencing any leaks or difficulties. He stated that in the foreman's investigation in the instant case, it was found that the whisker had been pulled, and it was also found that the tap hole was on the low side. He stated that based on this fact and the position of the runner, it was generally concluded that the runner was not hung low enough, causing the hot metal to go through the joint."

Supervisors reached the conclusion that the leak was caused either by insufficient cleaning of the furnace wall, or by a faulty preparation of the joint at the furnace side, where the joint had been washed out by the steel.

Although the grievance stated:

"I had to hang a runner where there was only one lug to hang it on,"

the Union explained at the hearing that there was a lip in the tap hole which, probably, was the cause for the leak.

Grievant has been disciplined on three prior occasions for joint leaks:

8-18-54      Suspended for two days for poor workmanship in hanging runner, resulting in a joint leak and the loss of 100,000 pounds of hot metal.

8-26-60      Reprimanded for poor workmanship in hanging runner, resulting in a joint leak and the loss of 25,000 pounds of hot metal.

6-15-62 Reprimanded for poor workmanship in hanging runner, resulting in a joint leak and the loss of 80,000 pounds of hot metal.

#### FINDINGS

In Case USS-5288-T, decided this same day, it was the Company which, at the time of the hearing, disclosed a new theory as to the probable events causing the loss of steel. In this case it is the Union which failed to discuss specific observations on the condition of the tap hole in the grievance procedure, although pointed out to Supervisors at the time of the tap. All through the grievance procedure it had been the contention of the Union that the positioning of the runner on merely one lug caused the failure of the joint. The record, in balance, sustains the position of the Company that a missing lug, by itself, cannot cause a joint leak. 10

The theory of the Union advanced at the hearing as an explanation for the loss of steel is a plausible one. However, it was never investigated during the course of the grievance procedure and can be given no more attention than the Company's belated explanation in Case USS-5288-T. 11

Had this been a "normal" heat, all facts discussed in the grievance procedure would have pointed to poor workmanship in preparing the joint and excluded all other causes. However, this was not a normal situation. The tap hole had been prepared by another crew. The jet failed, and the heat had to be lanced. The tap hole was on the low side and was raised to the proper height immediately after the tap. The tap hole also was unusually large. Finally, the casting was almost worn away. 12

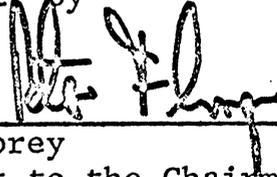
These conditions do not permit reasonable exclusion of all causes for the leak other than poor workmanship on the part of this particular grievant.

AWARD

The grievance is sustained.

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Findings and Award recommended pursuant to Section 7-J of the Agreement, by



Peter Florey  
Assistant to the Chairman

Approved by the Board of Arbitration

  
Sylvester Garrett, Chairman