

# Howzat!

---

*Not satisfied with your Tournament Director's decision? Phil Green has the answers.*

---

**C**RICKETERS DO IT more often than necessary, footballers waste their time doing it and rugby players know it will cost them 10 metres. When and where can bridge players do it – that is, appeal against the decision of a Tournament Director?

Tournament Directors are called to the table for one of three reasons:

- to sort out a procedural problem with the movement or scoring
- to give a Book ruling, e.g. explain the options for a lead out of turn
- to give a Judgement ruling, e.g. the assessment of damage after a hesitation.

Within the Laws, appeals cannot be made in the first two cases. The TD's decision is final. Of

---

*Ultimately, the TD is right even when wrong.*

---

course, if you believe the ruling to be wrong you can ask the TD *politely* to reconsider the ruling. If appropriate the TD will then change the ruling, or consult a more experienced colleague, but ultimately the TD is right even when wrong.

When the TD is called to give a judgement ruling, the first step is to agree the facts, e.g. was there a hesitation, was a conventional bid alerted, was the correct explanation given etc. It is normally too late to rectify the problem, so the TD will ask for the hand to be completed and for the non-offending side to request further assistance, if they feel they have been damaged. (Remember that the purpose of the Laws in these situations is to restore equity, so the TD will only intervene if damage may have been caused.)

Armed with all the facts, including the results at other tables, the TD will assess whether or not any damage may have been caused. If so the score will be adjusted to the most likely result, had the

infraction not occurred. When giving such a ruling the Tournament Director should advise both sides of their right to appeal against the decision, even if it is to let the score stand.

Now you have the opportunity to cause real trouble. The Laws allow you to appeal if you are not happy with the TD's

decision. In the first instance you should advise the TD. The TD will then consult with an experienced colleague or a senior member

---

*Now you have the opportunity to cause real trouble.*

---

of the committee and an appeals committee of three experienced players will be formed. Ideally this will be done at the end of the evening, but for practical reasons, the appeal is more likely to have to be heard later. The appeals committee will gather evidence from all parties involved, including the Tournament Director, and all players will have the opportunity to submit their view of events. The appeals committee will consider the facts and issue its decision, which may lead to a further adjustment to the result.

If you still do not like the decision you can of course appeal to the full committee of the club, then to Local CBA, then the EBU and probably the House of Lords and even the European Court of Human Rights. (However, be warned: there is a system of deposits used at higher levels, to prevent frivolous appeals.)

From this there is one important lesson for all to follow. At the first sign of a problem, call the Tournament Director. There is no stigma attached to this and it may be possible to prevent the situation getting worse. Indeed the Laws say you should call the TD, so if you do not you are yourself in breach of those Laws.

*Phil Green is Chief Tournament Director of Bath Bridge Club*