

# How To Be Appealed

Appeals are one of the biggest ways an event can be delayed. Events are busy places and Head Judges are busy people. They need information provided to them quickly and concisely. Below, is a guide to the efficient handling of appeals.

## What is an appeal?

Put simply, an appeal is a second opinion on a ruling. Every player has the right to an appeal an initial ruling. The process is (in most cases) a player requesting an appeal, followed by the floor judge (you) getting the Head Judge to offer their second opinion.

(As a note, we refer to the “Head Judge” here, but at larger events, there may be another judge delegated to take appeals in the event the Head Judge is busy. This will be made clear to you at the beginning of the event.)

## How do you get appealed?

Experienced competitive players will know about their right to appeal and will request one on their own, however, sometimes initiative is require on our part to open this avenue for them.

You should offer an appeal if one or both of the players look or sound uncomfortable with the ruling you have delivered. Even if players know they *can* appeal, they might feel uncomfortable with confronting you with requesting an appeal or they may simply not be aware that they have the option. Politely remind the players they have the right to an appeal if you feel the situation requires it.

## Don't take it personally

If you do get appealed, this is not personal and it does not necessarily say anything about you as a judge.

Every judge, including very experienced judges have their decisions appealed. Some players will appeal almost any ruling, but most of the time players just want to feel comfortable with the decision that's been made.

## Get The Table Number

Very important, often forgotten. Write down the table number or take the match slip with you.

Many matches have been delayed because a judge has taken an appeal to the Head Judge and then forgotten which table they needed to get back to.

## Maintain order

If possible, have another judge stay by the table. This is particularly important if the players are getting heated. If no other judge is immediately available, be very explicit that players should not continue to play or otherwise alter the board state.

## “I have an appeal”

When you find the Head Judge, your first step is simple. The *first words* you say to that person should be-

“I have an appeal.”

This tells them that you are not approaching them with something non-urgent. Unless they are actively engaged in another appeal, they will stop what they’re doing and help.

In almost all situations it is appropriate to immediately interrupt the Head Judge with an appeal. You do not need to wait your turn.

## Summarise

Briefly explain the scenario.

Try to boil down the situation into one line each for the following:

- What happened?
- What was your ruling?
- Which player appealed?
- Why did they appeal? (If you know)
- How much time has already elapsed?
- What is the ‘mood’ of the table? (Are the players calm or agitated?)

Keep it brief. If you inadvertently leave out something important, the Head Judge will have plenty of time to elicit that information from you or the players.

## Talk While Walking

Remember, we’re trying to be as efficient as possible in this process. Summarize *on the way* to the table.

However, make sure you step out of earshot of the appealing players. They will want to start talking to the Head Judge the moment they get to the table. Additionally, overhearing the inner workings of an investigation can make players defensive and could warn cheaters that they are under suspicion.

## Stay Nearby for the Ruling

Stand back a little, but stay within earshot.

Let the head judge lead the appeal, but don't hesitate to volunteer information if the players seem to have omitted or altered details of the story in second round of investigation. Also, try to learn! This is a great opportunity for you to add new investigative techniques to your judging arsenal.

## Debrief

Try to take the time to talk to the Head Judge about the appeal whether you are upheld or overturned. They are a highly experienced judge and talking to them about their process and decision making is extremely valuable. This may take a while due to the needs of the event, but even if you have to reach out after the event is over, you should make the effort to learn from the appeal.

Remember, it is never personal if your ruling is overturned nor does it necessarily mean you handled anything incorrectly. There are situations that are rules or policy situations where there is a clear 'right' and 'wrong' however, there are other situations where the difference between ruling one way or another comes down to a personal decision the judge at the table needs to make based on what the players have said. The Head Judge may have more information or a different impression of the same information.