

# How To Make Head Judge Announcements

At some point in most judges' careers, they will need to stand in front of a group of players and tell them how the event is going to go. Head Judge announcements are an important part of running a tournament smoothly. Without them, players won't know what you expect from them throughout the day or what to expect from you.

## Checklist

Noting down a quick checklist for your Head Judge Announcements is a great tool when you're standing there. For example, an outline for the Head Judge announcements used as examples in this How To-guide might look like the following:

- Welcome
- Names of judges: Johanna, Bryan, Marina
- Have judges pass out product (if necessary)
- # of players:
- # of rounds:
- 50-minute rounds, 10 tardiness policy
- Where to take match slips
- Bathrooms
- Food is at noon
- Format-specific and Policy Change announcements
- How to call a judge (raise hand, leave hand up) and how to appeal
- Clean up trash/Bloating Milds pun
- Open all packs (if necessary)
- Have fun!

## Welcome

"Hello players! My name is Johanna and I will be your Head Judge for this event. Helping me today are fellow awesome judges Bryan and Marina!"

The welcome is easy: Simply introduce yourself and the other judges so the players know who you all are. Make sure to point out your fellow judges as you name them!

## Tournament Information

"Today, we have 18 players and will be playing four rounds. This is a regular-level event, so we're all here to have fun. The rounds are 50 minutes long. Be on time when your match starts; if you're not in your seat after 10 minutes from start of round, you're considered to have forfeited your match."

After welcoming the players, it's time to offer them the basic information they may need. This includes the number of players, the number of rounds, the REL of the event, the length of the rounds, and the tardiness policy. If you're running a side event at a large tournament, you may need to get some of this information from the scorekeeping team before you start. .

Most side events and prereleases are a fixed number of rounds. For full swiss-to-top-8 tournaments, careful when announcing the number of rounds, as you are obligated to stick to your announcement , even if it's incorrect. For the proper number of rounds for your tournament, see Magic Tournament Rules Appendix F. If the number of rounds is not determined yet (perhaps due to no-shows or players asking to be added late), it's okay to tell players you will announce the tournament length in round 2.

## Venue-Specific Information

“When you finish a match, bring your match slip to the scorekeeper’s table at the front of the room. Restrooms are located at the back of the room - please tell a judge if you think you will not be back to your match in time for the next round. A food cart will be located right outside the double doors from noon to 2 p.m.”

Since you’re laying some facts on the players, why not lay some more? This is your chance to save your judges from answering the same questions repeatedly throughout the day. A player with an empty bladder is a happy player.

## Format-Specific Information and Policy Changes (optional)

“Since double-faced cards can be weird, I’m going to go over a few reminders for them. If you are using double-faced cards in your deck, make sure...”

If you need to announce any format-specific notes, now’s the time to do it. At this point you will already be losing players’ attention, so only do this if something is particularly important.

## Calling a Judge

“If you have any issues while playing, questions, need a hug, or something just doesn’t feel right, be sure to call a judge. It is not enough to simply ask your opponent; your opponent does not like you. To call a judge, raise your hand and call ‘JUDGE!’ really loudly. Most important, keep your hand raised the entire time. A judge will get to you as soon as possible. If you are unhappy with the floor judge’s ruling, you may appeal to me. My ruling is final.”

Explaining to the players how to call a judge can save you a lot of headache later on. Make sure to tell them to raise their hand and keep it raised to minimize how many times you hear “JUDGE!” look around, and can’t figure out who called for you. If you are the only judge, make sure to mention this now and explain that it may take you some time to respond to the judge call.

## The Pun (optional)

“I’d like to remind everyone to clean up your trash and make sure you have all your belongings with you when you get up. If you have any drinks on the table, please put them on the ground. We wouldn’t want your Evolving Wilds to become a Bloating Milds.”

Ah, yes, the bad pun. What better way is there to bring players together than a horrible sense of humor? You want to let the players know that you’re there to have fun too, and what better way to either make a bad pun during your announcements or tell a bad joke at the start of your announcements. (Why should you bring two shirts when you go golfing? In case you get a hole-in-one!) It’s not so much about getting a laugh (Nothing better than cracking a joke and getting absolute silence from the room!) than just showing your players that we don’t have to be serious all the time.

## Have Fun!

“Make sure to shuffle thoroughly, play fast, and most importantly ... have fun!”

Your players are there to play a game, and you’re there to help them have fun doing it. End your announcements with a friendly reminder of this fact.

## Preparation

Now that you know what to say, it's time to prepare to say it. Preparing ahead of time can go a long way in improving your announcements.

When taking notes for your announcements, the trick is to write down the bare minimum amount of information you need. Sure, you could write out your entire speech, but by only writing down little reminders your announcements will sound much more natural. You will also be able to keep your eyes on your players instead of a sheet of paper.

For example, an outline for the Head Judge announcements used as examples in this How To-guide might look like the following:

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## Practice!

The goal of the outline is to ensure you don't miss any of your important points, while also giving you the ability to sound natural. However, if you were to take this outline in front of your players right now you might end up stopping a lot to glance at it, filling your announcements with a lot of "ums" and "uhs" along the way. The easiest way around this is to simply practice your speech ahead of time!

## Present

Finally, it's time to actually give the announcement. If you've followed all the steps above, you should be more than prepared to make Head Judge Announcements. Speak loudly and clearly. Smile. Look at your players as much as possible, but don't be afraid to glance down at your outline to make sure you're covering all your important topics. If you make a mistake, don't worry about it and just keep on moving.

Remember, you're giving the announcements to a group of people about to play a card game. Have fun with it. They're here to have fun, and you should be too. The opening announcements are a great time to set this fun tone that can carry all the way through the rest of your event.