

Advice to Appeals Committees and Tournament Directors on the impact of the 2007 Laws regarding Logical Alternatives

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Abbreviations

AC Appeals Committee
LA Logical Alternative
TD Tournament Director

Is an action a Logical Alternative?

Law 16B1(b)

A Logical Alternative action is one that, among the class of players in question and using the methods of the partnership, would be given serious consideration by a significant proportion of such players, of whom it is judged some might select it.

When deciding whether an action constitutes an LA under the 2007 Laws, the TD should decide two things.

1. He should decide whether a significant proportion of the player's peers, playing the same system as the player, would consider the action.

What is a "significant proportion"? The Laws do not specify a figure, but the TD should assume that it means at least one player in five.

If fewer than about one player in five of a player's peers would consider the action then it is not a Logical Alternative.

2. If a significant proportion would consider the action, then the TD should next decide whether some would actually choose it.

Again the Laws do not specify a figure for "some", and the TD should assume that it means more than just an isolated exception.

If no one or almost no one would choose the action having considered it, the action is not an LA.

"Serious consideration" is more than a passing thought.

Method

Asking players for opinions is helpful in deciding whether an action would be considered and chosen, but the questions should be carefully presented.

For example, in a hesitation case players should be given the problem without reference to the hesitation. The TD should ask them what they would call after the given sequence, telling them the methods employed. If their answer is not the action under consideration, they should be asked what alternatives they considered.

Such polls will help to give the TD an idea of whether an action is an LA.

What should an AC do if the ruling is appealed?

- They may ask the TD for details of any poll he took.
- They could consider their own poll, but this will not usually be practical.
- They should be aware that the old "70% rule" is not in force now.
- They should be aware that this is a judgment area, and may take into account the experience of the players.