

Advice to Appeals Committees and Tournament Directors based on the 2017 Laws regarding logical alternatives

Revised February 2023

Abbreviations:

AC Appeals Committee

LA Logical Alternative

TD Tournament Director

Is an action a logical alternative?

Law 16B1(b)

A logical alternative is an action that a significant proportion of the class of players in question, using the methods of the partnership, would seriously consider, and some might select.

When deciding whether an action constitutes an LA under the 2017 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 a significant proportion of the player's peers would not consider the action, it is not an LA.

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.

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. If they do conduct their own poll, they should add the findings to the poll conducted by the TD; they should not replace the findings of the TD's poll unless they believe it to have been flawed in some way.
- 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.