

## **What You Need to Know to File a Protest at a Target Archery Tournament**

If you ever feel that an archer might be taking an unfair advantage that could result in a change of the outcome of the tournament, you should tell a judge as soon as possible. It is especially important to act quickly in situations where nothing can be done about the issue once archers start shooting in the next round or match.

### When should I file a protest, appeal, or complaint?

In cases where you and the judge have exhausted all possible avenues of discussion without coming to an agreement or compromise, you have the right to file a protest. This is sometimes called a complaint or an appeal because you are asking to appeal a judge's decision. However, all three terms apply to the same situation.

There are only two situations when protests are not allowed because a judge's decision is final:

- When a judge decides the value of an arrow that hit near a line
- When a judge throws a yellow flag during fast-moving team competition

Ideally, archers and tournament officials should resolve the issue without a formal protest. This will save time for everyone at the tournament. Also, people generally shoot their best when they are happy and relaxed, instead of tense and upset from dealing with a protest. You have every right to file a protest but it is best for everyone involved to consider it as a last resort.

### Who can file a protest?

While the issue might be raised by any person on the archery field, the archer or the Team Leader are the only ones can address the issue with a judge.

In cases where the archer is young, a parent may suggest that the archer ask a judge for help. The parent may also help write the formal protest. However, it is the right of the archer or the Team Leader to decide whether or not to talk to a judge or file a protest.

### How much time do I have to file my protest?

Once you decide to file an appeal, you need to move quickly. You have a **five minute window** of time from the end of the relevant round or match to find a judge and notify them in writing

that you want to file a formal protest. This can be on any piece of paper, and something as simple as “My name is Joe Smith and I want to file a protest because \_\_\_\_\_.” You do not need to go into detail, but mentioning the subject will allow the officials to begin looking up the rules.

Once the judge understands you are filing a protest, he or she can put the tournament on hold for you. Now you have **fifteen minutes** to write and submit the formal protest.

#### Do I need an official form?

FITA, now known as the WA or World Archery Federation, has an official form to help make the process run smoothly. You can ask a tournament official to give you a copy, which can be found in the 2010 FITA Rule Book 1: Constitution, Administration, Championships, and Para-Archery. Look on page 148 in Appendix 13. If you are competing internationally, you can also ask your Team Leader to look for the form in their official Team Leader Book.

**DiscoverArchery.org** provides a copy of the form in the Rules of Play section. You can find it in PDF format under “What do I do if I see something unfair?”

However, keep in mind that you do not need an official form. This applies to the first written notification you give the judge as well as your official protest. You may technically use any piece of paper, although it will help everyone if your writing is clear and easy to read.

#### Why is there a protest fee?

You will be asked to pay a \$50 cash fee when you submit your protest, or it will not be considered valid. This helps ensure that an archer is sincere when they submit their protest. It discourages archers from slowing down the tournament or submitting a protest “just to make a point.” If the jury rules in your favor, your fee will be returned to you.

#### Where do I submit my protest? Will I have to wait long for my outcome?

In an ideal situation, the tournament officials will have had the time and resources to select officials ahead of time. In a large well-staffed tournament, you should take your appeal to the chairperson of the Tournament Judge Commission. They will convene a jury of knowledgeable and impartial officials to look over your protest.

However, at a small tournament you should approach the Director of Shooting who will likely serve as the chairperson. He or she will meet with any other judges not directly involved with the issue, and they will decide on a jury of knowledgeable and impartial officials to look over your protest.

The jury will meet nearby in private. The members of the jury will do their best to follow protocol quickly and fairly. They may interview you, the judge involved, or any eyewitness in order to help them come to a resolution. The best thing you can do is to try and stay relaxed until they return with their decision.

### Balancing the Needs of the Archer and the Needs of the Tournament

Tournaments must be fair to be meaningful. Fair means that every archer has a voice and an opportunity to stand up for their rights. Fair also means making sure the tournament begins and ends on time. The World Archery Federation structured protests this way to help ensure the rights of all the archers on the field of play. If a competition is constantly stalled by protests, it is not fair to the other archers who may have travel plans they cannot reschedule because the tournament went long. Tournament officials want to help all competitors in any way they can, so they must always try to balance the needs of the archer with the needs of the event.

The best way to resolve a dispute is simply by talking it over with the judge. Ideally, everyone will be able to work together to find a solution without ever having to pull out the paperwork.