

Is it legal or illegal? What happens when a rule is questioned

by Paul Davison, Chairman, NFAA Rules Interpretation Committee

Whether it's shooting rules or the legality of the archery equipment being used, chances are that a rules issue will surface sometime during any given tournament. We're not talking about scoring issues (e.g., is the arrow "in" or "out"), which are judgment calls, but to the interpretation of existing rules and regulations published in the *NFAA Constitution and By-Laws*ⁱ.

In NFAA National or Sectional tournaments, if the group's Target Captain believes that a person in the group has broken a rule, the violation should be reported to the Tournament Director (or Chairman). An individual competitor may also report a suspected violation by filing a "protest" with the Tournament Protest Committee. At National tournaments, this committee consists of the Tournament Director, NFAA President, one Councilman, and two Directors. At Sectional tournaments, it's a committee of three NFAA members, two of which are the Section Councilman and a State Director (or alternate).

But what if a rule violation is suspected at a state or local NFAA sanctioned tournament? If it's not satisfactorily resolved by the tournament officials, *then the state's NFAA Director must make the ruling*. This applies to both shooting and equipment rules. Some rules, however, especially those dealing with archery tackle, may be questioned before the incident. For example, suppose an archer wants to know if a certain arrow rest is legal in Bowhunter Freestyle. Then, the question is forwarded to the archer's NFAA Director for a ruling. Manufacturers, however, may ask for a ruling on the legality of a new design by going directly to NFAA Rules Interpretation Committee (RIC). *Only new equipment rulings can bypass the State Director*.

Therefore, should you require an interpretation of an NFAA rule, the first step is to *contact your state's NFAA Director*. See the NFAA website, or the "Council & Board of Directors" page in this magazine, for postal and e-mail addresses. Do NOT send your query to NFAA headquarters, your Section Councilman, or any other NFAA official ... unless your Director fails to respond.

Once your state's NFAA Director makes an interpretation of your rules issue, the next steps are outlined in the NFAA Constitution:

- After a ruling is made by a Director, it is to be *sent immediately*, preferably via e-mail, to the Rules Interpretation Committee Chairman (presently Paul Davison, Southeastern Section Councilman)
- The RIC Chairman, within five days, shall e-mail the interpretation to the other two members of the committee (presently Sonny Glisson and Elaine Holmes).
- The RIC members are to reply within ten days of receipt of a Director's interpretation from the Chairman.
- Upon receipt of the opinions of the two committee members, the RIC Chairman is to summarize, document, and distribute the RIC ruling. This ruling is to be received by the Executive Secretary within five days after receipt of the last opinion of an RIC member. Copies of the ruling are also mailed to the RIC members and to the Director who submitted the original interpretation.
- Finally, at the annual NFAA Board of Directors meeting, all RIC decisions made during the previous year are reviewed by the Board, and are either upheld or overruled by a majority vote of the Directors present.

Really, it should take no longer than three weeks to resolve any rules issue; and remember, *always contact your state's NFAA Director first*.

ⁱAn abridged, rules-only, version of the *NFAA Constitution and By-Laws* on diskette (Microsoft® Word) is available from FAA for \$3.00, postpaid.