

Officials View

By Dr. Azmy

The New Rules: The 2005 rules are posted on the USATT web site.

Although we have written about the new rules in previous issues, I am still receiving several emails and questions on two aspects: the position of the free arm during the serve, and let services when playing a wheelchair player.

For the first question, the free arm (and hand) can rest on the body of the player or be anywhere as long as it is not in the space between the ball and the net post during the serve. If the hand is on the body and the arm is not extended forward, it is OK. Otherwise the arm must be completely removed as has been required by the previous rule.

The second question is about let services when playing a wheelchair player. A wheelchair player can play in any regular event. When that happens wheelchair service rules will apply. That means the serve to a wheelchair player will be a let if the ball, after bouncing on the wheelchair player's side of the table, leaves by either sideline of the table or returns back toward the net. This rule applies only during the service.

Umpire Recertification: Beginning in 2006 all umpires will be required to recertify every three years in years divisible by 3, e.g. 2006, 2009, etc.

Referee policy: Effective January 2007 umpire rank will no longer be a sole criterion to be a referee. Anyone serving as a referee must be a certified referee, national referee or international referee (subject to approval by the Board at its November meeting).

Umpire Opportunities: With the renewal of the U.S. Open Team Championships beginning in 2006 we have another opportunity for umpires at major tournaments. They will be held in March, with the U.S. Open in July, the North American Team Championships in November during Thanksgiving weekend, and the National Championships in December. We will use all levels of umpires at these major tournaments. We will continue to give priority to national and international umpires at the U.S. Open and Nationals but we will need all levels of umpires at the team tournaments.