



# **The International Table Tennis Federation**

## **Handbook for MATCH OFFICIALS**

**Tenth edition June 2004**

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## **FOREWORD**

This edition of the Handbook for Match Officials takes account of rule changes made from 2001–2004. Other sections of the previous edition have been modified with the object of providing clearer guidance and hence more consistency in the application of laws and regulations. Comments and suggestions for additions or improvements are welcome and may be sent to the Co-Chairmen of the Umpires and Referees Committee.

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The International Table Tennis Federation, founded in 1926, is the world governing body of the sport and its members are the table tennis Associations of more than 195 countries.

It supervises annual World Championships (alternate years Individual or Team), which involve more than eight hundred players from all continents, and five other world title events. Its main function is to control and develop the sport for the benefit of over thirty million competitive players in all parts of the world. Table tennis is an Olympic sport and is in the program of the Summer Olympic Games.

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# HANDBOOK FOR MATCH OFFICIALS – 2004

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this booklet is to guide match officials on the application of laws and regulations, and it should be read in conjunction with the current ITTF Handbook or Rules booklet. It deals mainly with the duties of umpires and assistant umpires, but it includes also aspects of the referee's duties in relation to the control of matches. The Handbook for Tournament Referees covers the wider duties of a tournament referee.
- 1.2 Players are entitled to expect consistency in the conduct of matches and should not be expected to have to make continual adjustment to different procedures in different competitions or different countries. In order to encourage consistency, the ITTF Umpires and Referees Committee (URC) has produced a summary of recommended procedures for match officials and this is included as Appendix A.
- 1.3 Appendix B contains the ITTF directives for match officials at World title competitions, including World Championships; these directives are not mandatory for other competitions but they are often adopted for Continental and Open International Championships.
- Appendix C describes the qualification of umpires and Appendix G is a summary of law and regulation changes made since the last issue.

## 2 LAWS AND REGULATIONS

### 2.1 Applicability

- 2.1.1 The first requirement of a match official is a sound knowledge of the rules, comprising laws and regulations, which govern competitive table tennis, complemented by a clear understanding of the extent to which they apply to different types of competition. The relevant information is contained in Chapters 2, 3 and 4 of the ITTF Handbook.

### 2.2 Laws

- 2.2.1 The "Laws of Table Tennis", referred to hereafter as "laws", are contained in Chapter 2. The laws apply to all international play and are generally adopted by Associations for their domestic competitions, although any Association has the right to introduce variations for competitions that concern only its own players. A law can be changed only at a General Meeting, with the agreement of a 75% majority of those voting.

### 2.3 Regulations

- 2.3.1 Chapter 3 contains the "Regulations for International Competitions", referred to hereafter as "regulations", which apply, in general, to all

international competitions. The additional regulations for world title events, including World Championships, are given in Chapter 4. All these regulations can be changed only at a meeting of the ITTF Board of Directors, by a simple majority of those voting.

### **3 TYPES OF COMPETITION**

#### **3.1 Open Tournaments**

- 3.1.1 An open tournament is a competition, organised with the authority of the Association in whose territory it is held, which is open for entry to the players of any Association. In all such tournaments there may be minor variations of the regulations where the organising authority is unable or unwilling to meet all of the requirements, usually in respect of playing conditions such as playing space.
- 3.1.2 Where an open tournament does not comply with a particular regulation, the entry form must state clearly the nature and the extent of any variations, so that intending competitors will know in advance the limitations that will apply. A competitor who submits such an entry form is assumed to have understood and accepted the limitations, and the tournament will then be conducted under the modified regulations.
- 3.1.3 Each season, an Association may nominate one open tournament which it organises as its "Open International Championships", and for such a tournament the regulations can be modified only with the permission of the ITTF Executive Committee. Similarly, any variations for World Championships must be authorised by the ITTF Board of Directors and for Continental Championships by the appropriate Continental Federation.
- 3.1.4 Since 1996, a number of Open International Championships have been included in a "Pro-Tour Circuit". They are organised directly under the auspices of the ITTF and, from time to time, they incorporate experimental variations of Laws and Regulations authorised by the ITTF Board of Directors. Such variations may apply to all Pro-Tour tournaments in a season or be on an individual basis, and details will be given in the relevant entry form of prospectus.

#### **3.2 Restricted Tournaments**

- 3.2.1 Domestic tournaments, in which all the players are from the same Association and tournaments which are restricted to players from a defined area or to members of specific groups or professions are not automatically covered by the regulations. For these competitions the organising authority has the right to decide which of the regulations will apply and what variations, if any, it wishes to make.

### **3.3 Other International Competitions**

3.3.1 International team matches, other than those in World or Continental Championships, normally observe all the regulations, but the participating Associations may agree on modifications. In these and other international competitions, it should be assumed that all the appropriate regulations are in force unless the published conditions of the event state that there are exceptions and make clear what the exceptions are.

## **4 MATCH OFFICIALS**

### **4.1 Referee**

4.1.1. For every competition as a whole a referee is appointed, usually with one or more deputies who can act on his behalf. The referee or an authorised deputy must be present in the playing hall throughout play, to decide any question of rule interpretation, on which he is the sole authority, and generally to ensure that the competition is conducted in accordance with the relevant laws and regulations.

4.1.2. Where the referee is the sole arbiter, such as in allowing a temporary suspension of play for injury or disqualifying a player for misbehaviour, he must act consistently and avoid any suspicion of partiality to particular players. In major competitions it is recommended that the referee and his deputies be from different Associations, so that there is always a “neutral” official to adjudicate in a dispute.

4.1.3 The referee is responsible for the appointment of match officials. Although he will not normally make such appointments himself he must be satisfied that the officials are competent and that they act fairly and consistently. He should explain to the umpires, in his pre-tournament briefing, how he expects laws and regulations to be applied, especially where any of these are new or might be contentious.

4.1.4. The players are under the jurisdiction of the referee from the time at which they arrive at the playing venue until the time at which they leave it. The practice hall or area is considered to be part of the playing venue.

### **4.2 Umpire**

4.2.1 For each match there is an umpire, whose primary duty is to decide the result of each rally. In principle, the umpire has no discretionary powers, but he is required to exercise judgment in applying some laws and regulations, such as deciding whether a rally should be a let because a player’s service or return may have been affected by circumstances outside the player’s control, or whether a player’s behaviour is acceptable.

- 4.2.2 Where the umpire is officiating alone, his is the final decision on all questions of fact that arise during a match, including decisions on all edge balls and on all aspects of service. In these circumstances he is directly responsible also for timing the duration of play, but when the expedite system is in operation he is assisted by another official who acts as stroke counter.
- 4.2.3 Although the umpire is obliged to accept certain decisions made by other match officials he is entitled to seek an explanation if he believes that an official has made a decision that is outside his jurisdiction. If, on enquiry, he finds that an official has acted in this way he can overrule the decision wrongly made by that official, either by reversing it or, more usually, by declaring the rally a let.
- 4.2.4 The umpire should be about 2–3 meters from the side of the table, in line with the net, preferably on a slightly raised chair, although this is not essential for singles. For doubles, the umpire is advised to stand if his seat is not high enough for him to see clearly whether in service the ball bounces on the correct half-courts. Standing for singles is not recommended, because it unnecessarily obstructs the view of spectators.
- 4.2.5 The players are under the jurisdiction of the umpire from the time at which they arrive at the playing area until the time at which they leave it.

### **4.3 Assistant Umpire**

- 4.3.1 For international competitions an assistant umpire is appointed and he takes over or shares some of the umpire's duties. For example, an assistant umpire is solely responsible for decisions on edge balls at the side of the table nearest to him, and he has the same power as the umpire to decide the legality of a player's service action, whether a player obstructs the ball and some of the conditions for a let.
- 4.3.2 If either the umpire or the assistant umpire decides that a player's service action is illegal, that a player obstructs the ball, that the ball in service touches the net or that the conditions of play are disturbed in a way which could affect the outcome of the rally, that decision stands.
- 4.3.3 Nevertheless, a decision taken by one of these officials may in some circumstances be pre-empted by a decision of the other. For instance, whether or not the ball touches the edge of the playing surface on the side nearest to the assistant umpire may be irrelevant if the umpire has already seen a player move the playing surface. Similarly, a service that is judged illegal by the assistant umpire may not be penalised if the umpire has previously decided that the rally is a let because a ball from another table has come into the playing area.
- 4.3.4 The assistant umpire should be seated directly opposite the umpire, in line with the net, and at about the same distance from the table. There is no need for the assistant umpire to stand for doubles.

#### **4.4 Timekeeper**

4.4.1 An assistant umpire may act as timekeeper, but some umpires prefer to carry out this function themselves, perhaps because they wish to decide for themselves how much time to allow for interruptions in play. The timekeeper is required to monitor the duration of practice, of play in a game, of intervals between games and of any authorised suspension of play, and his decision is final on the time that has elapsed.

#### **4.5 Stroke Counter**

4.5.1 Stroke counting when the expedite system is in operation is normally undertaken by a separate official, but the assistant umpire also can act as stroke counter. The stroke counter's duty is solely to count the return strokes of the receiver and his decision on this question of fact cannot be overruled.

#### **4.6 Appeals**

4.6.1 A player, or in a team match his captain, may appeal against what he believes to be a wrong rule interpretation by the umpire, assistant umpire or stroke counter, but no appeal may be made against a decision on fact by any of these officials in accordance with his designated authority. Such an appeal may be made to the referee, whose decision is final on any question of rule interpretation.

4.6.2 If, however, the player or captain believes that the referee is incorrect a further appeal may be made, by the player's Association, to the ITTF Rules Committee. This committee will give a ruling for future occasions but it cannot change the decision already made by the referee. An appeal may be made also to the tournament management committee against a referee's decision on any matter not covered by rule.

4.6.3 In responding to appeals, the referee must take care to observe the relevant procedures. In an individual event he should deal only with the player or pair; a team captain or coach should not be allowed to intercede on his player's behalf, but an interpreter may assist where there is a language difficulty. In a team match, any protest by a player that is not supported by his team captain should be ignored.

4.6.4 When the appeal is against the action of a match official, only that official should participate in the argument of the case. The referee may at some stage wish to hear the evidence or opinion of another official or a witness, but once that person has made his statement he should take no further part in any discussion, and interference by anyone not directly concerned must be firmly discouraged.

#### **4.7 Replacement**

4.7.1 There may be occasions during a competition, either before a match or after play has started, when there is a question about the ability of a match official to carry out the duties for which he has been appointed.

Such occasions are rare but when they do occur the referee must be ready to use his authority to deal with the matter, possibly replacing the official concerned if that is the only appropriate course of action.

- 4.7.2 The essential question for the referee is whether the appointment of a particular official, or the retention of an official already appointed, is likely to lead to an unfair result to the match. If an official is acting correctly and consistently and is not showing deliberate partiality it would be unreasonable for the referee to replace him simply because his decisions might affect one player or pair more than the other.
- 4.7.3 A complaint by a player that an umpire is too strict in his application of the laws or that he has been the subject of a previous protest by the player does not automatically disqualify him from officiating at a match in which that player is due to take part. Similarly, disputes between a match official and a player or captain during play, however protracted, do not necessarily justify the replacement of that official.
- 4.7.4 Occasional mistakes by an umpire, especially if quickly corrected, would not normally justify his removal and it is generally better for the referee not to intervene during a game even when mistakes are more persistent, provided it is clear that the outcome of the match is not being prejudiced. Account must be taken, however, particularly in staged matches, of the possible effect on public presentation.
- 4.7.5 If, and only if, the referee is satisfied that the retention of an official is likely to prejudice a fair result, owing to complete loss of confidence by the players in the official's competence or judgment, that official may be replaced by another. The change should be made with the least possible fuss and the referee should explain carefully to the replaced official the reason for his action, avoiding any public display of criticism.
- 4.7.6 Where an official is replaced for making wrong decisions, the score resulting from these decisions cannot be changed if they were made on questions of fact within his jurisdiction. If they were made through a misinterpretation of rule or were outside his jurisdiction, consideration may be given to replaying any game whose result was affected, but it is generally better to proceed from the score that has been reached.

#### **4.8 Presentation (See also Appendices A, D, & F)**

- 4.8.1 In addition to their responsibility for ensuring a fair result, match officials have an essential part to play in the presentation of a match. This should not, however, encourage them to indulge in personal showmanship and the best tribute to a good team of match officials is that they are not noticed, because they control play so unobtrusively that players and spectators can concentrate totally on the match.

- 4.8.2 While on duty match officials should look alert and interested in the match at which they are officiating. Players, to whom the match may be a serious matter, do not always welcome a jocular or light-hearted attitude. Officials should not leave their places during a match unless they need to do so for a specific purpose, such as to retrieve the match ball at the end of a game or to restore the position of surrounds.
- 4.8.3 Even when off-duty, match officials should take care not to behave in a way which may prejudice their authority or which may reflect unfavourably on their Associations or on the sport. Good relationships with players are important, but care should be taken not to appear unduly friendly with particular players or to give any indication of partiality. Public criticism of other officials or organisers should be avoided.
- 4.8.4 Match officials are also responsible for the appearance of the playing area during a match. It should be kept tidy and free from unnecessary people and equipment, and any disturbance of the table or surrounds should be corrected. Only officials directly concerned with a match should be allowed in the field of play, positioned so that they are as unobtrusive as possible consistent with their being able to carry out their duties.
- 4.8.5 Organisers usually set a limit for the number of persons allowed on the “team bench” and, in an individual event, there may also be a limit on the number of people allowed to accompany the players or pairs. It is the duty of the umpire to ensure that any such limits are observed and, if necessary, play should be suspended until those not entitled to be there have withdrawn.
- 4.8.6 It is important, at all tournaments, to make professional presentation a habit and something that the umpire feels natural and comfortable with at all times (See Appendix F).

#### **4.9 Dress**

- 4.9.1 Most Associations have adopted standards of clothing for their match officials, consisting usually of a jacket and trousers or skirt of specified colours, but the same clothing may not be suitable in all environments. For instance, in very warm conditions it may be intolerable for an official to have to wear a jacket throughout what may prove to be a long match, while some playing halls may be uncomfortably cold.
- 4.9.2 In these circumstances the team of officials for a match should agree among themselves reasonable variations so that if, say, they need to wear pullovers, these are all of the same colour. The most important consideration is that the officials are neatly dressed, as uniformly as is practicable, but it should be confirmed that any proposed changes to the normal uniform are acceptable to the organisers of the competition.

- 4.9.3 The URC has adopted the following uniform combinations for umpires working at World Title events starting no later than January 1 2005:
- a Jacket or blazer (navy blue),
  - b Shirt or blouse (light blue),
  - c Dress pants or skirt (khaki/tan),
  - d (ITTF-)tie or scarf (red),
  - e Leather belt (black) with a small buckle
  - f Dress shoes or sports shoes (black) with non-marking soles,
  - g Ankle socks (black),
  - h IU pin only on left lapel and official nametag (white/black lettering) on right lapel.

It is hoped that all umpires will begin to acquire some of the items that would not conflict with the uniform of their National Association.

- 4.9.4 Unless approved by the referee for religious or medical reasons, hats or headgear should not be worn. Tracksuits, windbreakers, etc. should never be worn.

## **5 PLAYING CONDITIONS**

- 5.1 The referee has the final decision on the acceptability of playing conditions but it is usually the umpire who is first aware of possible deficiencies, especially those that arise once an event has started. The umpire must, therefore, know the requirements of the relevant laws and regulations so that he can report promptly to the referee any variation that is not within his power to correct.
- 5.2 The playing space and the level of lighting will normally have been checked when the playing hall is set up and the tables and nets will have been properly installed. The umpire should, however, satisfy himself before play begins that nothing has happened to disturb the conditions of play, such as failure of a light source, displacement of a table or the surrounds or loss of tension in the net assembly.
- 5.3 Whenever possible, the umpire should try to correct any deficiency himself but if he cannot do so without holding up play he should report promptly to the referee. The referee may defer the match until the proper playing conditions have been restored or may transfer the match to another table but, if the shortcomings are only slight, he and the players may agree to ignore it and play the match in less than ideal conditions.
- 5.4 Match officials have a responsibility to see that the advertising regulations are observed. The size and colouring of advertisements on equipment and fittings in and around the playing area should be checked by the referee, in time for any necessary corrections to be made before

play starts. During the competition, umpires should ensure compliance with the restrictions on advertisements on players' clothing and numbers.

- 5.5 It is important for the umpire to check the tension of the net-cord. It is not really satisfactory just to estimate this by touch and several manufacturers have produced weighted net gauges, which ensure consistency. These gauges, which weigh exactly 100 g, have two steps, one at 15.25 cm and the other 1 cm lower. After the height has been checked against the upper step the lower step is rested on the top of the net and the tension adjusted until the bottom of the gauge just touches the playing surface.

## **6 THE BALL**

### **6.1 Type**

- 6.1.1 It is the umpire's duty to ensure that the ball used for each match is of the brand, grade and colour specified for the competition and it is not permissible for a ball of a different kind to be used, even if both players or pairs prefer it. Any attempt by a player to substitute an alternative ball for the one supplied may be regarded as unfair behaviour, to be dealt with under the appropriate regulations.

### **6.2 Choice**

- 6.2.1 Players are not allowed to select balls in the playing area but, wherever possible, they should be given the opportunity to do so before they come to the match table. For the match they must accept a ball taken at random by the umpire either from among those they have chosen or, if for any reason they have not chosen any, from a box of new balls of the brand, type and colour specified for the competition.
- 6.2.2 The same procedure is followed if a ball is damaged or lost during a match and has to be replaced. If this happens, the players may be allowed a short period of practice with the new ball but it must be made clear to them that this is simply to enable them to get used to its characteristics and that there is no question of their being allowed to test it and possibly ask for an alternative.

## **7 THE RACKET**

### **7.1 Coverings**

- 7.1.1 A striking surface of the racket must be covered with one of the specified materials and, whether covered or not, one side must be red and the other black. The covering should extend to the limits of, but not beyond, the blade, but some tolerance may be allowed. The referee must decide what is acceptable and advise his umpires accordingly but, as a guide, 2 mm would be an acceptable margin to most referees.

- 7.1.2 In competitions played under international regulations the covering must be of a type authorised by the ITTF. Coverings authorised in this way carry the ITTF logo and the maker's logo or trademark, and players are required to attach the rubber to the blade so that these identifying features are clearly visible near the edge of the striking surface so that they can be checked by the umpire.
- 7.1.3 Although only materials that comply with current laws and regulations are authorised, it cannot be assumed that a covering marked as authorised will automatically be legal. The original sponge layer may have been replaced by one of greater thickness and gluing can cause the layer to swell, so the thickness of the covering should always be checked.
- 7.1.4 One of the most difficult decisions for an umpire or referee to make is the glossiness allowable for racket coverings. Although this can be measured with an EEL glossometer, such equipment is not usually available at a competition and some more practical means must be found. As a guide, a racket covering can be considered too glossy if letters can be clearly distinguished when, say, a net measure is placed at an angle to the racket surface.
- 7.1.5 The umpire must check the racket covering against a list of currently authorised coverings. The presence of the ITTF marking is required but is not proof that the covering is currently authorised. The ITTF web site [www.ittf.com](http://www.ittf.com) has a list of currently approved racket coverings.

## **7.2 Adhesives**

- 7.2.1 Coverings may be attached to racket blades only by means of pressure-sensitive adhesive sheets or liquid adhesives that do not contain certain harmful solvents. Organisers are required to provide a properly ventilated gluing area and players must not use liquid glues or the associated solvents anywhere else in the playing hall, including changing rooms and practice and spectator areas.
- 7.2.2 In major competitions rackets are tested for the presence of banned solvents, normally after the matches. For the quarter and semi-finals as well as for the finals, the players may be given the choice of a pre-match or post-match test, so that they can decide between not having the use of their racket between the test and the start of the match and the disqualification if a post-match test proves positive. The tournament organizer may enforce pre-match tests at these final stages.
- 7.2.3 A racket that is found, in a pre-match test, to release more than the tolerated level of an illegal solvent will be confiscated and the player will have to use a different racket; if there is no time to test the replacement before the match, it will be tested afterwards. A racket that is found satisfactory will be marked and given to the umpire for issue at the match table.

7.2.4 A player whose racket is found, in a post-match test, to release an unacceptable level of an illegal solvent will be disqualified.

7.2.5 Voluntary pre-match tests will not lead to any penalty.

### **7.3 Inspection**

7.3.1 The umpire should inspect the rackets that players intend to use before they start their pre-match practice, so as to avoid unnecessary delay at the start of the match. This, and any subsequent inspection necessary because a damaged racket has to be replaced, should be done with as little fuss as possible. Opponents must always be given the opportunity to examine any racket that is to be used.

7.3.2 If the umpire considers that a racket is illegal he should explain why to the player. Where this is a question of fact, such as an over-thick covering, the player may accept the ruling. If he does not the matter must be reported to the referee, whose decision will be final. Similarly, if an opponent objects to a racket, which the umpire considers acceptable, the referee must decide whether the objection is justified.

7.3.3 A player is not allowed to change a racket during a match unless it is accidentally damaged so badly that it cannot be used. If it is discovered that a player has changed an undamaged racket the umpire should immediately suspend play and report to the referee, who may disqualify the player.

7.3.4 Players must normally leave their rackets on the table during the intervals between games and must not remove them without the specific agreement of the umpire. If, with the agreement of the umpire, a player removes his racket during an interval for any reason, the umpire and the opponent must be given the opportunity to inspect the racket, or its replacement, before the next game starts.

### **7.4 Damage**

7.4.1 A racket which is legal when a player starts to use it may become damaged to an extent which invalidates its legality by, perhaps, destroying the continuity of the covering or the uniformity of pimples over a significant part of the surface. If a player wishes to continue with a damaged racket and the umpire has any doubt about its continuing legality he should immediately report to the referee.

7.4.2 In deciding whether to allow further use of a damaged racket the referee should consider primarily the interests of the opponent. The ball is likely to rebound unpredictably from a damaged surface and this could cause difficulties for both players, although the player who wishes to use the racket has implicitly accepted this risk. Therefore, unless the damage is trivial, it is generally better for the racket to be replaced.

## **8 CLOTHING**

### **8.1 Colour**

- 8.1.1 The main colour of clothing must be clearly different from that of the ball in use, but the “main” colour does not necessarily mean the colour occupying the greatest area. A solid patch of colour on the front of a shirt that covers only 40% of the area may still be the dominant colour, whereas a much large percentage of same colour evenly dispersed could be relatively unnoticeable.
- 8.1.2 It is the apparent colour of the clothing, which is important, and the referee has to decide whether it provides sufficient contrast with the colour of the ball. Predominantly yellow clothing may be quite acceptable with an orange ball and patterned clothing having a white background may be satisfactory with a white ball, provided the perceived colours of clothing and ball are clearly different.
- 8.1.3 There are no specific restrictions on the colour or size of badges, but they must comply with the normal requirements for the colour and design of clothing. On the back of the shirt players may wear lettering identifying themselves or their Associations or, in club matches, their club, and in this case white or any colour may be used; such lettering must not obscure any identifying numbers that the organisers require a player to wear.
- 8.1.4 Opposing players and pairs must wear shirts of clearly different colours. The umpire must resolve any question in this regard before the players start their practice period and, preferably, before the players arrive at the playing area.
- 8.1.5 An umpire who considers that the clothing worn by opposing players is not sufficiently different should ask them to decide which of them will change; if they do not accept his ruling the matter must be reported to the referee. Where it is decided that one must change and they cannot agree which will do so, the decision must be made by lot.
- 8.1.6 The purpose of this regulation is to help spectators to distinguish between players, and the possible distance of spectators from the playing area must be taken into consideration. Colours which look quite different close-up can appear almost identical when seen from the back row of spectator seats, and opposing players’ shirts should preferably be of different basic colours and not just different shades of the same colour.

### **8.2 Design**

- 8.2.1 Clothing may be of any design provided it does not bear symbols or lettering that might cause offence or otherwise bring the game into disrepute. The referee is responsible for determining what is and what is not acceptable for such reasons, but examples of markings which would be precluded are obscene pictures or lettering and political slogans or messages in any language.

8.2.2 Players of the same Association forming a doubles pair in international competitions are allowed to wear clothes of different manufacturers, if the basic colours are the same and their National Association authorizes this procedure. In a World or Olympic Title Competition the players of the same Association shall be dressed uniformly, with the possible exception of socks, shoes and the number, size, colour and design of advertisements on clothing.

### **8.3 Advertisements**

8.3.1 Shirts, shorts or skirts may carry advertisements in addition to the logo or trademark of the maker of the garment, although advertisements for certain types of products are precluded. These advertisements are limited in size and number but may otherwise be of any design, provided that they are not so conspicuous or brightly reflecting as to unsight an opponent and that they do not include offensive wording or symbols.

### **8.4 Legality**

8.4.1 It is usually the umpire who first has the opportunity to consider whether players' clothing complies with the relevant regulations. If he is sure that it is illegal he should explain why to the player and, if the player accepts his opinion and modifies or replaces the garment with one that is legal, no further action is needed. Only where the umpire is uncertain or the player does not accept the umpire's opinion would the referee be consulted.

8.4.2 It is often a matter of judgment whether clothing complies with the regulations and the referee's decision is final on any question of legality.

8.4.3 Although it is reasonable to expect umpires to report any doubts about the legality of clothing, the referee should check for himself, by looking round the playing hall from time to time, that there are no obvious failures to meet the required standards. This should be done as early as possible in a competition, as it is difficult to justify banning a garment, which has been accepted without question in several previous matches.

8.4.4 In making decisions about the legality of clothing and other playing equipment, the referee must be consistent, both among players at the same competition and, as far as practicable, with the standards applied at other similar competitions. Where he is uncertain, he may be able to make a comparison with similar garments that have been accepted previously and conform to a more widely used standard.

8.4.5 The regulations define "normal clothing" but do not specifically preclude the wearing of such items as headgear and "cycling shorts", and the referee must decide in each case what he will allow, taking account of the presentation of the sport. Headgear worn for religious reasons and headbands to prevent long hair from obscuring a player's view are clearly acceptable, but most referees would not allow the wearing of, for example, reversed baseball caps.

- 8.4.6 It is increasingly common for players to wear cycling shorts, usually under normal shorts, as a means of keeping muscles warm, and this practice is generally accepted. It is recommended, however, that where such shorts are worn they should be of the same colour as the normal shorts and, in any case, they must not carry any advertisements or other markings.
- 8.4.7 If a player protests that he is being unsighted by brightly reflecting jewellery or other items worn by an opponent the umpire should ask for the offending items to be covered or removed. If this request is refused the matter must be reported to the referee, whether or not the umpire supports the protest. The fact that the item has been worn in previous matches is irrelevant, and each case must be decided on its merits.

## **8.5 Track Suits**

- 8.5.1 A player may not normally wear any part of a tracksuit during play but in some circumstances the referee may give permission for him to do so. Examples of such circumstances are extreme cold in the playing hall, with the consequent risk of muscle strain, or a leg disability or injury that the player prefers to keep covered. If a tracksuit is worn in play, it must comply with the requirements for playing clothes.

## **8.6 Changing**

- 8.6.1 Players should be discouraged from changing items of clothing in full view of spectators. If a player needs to change a playing garment because it is torn or wet through perspiration, he may be allowed to leave the playing area to do so during any authorised interval in play, accompanied by an official. The referee may give permission on each occasion or as a general dispensation to umpires before play begins.

## **9 DEFINITIONS**

- 9.1 The laws governing play are preceded by a set of definitions. The main purpose of these definitions is to explain the significance of the main technical terms used in the laws, which may be different from the normal meaning of the words, but it should not be overlooked that they can often help also in the interpretation of laws to cover circumstances that are not dealt with specifically.
- 9.2 For instance, the definition of “to strike” the ball is “to touch it with the racket, held in the hand, or the racket hand below the wrist”. From this it follows that a player who drops his racket during a rally but attempts to return the ball by hitting it with the hand in which he had been holding the racket cannot make a good return, because he is not “striking” the ball according to the definition.
- 9.3 For the same reason he cannot make a good return by throwing his racket at the ball, because the racket does not “strike” the ball if it is not held in the racket hand at the moment of impact. However, a player may

transfer his racket from one hand to the other during play and strike the ball with the racket held alternately in either hand, because the hand holding the racket is automatically the “racket hand”.

- 9.4 It is essential to understand when the ball is considered as being “in play” because it is only during this time that a point, other than a penalty point, can be scored. The ball is in play from the last instant at which it is stationary on the palm of the server’s free hand before being intentionally projected in service, and until the server has taken this action this instant is not defined.
- 9.5 Thus if the ball accidentally rolls off the server’s hand before he starts to throw it his opponent does not score a point, because the ball was not in play. For the same reason a player may place the ball on his free hand and hold it stationary but then change his mind about the type of service he will make and move to another position to do so. Provided he has made no attempt to throw the ball, no point is scored.
- 9.6 Once the ball is in play it remains in play until the rally has been decided as a let or point. The ball does not go out of play simply because it goes outside the playing area or above the level of the lights without touching them, but it does do so if it passes over a player’s court or beyond his end line without touching his court since last being struck by his opponent.
- 9.7 The definition of "obstruction" has been changed slightly. The intention is that a player will be penalised under this law only if he intercepts the ball in a way that is likely to prevent an opponent making a good return. There is no obstruction if the interception occurs when the ball has passed beyond his end line, has passed outward over the sideline or is otherwise moving away from the playing surface.

## **10 SERVICE**

### **10.1 Consistency**

- 10.1.1 Consistent application of the service law always presents difficulties, perhaps because it has become so complicated, and there is sometimes a tendency for umpires to pay most attention to the aspects that they find easiest to check. To offset this tendency, the umpire should keep in mind the purpose of the various requirements and try to ensure that they are applied in a way that meets their objectives.

### **10.2 Free Hand**

- 10.2.1 The requirement for the server’s free hand to be open is intended to ensure that the ball is not gripped in any way, so that the player cannot impart spin to the ball as he throws it. In applying the law the umpire should be less concerned with details such as the precise curvature of the server’s free hand than with satisfying himself that the ball is resting freely on its palm.

10.2.2 To help ensure that the ball can be seen resting freely on the palm it is required to be stationary above the level of the playing surface. The free hand may not be held stationary, dropped below the table surface and then brought upwards with a continuous sweep of the arm to throw the ball; if the hand is not brought to rest again above the level of the playing surface the service is illegal.

10.2.3 The ball, but not necessarily the whole of the free hand, must also be behind the server's end line from the start of service until it is projected upwards. Thus a player may begin service with his arm and part of his free hand over the playing surface without being penalised, provided the ball itself is clearly behind the end line.

### **10.3 Throwing The Ball**

10.3.1 The server is required to throw the ball "near vertically" upwards and it must rise at least 16 cm after leaving his hand. This means it must rise within a few degrees of the vertical, rather than within the angle of 45° that was formerly specified, and that it must rise far enough for the umpire to be sure that it is thrown upwards and not sideways or diagonally.

10.3.2 The lower limit of 16 cm is just greater than the height of the net, which provides a convenient reference.

### **10.4 Striking The Ball**

10.4.1 The ball must not be struck until it is falling from the highest point in its trajectory. At the moment of contact with the racket the ball must be above the level of the playing surface and behind the end line.

### **10.5 Visibility**

10.5.1 The primary requirement of the new service law is for the server to ensure that both the receiver and the umpire or assistant umpire can see the ball throughout the service. The umpire should look to see that the server clearly removes his/her free arm, from the area between the server's body and the net, immediately he/she releases the ball.

10.5.2 The ball must be above the level of the playing surface at the start of service. There is, however, no specific requirement for the receiver to be able to see the racket throughout service, and the server may quite legitimately begin service with the racket concealed, for example, behind his back.

10.5.3 From their positions in line with the net it may be impractical for the umpire and/or an assistant umpire to judge whether the ball is struck illegally if it is struck close to the end line or beside a player's body. It is, however, the responsibility of the player to serve so that the correctness of his service action can be seen and if he serves near the margins of illegality he runs the risk of being penalised.

## **10.6 Warning**

- 10.6.1 Exceptionally an umpire, who suspects, but is not sure, that a player's service action is illegal may warn the player without awarding a point. Only one warning may be given during a match and if any of his subsequent services in that match is of doubtful legality, for the same or for any other reason, a point will be awarded to his opponent. A yellow card should not be used for a service warning.
- 10.6.2 Only the umpire is entitled to issue a service warning and the assistant umpire must simply decide whether a service is legal or illegal.
- 10.6.3 Whether or not a formal warning is given there is no objection to a player whose service action is only marginally acceptable being advised informally, between rallies, that any deterioration could make it illegal. Contrary to popular belief, a player is not entitled to a warning for a first illegal service, and a clear failure to meet the requirements of the service law should always be penalised by the award of a point.
- 10.6.4 The umpire has no power to ignore an infringement of the service law because he does not believe that it gives the server any advantage and there is no justification for overlooking a first offence in the hope that it was a temporary lapse. The offence may be repeated at a critical stage of the match, and a player penalised then could justly protest that he had been given no earlier indication that the action was illegal.

## **11 A LET**

### **11.1 Purpose**

- 11.1.1 The primary purpose of a let is to end a rally without awarding a point when something has happened which may affect the result of the rally, but there are other occasions on which it is necessary to suspend play temporarily. Such occasions may include the correction of errors in the score, the serving order or the ends at which the players are playing and the introduction of the expedite system when the time limit is reached.

### **11.2 Net Cord Service**

- 11.2.1 The most common reason for a let is that the ball touches the net assembly while passing over it in service. Provided the service is good up to the point at which the ball touches the net, the rally is a let if the ball then touches correctly the receiver's court or if it is obstructed by the receiving player or pair; if it does not touch the correct court at all and is not obstructed, the receiver scores a point.
- 11.2.2 As soon as the umpire or the assistant umpire sees the ball in service touch the net assembly he should call "let" and raise one hand above his head. The rally clearly cannot continue normally and if no call is made until either the service is seen to be otherwise good or the ball goes out of play, it will appear to the players and spectators that the match

officials are slow to react. The umpire will then declare a let or award a point when the outcome of the rally is known.

11.2.3 If either the umpire or the assistant umpire believes that the ball in service touches the net the rally is a let. Even if there is only a suspicion that the ball touches the net in an otherwise good service it is better to declare a let than to allow play to continue, because there is a risk that one or more players may have the same suspicion and, as a result, will be unable to give full attention to the course of play.

11.2.4 A player who believes that the ball touched the net in an otherwise good service may sometimes raise his arm or catch the ball and ask the umpire to declare a let. Unless the umpire is certain that it did not he will usually concur, especially if the server agrees with his opponent, but he should make clear that he is under no obligation to do so and that the player should continue playing if the umpire does not declare a let.

### **11.3 Interruptions**

11.3.1 Another common reason for a let is a disturbance that may affect the outcome of the rally, such as a ball from another table coming into the playing area or a sudden noise which is sufficiently loud to startle the players. Here again, it is better to declare a let immediately if there is a risk of an interruption than to wait until the rally has ended and then to decide whether or not the disturbance was significant.

11.3.2 A let should not normally be declared for occurrences due to hazards which were present at the start of a rally. For example, a player who fails to make a good return because he collides with his doubles partner, or trips over a surround is not entitled to the benefit of a let, but one may be allowed if the incident disturbs the conditions of play in a way which could be disadvantageous to an opponent.

### **11.4 Unreadiness**

11.4.1 The umpire may declare a let if the receiver is not ready, provided he makes no attempt to return the ball. However, the fact that the receiver makes no stroke does not itself justify a let and the umpire must decide whether the receiver was really unready or, perhaps, merely unwilling to try to return what appeared to be a difficult service. Players should be encouraged to show when they are unready by raising a hand.

## **12 A POINT**

### **12.1 Decision**

12.1.1 Each rally that is not a let results in the award of a point and the laws specify the various reasons for which a point is scored. The decisive stage of a rally is usually that at which the ball goes out of play and the umpire should beware of making a decision based on what he expects to

happen, without allowing for the possibility that the rally may be ended in some quite different way which may invalidate his decision.

- 12.1.2 For instance, the ball may be returned by a player, well wide of the table, so that it is clear that it will not touch the opponent's court; but the rally does not end until the ball goes out of play and either player may still win the point. If in these circumstances, the opponent moves the playing surface while the ball is in play, it is the player who struck the wide return who wins the point, even though the return was unlikely to be good.
- 12.1.3 Not all points are scored for reasons directly related to play, such as the failure to make a good service or a good return. For example, if while making a potentially winning drive a player accidentally touches the playing surface with his free hand or moves the table while the ball is in play, his opponent will score a point, whether or not he is likely to be able to make a good return.
- 12.1.4 The umpire must never award points for reasons that are not supported by the laws, perhaps because he considers that one player "deserves" a point or that another should be penalised for an unfair action. The umpire should always be able to justify any decision he makes by reference to a law and it is for this reason that he should study carefully and understand all of the reasons for which a point may be scored.
- 12.1.5 Some infringements of the laws or regulations do not automatically stop play and the umpire may have to do so by calling the score. In some cases it will be obvious to the players why the rally has ended; where it is not obvious the umpire or assistant umpire should be ready to explain the reason for his decision. He may be able to do so by means of signs or by using one of the standard terms of explanation (18.4.2).

## **12.2 Edge Balls**

- 12.2.1 It is necessary to decide whether a ball which touches the edge of the table makes contact on or below the playing surface, and the path of the ball before and after it touches can help him arrive at the correct decision. If the ball first passed over the playing surface the return is good, but if it touched while it is still rising from below the level of the playing surface it almost certainly touched the side.
- 12.2.2 The main difficulty arises when a ball arrives from outside, and above the level of, the playing surface, and here the best guide is the direction of the ball after contact with the table. There is no infallible guide but, if the after touching the edge the ball travels upwards, it is reasonable to assume that it touched the playing surface but, if it continues downwards, it is more likely to have touched the side.
- 12.2.3 The assistant umpire is solely responsible for edge ball decisions at the side of the table nearest to him. If he believes that the ball touched the side he should call "side", and the umpire must award a point to the

opponent(s) of the last striker. Only the umpire can decide on edge balls at the ends and at the side nearest to him.

### **12.3 Doubt**

- 12.3.1 An umpire who is certain that he has made a correct decision should not change it simply because the players think he is wrong, but he may appear officious if he insists on maintaining a decision with which both players or pairs strongly disagree. There is also a risk that the player who benefited from the decision may then deliberately fail to make a good service or return, and this will diminish the umpire's authority.
- 12.3.2 A decision should never be reconsidered solely at the request of the player who would benefit from a change, even if his opponent offers no objection, and a request for reconsideration should be ignored once another rally has started. Exceptionally, where both players or pairs are sure that a decision is wrong and the umpire can accept that he may have been mistaken, he would be wise to accept the correction.
- 12.3.3 When there is a genuine doubt in the mind of the umpire he should give the benefit of the doubt to the player who may have committed an offence, provided he is certain that an opponent has not been adversely affected. If, however, there is a risk that a player's attention has been distracted during the play because he too suspected that his opponent infringed a law but was not penalised, the rally should be declared a let.

## **13 CONTINUITY OF PLAY**

### **13.1 Time-out**

- 13.1.1 In addition to the statutory intervals between games, each player or pair, or their captain or adviser on their behalf, is entitled to claim a time-out period of up to 1 minute during a match. Making a T-sign with the hands indicates the request, which can be made only between rallies.
- 13.1.2 On receiving the request the umpire should hold up a white card and then place it, or a white marker, on the court of the player or pair making the request. Play is resumed when this player or pair is ready to do so or at the end of 1 minute, whichever is the sooner. The white marker should then be removed from the table and placed near the score indicator, next to the score of the player or pair who requested the time-out.
- 13.1.3 If a captain/adviser and a player/pair disagree whether a time-out is to be taken, the captain has the final decision in a team match and the player/pair in an individual match.
- 13.1.4 If both players/pairs ask for a time-out at the same time, the time allowed is still up to 1 minute but they need not return earlier unless both players/pairs are ready to resume. Neither player/pair is entitled to another time-out in that individual match.

## **13.2 Time-wasting**

- 13.2.1 The requirement is for play to be continuous throughout a match, apart from authorised intervals, but if, for example, the ball goes outside the playing area, clearly play cannot continue until it is returned. The intent of the regulation is to prevent deliberate time-wasting, such as by repeated bouncing of the ball, long pauses before serving and prolonged discussions with a doubles partner, which should be firmly discouraged.
- 13.2.2 Players are not allowed to receive advice or instructions from their coaches or advisers after practice. They may practice for up to 2 minutes, but as soon as they have finished they must start play, even if the practice period has lasted for less than 2 minutes.

## **13.3 Towelling**

- 13.3.1 It is the duty of the umpire to ensure that any interruptions are as short as is practicable and that players do not take advantage of any concessions to gain extra rest periods or disturb the rhythm of an opponent's play. The pace of modern table tennis, especially when played in warm conditions, makes occasional breaks for towelling necessary but such breaks are now limited to specified stages of play.
- 13.3.2 Players are entitled to brief breaks for towelling after every 6 points from the start of a game, and at the change of ends in the last possible game of a match. These breaks normally coincide with a change of service, but not after the score 10-10 or when expedite is in operation. Spectacle wearers can have particular problems, especially in hot conditions, and the umpire may allow them short breaks for cleaning between any rallies.
- 13.3.3 The purpose of the restriction on towelling is to prevent it being used as a delaying tactic, either to gain extra rest time or to disturb the rhythm of an opponent's game. There is no reason why players may not towel at times which do not further interrupt the continuity of play, such as when the ball is being retrieved from outside the playing area, but care must be taken that players do not deliberately cause such breaks.

## **13.4 Damaged Equipment**

- 13.4.1 Another possible reason for an interruption of play is damage to playing equipment. No interval can be allowed for a player to fetch a new racket if the one he is using is damaged, because he is required to be able to replace it in the playing area. If he replaces a racket and this racket also becomes damaged the umpire must report to the referee, who will decide how a second replacement is to be provided.
- 13.4.2 Replacement of a damaged ball should not be allowed to hold up play unduly, but players should be allowed a few practice strokes with the new ball before resuming play.

13.4.3 The failure of a light, or other serious disturbance of the playing area, that could cause delay should be reported immediately to the referee, who may transfer the match to another table if one is available.

### **13.5 Injury**

13.5.1 If, owing to accident or illness, a player is unable to continue the umpire must report immediately to the referee. The referee may authorise an emergency suspension of play for the player to receive treatment or to recover by resting, provided he is satisfied that the break in continuity will not unfairly affect an opponent and that the player will be able to resume play within a reasonably short time.

13.5.2 No interval can be allowed where the disability is due to illness or unfitness that was present or to be expected at the start of the match, or to effects such as exhaustion resulting from the way in which play has proceeded. If an interval is granted, it should be as short as possible and not longer than 10 minutes, but if anyone in the playing area is bleeding, play must not be resumed until all traces of blood have been removed.

13.5.3 Once a player has been granted an interval for recovery from injury, normally he should be allowed no further such interval during that match. Exceptionally, where the first interval was very short, another brief interval may be allowed for treatment provided that it is not likely to be prejudicial to the opponent and that the total period for which play is suspended during the match does not exceed 10 minutes.

### **13.6 Leaving Playing Area**

13.6.1 Players shall remain in or near the playing area throughout an individual match, except with the permission of the referee; during intervals between games and time-outs they shall remain within 3 metres of the playing area under the supervision of the umpire.

### **13.7 Rest Periods**

13.7.1 Players should not be allowed to extend the intervals between games and should be called back if they have not returned at due time. Each interval is limited to 1 minute and if players do not take all the time available to them at one interval they may not claim extra time at the next. It is not necessary for the players or pairs to agree on taking a rest period, which must be allowed if any player wishes to take one.

## **14 ORDER OF SERVING, RECEIVING AND ENDS**

### **14.1 Choice**

- 14.1.1 At the start of a match the choice of serving, receiving and ends is decided by lot, usually by tossing a coin or disc having two distinct sides. The player who wins the right to choose first may decide to serve or to receive first or to start playing at a particular end of the table. If he decides to serve or receive first his opponent has the right to choose an end and vice versa, so that both players have a choice to make.
- 14.1.2 In each game of a doubles match, the pair due to serve first may choose which of them will serve first and in the first game the opposing pair must then decide which of them will receive first. In subsequent games the striking order is defined by the initial order, which reverses for each game. When first one pair scores 5 points in the last possible game of a match, the receiving pair must change their order of receiving.
- 14.1.3 In a doubles match between A, B and X, Y, the only two possible orders of striking are A-X-B-Y-A-.. and A-Y-B-X-A-.., but the sequence may start with any player, depending on the choices made at the start of each game. The umpire should note the striking order at the start of the match and of the first server in each game, so that any errors can be corrected by reference to the appropriate starting point.

### **14.2 Errors**

- 14.2.1 The correction of errors in striking order or ends is based on two principles. First, as soon as the error is discovered play is stopped and is resumed with the correct order or ends; second, any points that have been scored while the error persisted count as though it had not occurred. If an error is noticed during a rally the umpire should immediately declare a let, and not wait until the ball is next out of play.
- 14.2.2 The score that has been reached usually determines who should be serving and receiving but if, in doubles, the pair who should have served first in a game did not do so, the umpire cannot know which of them would have served first. If this happens he should ask them immediately who would have been their first server, and he can then calculate the order in which play will resume.

## **15 EXPEDITE SYSTEM**

### **15.1 Principle**

- 15.1.1 The expedite system is the method provided by the laws to prevent unduly long games, which may result from negative play by both players or pairs. Unless both players or pairs have scored at least 9 points, it is introduced automatically after 10 minutes' play in a game or at any earlier time at the request of both players or pairs.

- 15.1.2 Under the expedite system the serving player or pair has 13 strokes including the service stroke in which to win the point. If the receiving player or pair safely makes 13 good returns, the receiving player or pair wins the point. The game is won, as in normal play, by the player or pair first scoring 11 points or, if the score reaches 10-10, by the player or pair first establishing a lead of 2 points.
- 15.1.3 The serving order throughout each game is the same as for a normal game, but service changes after each point instead of after every 2 points. At the start of each game the first server, and in doubles the first receiver, is determined by the order established at the start of the match, even though the same players may have been serving and receiving at the conclusion of the preceding game.

## **15.2 Procedure**

- 15.2.1 When the time limit is reached, unless the score has reached at least 9-9, the timekeeper should call "Time" loudly. The umpire should then declare a let if necessary and tell the players that the remainder of the match will be conducted under the expedite system. If the ball is in play when the time limit is reached, the next server is the player who served for that rally; if it is not in play, the next server is the player who received in the preceding rally.
- 15.2.2 Thereafter, in each rally the stroke counter is required to count aloud the return strokes of the receiving player or pair, including the return of service, from "one" to "thirteen". The call should be made immediately after the receiver has struck the ball and not delayed until the return has been judged good or the ball has gone out of play. If the 13th return is good the umpire should call "stop" and award a point to the receiver.

## **16 ADVICE TO PLAYERS**

- 16.1 A player may receive advice during the intervals between games or during any other authorised suspension of play, but not between the end of practice and the start of play, during breaks for towelling or while he, or his opponent, is retrieving the ball.
- 16.2 In a team event he may have any number of advisers but in an individual event he may receive advice from only one person, who must be nominated to the umpire before the match. Where a doubles pair consists of players from different Associations, each may nominate an adviser. These advisers are treated as a single unit for the purposes of the advice regulations. A single warning applies to both, and, if either of the pair gave advice illegally after either had been warned, both would be sent away from the playing area.

- 16.3 When anyone tries to give advice illegally the umpire should first warn him by holding up a yellow card so that it is clearly visible to everyone concerned, but there is no need for him to leave his chair to do so. In a team match, such a warning applies to everyone on the “team bench”. If in that team match anyone again gives advice illegally, the umpire should hold up a red card and send that person away from the playing area. Another advisor cannot replace an advisor who is sent away from the playing area for giving advice illegally.
- 16.4 A dismissed adviser must go far enough away to ensure that he cannot influence play. In an individual event he may not return until the match ends; in a team event he may not return until the end of the team match except to play, when he may return only for the duration of his individual match. If he refuses to leave or returns before he is entitled to do so the umpire should suspend play and report to the referee.
- 16.5 Attempts may be made to advise a player by calling out to him during play, but the umpire must be careful to distinguish between advice and shouts of encouragement. Advice need not be spoken and hand signals are often used; this type of advice is difficult to detect, as is advice given in an unfamiliar language, but match officials must be alert to any illegal attempt to influence play and act promptly to deal with it.
- 16.6 The “behaviour” regulations include provision for use of the point penalty system to control illegally given advice, but its application should be limited to situations where it is clear that it is the player who is seeking advice. It would be unfair to penalise a player for simply receiving advice that he has not sought and may not want and in most cases it is better to deal directly with the illegal adviser.
- 16.7 The assistant umpire may often be in a better position than the umpire to see that advice is being given illegally. He may warn the adviser informally between rallies, perhaps by a signal, but only the umpire can give a formal warning. If further advice is given illegally the assistant umpire should immediately draw this to the umpire’s attention, interrupting play if necessary by calling “stop” and raising his hand.

## **17 BEHAVIOUR**

### **17.1 Responsibility of the Umpire**

- 17.1.1 Deliberately unfair or offensive behaviour is not common in table tennis and is usually limited to a small minority of players and coaches, but its effects may be very damaging and it is often difficult to control. Because misbehaviour can take many forms it is impractical to lay down precise rules, and setting and applying acceptable standards of conduct is more a matter of judgment and common sense than of factual decision.

- 17.1.2 The umpire should be ready to respond immediately to any sign that bad behaviour by a player or coach is likely to be unfair to an opponent, to offend spectators or to bring discredit to the sport. If he tolerates early lapses in good behaviour, however trivial, without even a disapproving glance he will find it much harder to impose proper discipline if these lapses later become more persistent or serious.
- 17.1.3 He should, however, avoid over-reaction to possibly unintentional instances of unseemly behaviour, for this could lead to resentment and animosity that will undermine his authority. When he takes action he should always try to do so in a way that does not make the situation worse, either by drawing undue attention to an incident that may not have been generally noticed or by appearing to victimise a player or coach.
- 17.1.4 An example of behaviour which might justify action by the umpire is shouting during play, in annoyance or elation, but in deciding how to react the umpire should take account of the environment in which it occurs. If the general noise level is so high that the player's shouting is hardly noticeable, it is more sensible not to stop play but to wait until the end of the rally before speaking to the offending player.
- 17.1.5 Another example of bad behaviour is gross disrespect of match officials by players or coaches, usually to demonstrate disagreement with a decision. This may take the form of persistent protest, alteration of the score indicators or even threats against the officials. Such behaviour detracts from the presentation of the sport and from the authority of the match officials, and must be strongly resisted.
- 17.1.6 When misbehaviour occurs, the umpire has to decide whether the offence is so serious that he must suspend play and report immediately to the referee. Although this option is always available and should be used when appropriate, it should rarely be necessary on the first occasion and in most circumstances the initial action should be to give the offender a warning.

## **17.2 Warning**

- 17.2.1 Unless the incident is so seriously unfair or objectionable that formal action cannot be avoided, a quiet informal word of warning or even a warning signal should be sufficient to make the offender aware that such behaviour is unacceptable. Wherever possible, this should be done without interrupting play, taking advantage of the next natural break such as the end of the rally or the end of the game.
- 17.2.2 When, however, the umpire believes that an opponent may have been adversely affected or that the behaviour is likely to offend spectators or otherwise to be detrimental to the sport he should immediately declare a let and formally warn the offender, by holding up a yellow card, that further misbehaviour will incur penalties.

- 17.2.3 When a formal warning has been given, a yellow marker should be placed near the score indicator, next to the score of the player who has been warned. This warning applies for the remainder of the individual match or, in a team event, the remainder of the team match, and subsequent offences will incur penalty points.
- 17.2.4 It should be remembered that, once a formal warning has been given, subsequent offence must automatically be penalised by the award of points. The umpire should not be afraid to use this procedure when it is justified, but if a formal warning is given too readily he may find that he has to penalise a player at a critical stage of a match for an offence that to many people may appear trivial.

### **17.3 Penalties**

- 17.3.1 If a player who has been formally warned commits a further offence in the same match the umpire should award 1 penalty point to his opponent and for a third offence he should award 2 points, each time holding up a yellow and a red card together to show the action he has taken. Should misbehaviour continue after the umpire has imposed these penalties he should suspend play immediately and report to the referee.
- 17.3.2 When the umpire awards a penalty point the referee should be advised as soon as practicable, but without delaying play, to enable the referee, if he wishes, to come to the playing area so that he will be readily available in case of any further trouble. If the referee or his deputy is not in a position to see the display of cards it may be possible to use another pre-arranged signal or to send a messenger.
- 17.3.3 Penalty points may sometimes be awarded after a game has ended, or 2 penalty points might be awarded against a player when his opponent needs only 1 point to win the game. If the match has not ended any "unused" points are transferred to the next game of that individual match, so that it starts at the score of 0-1 or 0-2 in favour of the offender's opponent, but if the match has ended they should be ignored.
- 17.3.4 In a team match, warnings and penalties are carried over to subsequent individual matches. A doubles pair is regarded as having incurred the higher of any warnings or penalties incurred by either of the players; thus if one has been warned in a previous match and the other had incurred 1 penalty point, a first offence by either of them in the doubles match would incur 2 penalty points. A warning or penalty during a doubles match applies to the pair during that match, but only the offending player will carry it over to a subsequent individual match.
- 17.3.5 In a team match it is necessary to record warnings and penalties so that they can be transferred to later matches, but it is advisable to do so also in individual events. This will allow the referee to take account of persistent bad behaviour when deciding, for example, whether to

disqualify a player. The record can conveniently be a note on the scorecard, stating who was warned or penalised and at what stage of the match, with a brief description of the offence.

- 17.3.6 It is clearly impracticable to award penalty points against a coach, and it would be unfair to award them against a player on whose behalf he may be protesting. If after a formal warning a coach continues to misbehave he should be shown a red card and sent away from the playing area until the end of the match or, in a team event, of the team match; where this action is taken the incident should be reported to the referee.

## **17.4 Responsibility of the Referee**

- 17.4.1 The referee may disqualify a player from a match, an event or a whole competition, depending on the gravity of the offence. This is a matter for his judgment but when a player is reported for continuing to misbehave after the award of 2 penalty points the referee would normally disqualify him, holding up a red card. In very serious cases he would also make a formal report to the player's parent Association.
- 17.4.2 Usually the referee learns of instances of bad behaviour from the umpire, but he may sometimes be able to see them and to take action before the umpire has invoked his attention. He can also anticipate possible problems by, for example, watching at least part of any match involving a player who has previously been warned or penalised for bad behaviour, to make sure that such behaviour does not continue.
- 17.4.3 Even where there has been no previous incident it may be obvious from the reaction of spectators that one or more of the players in a match are misbehaving. By watching the match the referee may find that the umpire is no longer in control of play and in this situation he should take action on his own initiative, either by telling the umpire what he must do or by dealing directly with the offending player.

## **18 MATCH CONDUCT**

### **18.1 Score Calling**

- 18.1.1 The umpire should call the score clearly, taking care that the tone of his voice does not suggest partiality towards one player or pair; he may place a slight emphasis on the number of points which has changed as a result of the rally. If he is using a microphone he may need to adjust his speaking level, and/or the position of the microphone, and he should remember that it may well cause remarks that were not intended for the public to be generally audible.
- 18.1.2 The score should normally be called as soon as the rally has been decided and the umpire should not wait until he judges that the players are ready to resume play. However, if there is loud applause or a player is retrieving the ball from the back of the playing area he may prefer to

delay his call slightly to until he is satisfied that both players or pairs will be able to hear it.

- 18.1.3 The umpire should call first the number of points scored by the player due to serve next, then the number of points scored by the opposing player or pair. At a change of service this may be followed by the name of the next server; at the start of a game the same procedure may be followed or the server's name may be announced first. It is, however, a requirement to point to the next server.
- 18.1.4 Whilst it is optional for the umpire to use the players' names, he should be sure how to pronounce players' names correctly. The umpire should verify correct pronunciation before the match is started.
- 18.1.5 When each player or pair has scored, say, 4 points the score may be called either as "4-4" or "4-all"; the score 0 may be expressed as either "zero" or "love". At the start of a game the umpire may announce "0-0, Smith", but it is better to say "Smith to serve, 0-0", to avoid the risk of players starting before the call is complete. If the rally is a let the umpire should repeat the existing score, to confirm that no point has been scored.
- 18.1.6 In a team match the name of the Association may be used instead of, or as well as, the player's name. It is, however, a requirement to point to the next server. Thus in a team match between France and Poland, the opening announcement could be "Kinski of Poland to serve, 0-0". During an individual game the score might be called as "6-4, France" and the announcement after an individual match could be "Game and match to Poland, 11-8, 11-9, 11-6; Poland leads by 1 match to 0".
- 18.1.7 In an international competition both the score and, when the expedite system is in operation, the number of strokes must normally be called in English, but a different language may be used by agreement between the umpire and both players or pairs. Other announcements should be made in English unless it is clear that another language is more acceptable to spectators.
- 18.1.8 See Appendix F for Field of Play Procedures.

## **18.2 Signals**

- 18.2.1 In addition to calling the score the umpire is recommended to use hand signals to indicate certain decisions, especially where the noise level makes it difficult for a score call to be heard. Even if the umpire delays his call to allow for a burst of applause to subside or a player to return from retrieving the ball, a prompt signal will allow score indicators to be updated without having to wait for the score to be announced.
- 18.2.2 The umpire must point with his hand to the new server at a change of service but he may also indicate the award of a point by raising vertically to shoulder level the hand nearer the player or pair who won it. If he declares a let or wishes to delay the resumption of play he should raise

one hand above his head, and the assistant umpire should use the same signal to attract the umpire's attention when he makes a decision within his jurisdiction. Hand signals should be clear and positive but they must not be unnecessarily flamboyant or aggressive.

18.2.3 See Appendix E for examples of correct hand signals.

### **18.3 Time Keeping**

18.3.1 The timekeeper must time the practice period, intervals between games and any authorised suspension of play. During a game, the timer should be stopped during significant breaks in play and re-started as soon as the next rally begins. Examples of such breaks are pauses for towelling; the change of ends in the last possible game of a match and delays while the ball is being retrieved from outside the playing area. Retrieving the ball while still in the playing area is not a reason to stop the timer.

### **18.4 Explanations**

18.4.1 It is not usually necessary to have to explain umpiring decisions, and gratuitous announcements should be avoided. For example, if a player serves the ball into the net he has clearly not made a good service and there is no need to call "fault". If, however, the rally is decided in a way that does not automatically end play or which may not be obvious a brief explanation may be given, using standard hand signals and/or the standard terms listed below.

18.4.2 The recommended explanatory terms are,

net touched by player, clothing or racket	"touched net"
playing surface moved	"moved table"
free hand touched playing surface	"hand on table"
ball obstructed by player	"obstruction"
ball touched same court twice	"double bounce"
ball struck twice by same player	"double hit"
ball struck by wrong player in doubles	"wrong player"
in doubles service, ball touched wrong half-court	"wrong side"

18.4.3 A fuller explanation should be given if necessary – for instance, where a service has been ruled illegal and the player is not sure which of the requirements he failed to meet. Language problems can often be overcome by the use of signs, such as pointing to the edge of the playing surface if a player has not noticed that the ball touched it, or demonstrating an aspect of service action that has been penalised.

## **19 SCORE INDICATORS**

- 19.1 The score is usually displayed on one or more score indicators. The correct use of score indicators is an important element in the presentation of a match and the umpire should make sure that the officials operating them are aware of their duties. Operators must await the umpire's call or signal before changing the score and must never anticipate decisions that they do not have the authority to make.
- 19.2 Most score indicators have two sets of large numbers to show the points scores and two smaller sets of numbers for the games scores. These indicators can provide a great deal of useful information, provided they are used consistently. Before a match the games score indicators should be left blank and not set to 0 until the players arrive, as a guide to whoever is controlling the program of play.
- 19.3 Before a game starts the points score indicators should be blank, and should not show "0-0"; this score should be displayed only when the umpire calls it to announce the start of the game. At the end of a game the indicators should be left showing the final points score until just before the start of the next game, for the benefit of spectators, before being returned to the blank position.
- 19.4 In no circumstances should the result of a game be shown simultaneously on the points and games score indicators. The games score should not be changed until the final points score in that game is reset so that, for example, until shortly before the start of the 4th game of a match the indicators may show a games score of 1 to each player and a points score of 11-7, but not 2-1 and 11-7.
- 19.5 Score indicators are normally placed in front of the umpire or assistant umpire, or both, facing towards the players, and in this position it is often difficult for spectators seated at the ends of the playing area to see them. Provided the score indicator is reasonably light, the operator may raise it above his head and display it to both sides at suitable intervals during play, such as at a break for towelling or when retrieving the ball from the rear of the court, or at change of service.
- 19.6 Most mechanical score indicators can display points scores up to about 30 and rarely will the score in a game exceed this figure. If this stage is reached one possibility is to reset them to 0-0, but this can be confusing for spectators when they see the server changing after every point and it is generally better to revert to 10-10, a score at which the alternation of service is expected.

## **20 CONCLUSION**

20.1 Whether working alone or as part of a team, the work of match officials can be difficult and demanding. They must be fair but not indulgent, firm but not officious and confident without being obtrusive. For most people these qualities are acquired only through experience, but it is hoped that the guidance given in this booklet will be of assistance to all those seeking to improve their competence as match officials.

## Appendix A – Recommended Procedure for Match Officials

- 1 Before going to the playing area, check that you have all the necessary equipment, such as net gauges, disc or coin for tossing, balls, score card, stop-watch and colored cards. Make sure that you understand how to complete the score card.
- 2 On arrival at the playing area, check that the table and surrounds are correctly positioned and that the net is properly adjusted for height and tension. If a microphone is to be used, make sure that it is working properly and that you know the correct voice level.
- 3 Set the indicators to the blank position – that is, so that they show no points or games scores (Figure 1). In a team match, check that the match score indicator is set correctly. When the players arrive, set both games score indicators to “0” (Figure 2)

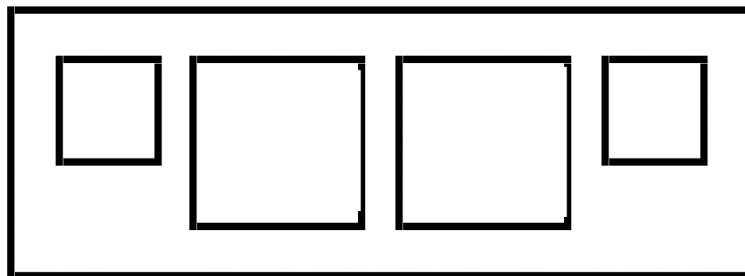


Figure 1: Before players arrive

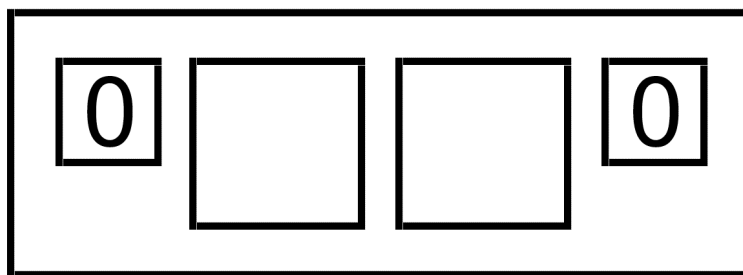


Figure 2: When players arrive

- 4 Before practice begins, check that players are wearing the correct numbers and that their rackets are acceptable. If you leave this until later and there is a wrong player or an illegal racket, time spent practicing will have been wasted.

- 5 Make sure that the regulations about clothing are kept; report any non-compliance that you cannot resolve, or any doubt about clothing or rackets, to the referee.
- 6 Decide who will have the choice of service and ends by spinning a two-colored disc or a coin in front of both players or pairs, making sure that they know how to call. Do not let the disc or coin fall on the playing surface and, preferably, not on the floor.
- 7 When both players or pairs have made their choices, note on the score card who is to be the first server and, in doubles, the first receiver. Unless you are certain of the correct way to pronounce the players' names, ask them how they wish their names to be called.
- 8 In an individual event, establish who is the designated advisor for each player or pair. In a team event, check that the number of people on the team bench, including players, coaches and other team officials, does not exceed the permitted number.
- 9 Give the players a ball which you have taken at random, either from those which they have chosen before the match or, if they have not chosen any, from a box of balls of the type specified for the competition.
- 10 Time the practice period and advise the players just before the permitted time is up. Make sure that they do not receive advice or do anything else to delay the start of play after the practice period has ended.
- 11 Before play starts, ensure that towels are placed in a receptacle provided near the umpire and are not left draped over surrounds. Any other items, such as track suits and bags, should be placed outside the playing area.
- 12 When the players are ready, call "zero-zero" or "love-all", pointing to and naming the first server. In a team match you may use the player's name or the team name, or both. Set the points score indicators to "0-0" (Figure 3).

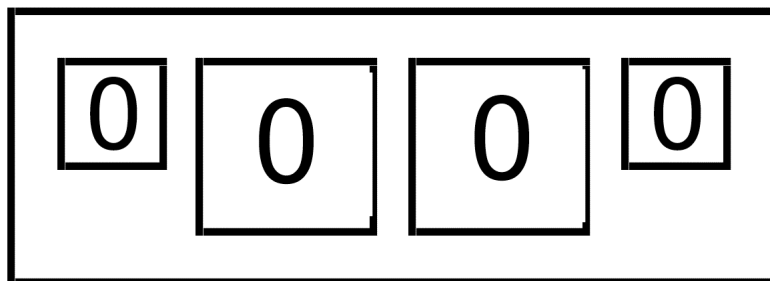


Figure 3: At 0-0 in 1<sup>st</sup> game

- 13 Start the timer as the first player serves and stop and re-start it for substantial breaks in play, such as time spent toweling or retrieving the ball from outside the playing area. Call “time” if play lasts for 10 minutes, unless expedite is already in operation or both players or pairs have scored 9 points.
- 14 As soon as practicable after the end of each rally indicated the result, by signal or by calling the new score, or both. If there is to be a change of service, point to the new server. You may also name the new server. Do not change the indicators until the umpire has signaled or called the award of a point (Figure 4).

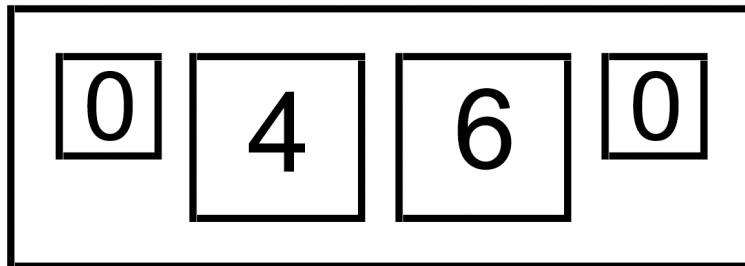


Figure 4: At 4-6 in 1<sup>st</sup> game

- 15 Discourage players from wasting time by such means as wandering around the playing area between rallies, persistent bouncing of the ball before serving or prolonged discussion with a doubles partner.
- 16 During a game, make sure that players are not given advice, either by speech or by signals. On the first occasion warn anyone advising illegally; if the offense is repeated, send the advisor away from the playing area for the remainder of the match or, in a team match, for the remainder of the team match (unless the advisor is a player, when he plays a match).
- 17 At the end of a game, announce the winner and the current games score and record the result on the score card. Leave the indicators showing the final points score, without changing the games score (Figure 5).

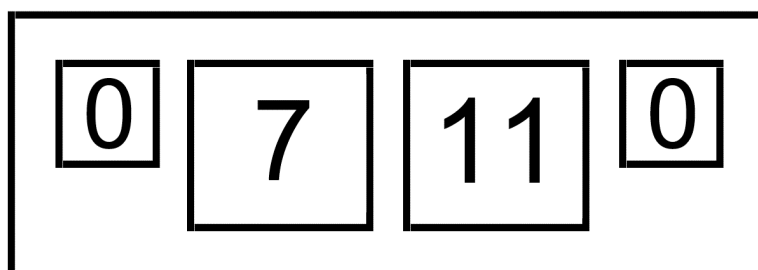


Figure 5: At end of 1<sup>st</sup> game

- 18 Just before the players return for the next game, set the points score indicators to the blank position and alter the appropriate games score indicator to reflect the result of the previous game (Figure 6). Remember to change round any yellow or white markers. Set the points indicators to “0-0: when the umpire calls that score (Figure 7).

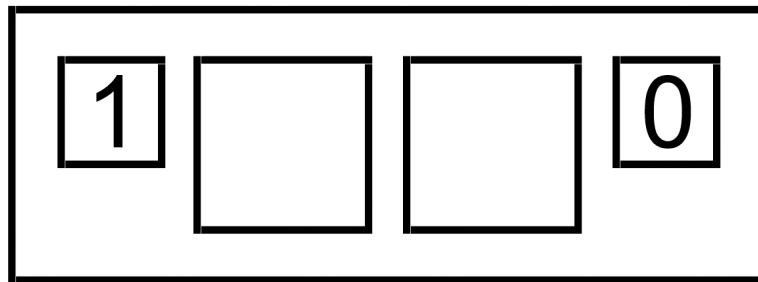


Figure 6: Just before 2<sup>nd</sup> game

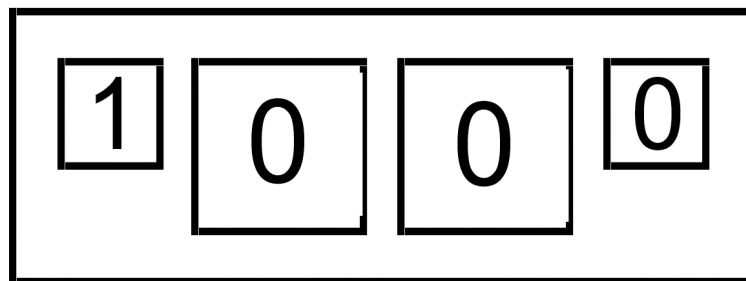


Figure 7: At 0-0 in 2<sup>nd</sup> game

- 19 After each game, collect the match ball and either retain it or leave it on the match table ready for the next game. Check that surrounds are in their correct positions. Time the interval between games and recall players as soon as the permitted time is up.
- 20 If necessary, remind players that they must leave their rackets on the table between games unless you have given permission for them to be removed. If they are removed, remember that they must be inspected again before the next game.
- 21 During intervals, do not wander around the playing area talking to other match officials. Stay in your seat unless you need to move for reasons such as retrieving the ball or adjusting the table, net or surrounds.
- 22 At the end of a match, announce the result and, in a team match, the new team match score. Complete the score card and ask the players or team captains to sign it, as required. Leave the indicators showing the final points score and the previous games score (Figure 8).

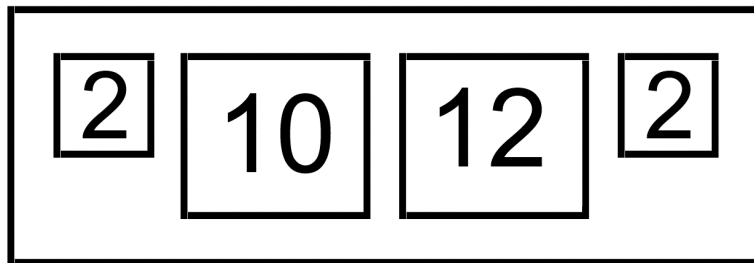


Figure 8: At end of match

- 23 Return the score card promptly to the appropriate officials. Before leaving the playing area, collect the match ball and any spares, as well as any items of clothing, towels or other property that may have been left behind. Re-set the indicators to the all-blank position (Figure 1).
- 24 Finally, make sure that you are aware of and are ready to apply any additional procedures or special methods of presentation that have been agreed for the particular competition at which you are officiating; if you are in any doubt, consult the referee.

## **Appendix B – Directives for Match Officials at World Title Competitions and Sanctioned Events**

This appendix is under revision. Blank pages have been included to preserve the numbering of other appendices.

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## Appendix C – Qualifications of Umpires

The ITTF does not prescribe any standards or test procedures for the qualification of umpires and referees by national associations, however, the ITTF Umpires and Referees Committee (URC) in cooperation with the ITTF Rules Committee provide a degree of commonality and a focal point for the exchange of information and ideas between Associations.

Most associations have 2 to 3 levels of qualifications, with the lowest level being related to a limited geographical area and the highest level having national status. The titles used for the lower grades often reflect smaller geographical area and may include Club Umpire, County Umpire, State Umpire, Provincial Umpire and Regional Umpire. The highest national grade is usually entitled “National Umpire”

It is up to each association to define and build an appropriate training system for their umpires to prepare them toward participating at an international level. The training programs should include practical (field of play) as well as theoretical (Laws and Regulations) components.

Candidates for the International Umpire (IU) qualifications must be experienced holders of their national association’s highest qualification for at least two years. They must also demonstrate a nominal level of English comprehension as the base level of communicating with players, coaches and other officials before they are accepted to undergo the IU qualification process.

The International Umpire (IU) qualification was introduced in 1973, with the objective of providing an internationally accepted “minimum” standard to which umpires of all Associations could become qualified. The IU qualification was not intended as a substitute for a well thought out national education, training and qualifying program.

The IU exam typically consists of 50 questions, with several possible answers to each. The candidate has to select the correct answers within a fixed time period, without using references or help from anyone. Questions are either factual (Laws and regulations) or ask what action an umpire should take about a specific situation (field of play). That is why it is critical that umpire experience includes both practical as well as theoretical training.

Qualifying as an International Umpire demands strong understanding of the laws and regulations, several years of practical “on the table” experience, confidence as an official and a nominal understanding of conversational English as the basis for communication with international players, coaches and other officials.

Once qualified, an International Umpire may have increased opportunity to officiate at competitions outside of their own country. Repetitive and frequent exposure at all levels of international competition is the most important element in building experience and confidence as an active International Umpire.

Every year at designated ITTF events, qualified trainers and evaluators will conduct Advance Umpire Training (AUT) courses as well as field of play evaluations on International Umpires working those events. The Advance Umpire Training course is designed to impart the ITTF uniform method of performance for all International Umpires. The evaluation process – with immediate feedback to each umpire – is designed to assist umpires in improving and standardizing their skills toward a uniform high level of performance.

The ITTF umpire evaluation process is not a pass/fail or a grading system, but rather an objective measurement of targeted tasks that must be performed before, during and after each match. Neglecting to perform a designated task is not a failing, but rather an opportunity to improve performance the next time out. Over time with repetitive evaluations and feedback, the quality and standards of umpiring will be reached and can be maintained at a very high level.

In 2002, the ITTF took the first step in building a higher-level qualification for International Umpires. Through attending the Advance Umpire Training course at designated ITTF events; passing an advance level – ITTF supervised – written exam; completing multiple field of play evaluations by different evaluators at various events as well as passing an oral interview, an International Umpire can qualify toward the next level of “Blue” badge certification.

Umpires attaining – and maintaining their “Blue” badge certification through regular activities and evaluations – will have greater opportunities in being nominated by the ITTF URC to represent their associations at ITTF World Title events.

Excellence, Consistency and Confidence as a match official comes only with experience and an open mind that never stops learning. Old habits are hard to change, however, consistent performance among all International Umpires – irrespective of language and cultural differences – is the primary objective of the ITTF umpire qualification process.

## Appendix D – Officials Code of Conduct

**1** Match officials, especially while in uniform, are ambassadors of the sport, of the ITTF and of their Associations. At an international competition they are the guests of the host Association and they must respect its traditions and social customs. The following guidelines, which are not exhaustive, are intended as an aide-memoire on the aspects of conduct to which special attention should be given.

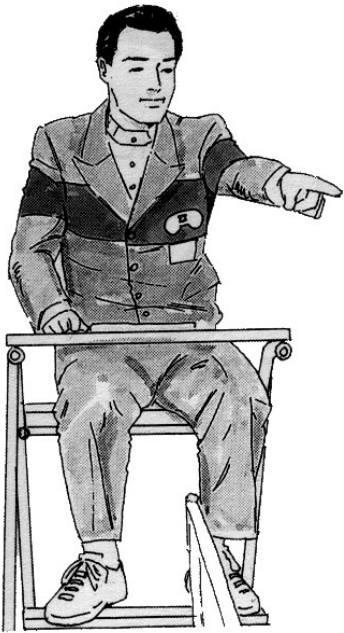
### **2 MATCH OFFICIALS SHOULD**

- 2.1 Study and make sure they understand all the relevant rules, duties and procedures for the competition at which they are officiating;
- 2.2 Be in good physical condition, with natural or corrected normal far-sighted vision and normal hearing;
- 2.3 Be in appropriate uniform and maintain their appearance and personal hygiene;
- 2.4 Be prompt for all assignments;
- 2.5 Maintain strict impartiality and avoid any relationship with players or coaches that might cast doubt on that impartiality;
- 2.6 Refer all issues not related to their duties to the Referee or other appropriate tournament official;**
- 2.7 At all times conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner, respecting the authority and interests of the Referee, the organizers, other tournament officials, players and the public.

### **3 MATCH OFFICIALS SHOULD NOT**

- 3.1 Discuss tournament incidents or other issues related to their duties with players, spectators or media, but should refer any such matters to the Referee and the tournament committee;
- 3.2 Accept personal gifts from players, coaches and teams other than those of nominal value. Gifts provided by a host organization to all officials can be accepted;
- 3.3 Consume alcoholic beverages or take drugs or medications that will inhibit performance before their match on the day they are to officiate;**
- 3.4 Publicly criticize other officials or otherwise bring the sport into disrepute.
- 3.5 As with the high standard of professionalism and conduct required of players, the ITTF requires a high standard of professionalism and conduct from its Certified Officials as well as all Officials participating in ITTF sanctioned and recognized events. ITTF Certified Officials not observing the stated guidelines may be subject to a formal disciplinary process.

## Appendix E – Recommended Hand Signals



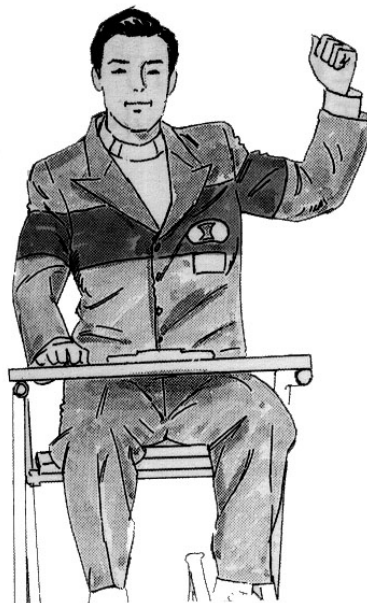
**Edge ball**



**Next server**



**Let**



**Point**

# Appendix F – Field of play Procedures

## INTRODUCTIONS

Everything that is visible and can occur within the view of spectators and media (reporters, television, and photographers) is considered field of play. From the moment an umpire or a referee enters the field of play they are bound by the field of play conduct and procedures.

The actions and performance of every umpire on the field of play must be uniform in all aspects – not just in conducting a match but also on the way they walk to/from the assigned courts, performing their pre and post match duties as well as interactions with players, spectators and other officials on the field-of-play.

### 1 UMPIRES PRE-MATCH PREPARATIONS

- 1.1 Umpires should report to the Referee – or designated assistant that handles umpire schedules (Chief of Umpires) – at least 30 minutes before the start of their assigned session to prepare and get ready for performing their duties.
- 1.2 The umpire is responsible for pre-match ball selection and shirt and number check. They should normally conduct these duties at the designated area at least 15 minutes before the start of a match.
- 1.3 Approximately, ten minutes before the start of each match, the umpire should be ready with the match card and balls for their designated table.
- 1.4 Before entering the field of play, the umpire and assistant umpire should confer and discuss any issues pertaining to the upcoming match. They should agree on who will time the warm up periods and intervals between games (typically the assistant umpire) and who will time the time-outs taken (typically the umpire) as well as who will place the time out card on the proper side of the table during the time out period (typically the assistant umpire). They should both be clear on how they will communicate during a match without necessarily having to physically confer between points or between games.
- 1.5 Just before entering the field of play, the umpire and assistant umpire line up near the field of play entrance and get set to walk in together as a team. The umpire should be in front with the match-card and ball box held in the left hand.
- 1.6 Neither the umpire nor the assistant umpire should be carrying anything else in their hands into the field of play. Everything an umpire and assistant umpire require to conduct their on court duties – pen, stop watch, net gauge, yellow/red/white cards, towel, coin – should be in their pockets and not externally visible or dangling from the uniform or around the neck. Place all handbags in a secure area designated by the Referee.

- 1.7 When the umpire team (umpire and assistant umpire) is ready, they enter the field of play in a straight line – in uniform step with the first person in line – the umpire leading the way to the assigned court. During the feature matches on the last day of competition there may be appropriate introductory music announcing the presentation of the officials – and players – to the playing field.
- 1.8 With or without introductory music, the umpire team should walk in a straight line calmly with deliberate step and very nominal hand motions. The objective is not to emulate a military parade, but rather a spirit that a unified team is on the way to perform an assigned task.
- 1.9 An umpire should never step over any barrier. He/she should always open a space between two barriers, step around it gently and close that space after passing through.
- 1.10 It is also possible that the Chief of Umpire would assemble a group of umpires to enter the field of play as a team – each proceeding to their respective table. In that case, umpires and assistant umpires will assemble at the designated staging area – to be determined by the Chief of Umpire. Umpire teams will line-up in order of table assignments and walk into the field of play as a group in step following the first person in line.
- 1.11 As each set of officials reach their respective court they turn in and go toward the umpire's chair. Upon entering the court, the umpires & assistant umpires would stand erect on either side of the umpire's chair until all umpire teams have arrived at their respective positions.

## **2 UMPIRES ARRIVING AT COURT**

- 2.1 The Referee or Chief of Umpire will designate the entry point of the umpire team into each court. Typically the entry point into each court should be the nearest corners on the side of the umpire chair.
- 2.2 Upon entering the court, the umpire and assistant umpire would both walk toward the umpire's chair. The umpire places the match card and balls in the umpire's chair and stands – feet together and hands to their side – to the right side of the chair facing the table and the assistant umpire would stand – similarly – to the left side of the chair. When available, the field of play announcer should present the umpires to the spectators and the media by name and association.
- 2.3 As each name is called the official takes one small step forward and one step back to the same position – no turning around to face other spectators or hand motions.

- 2.4 Regardless if the umpire team was or was not presented to the spectators, they should stand in that position for at least 5 seconds before starting their pre-match procedures. The assistant umpire should follow the lead of the umpire so that both can begin their on court duties at the same time.
- 2.5 Under some conditions – typically during feature matches – players will also walk in with or after the umpire team. In that case, one playing team/pair would stand next to the umpire and the other team/pair would stand next to the assistant umpire. After the players – and umpires – have been presented, pre-match procedures can begin.

### **3 PRE-MATCH PROCEDURE**

- 3.1 Before the start of the warm up period, the umpire:
  - 3.1.1 Completes racket checks,
  - 3.1.2 Checks shirt colour, if not completed during ball selection,
  - 3.1.3 Check player numbers, if required by the Referee or organizing committee,
  - 3.1.4 Confirm designated advisor for non-team events,
  - 3.1.5 Perform coin toss and starting end for each player/pair,
  - 3.1.6 Starts the clock for the warm up period, or instruct the assistant umpire to do so,
  - 3.1.7 Complete the relevant information on the match card.
- 3.2 Then the umpire sits in the umpire chair for the duration of the warm up period.
- 3.3 While the umpire is conducting his/her duties with the players, the assistant umpire should:
  - 3.3.1 Check the net height and tension,
  - 3.3.2 Check the cleanliness of the table and floor – removes any debris,
  - 3.3.3 Organize and straiten out surrounds,
  - 3.3.4 Clear scoring device to blanks – if needed,
  - 3.3.5 Place name cards in proper place – if provided by the Referee or organizing committee,
  - 3.3.6 Flips the game indicators to 0-0. Once the players are present on or near the court,
- 3.4 The assistant umpire sits down in the chair during the remainder of the warm up period.

## **4 PRE-MATCH ANNOUNCEMENTS – 30 SECONDS BEFORE THE START OF A MATCH**

4.1 If a field of play announcer has announced the players the umpire can skip this section.

4.2 After the umpire has completed the field of play duties and the two minutes warm up has begun. The umpire sits in his/her chair and delivers the pre-match announcement 30 seconds before the start of the match.

Exact words – in a calm non hurried manner:

“Ladies and Gentlemen, this “semi-final” match will be the “best of seven”,

To my right (pointing to the player), from “Germany”, “Timo Boll”,

To the left (pointing to the player), from “The Netherlands”, “Trinko Keen”,

“Keen” won the toss and elected to “Serve” (or “Receive” or “End”).

This should take about 15 to 20 seconds to deliver.

Substitute the Underline text with appropriate content.

4.3 The umpire should make every effort to pronounce the name of each player correctly. If unsure about the pronunciation – ask the player while conducting racket check

## **5 START OF THE MATCH**

5.1 When time is up, the assistant umpire raises his/her hand and announces, “TIME”.

5.2 The umpire points to the server and glances to see that the receiver is ready.

5.3 When the server is ready, the umpire announces, “Keen to serve” – “Love All” or “Zero-Zero”.

5.4 The Assistant umpire flips the points score to 0-0, starts the clock and the match begins.

## **6 DURING MATCH PROCEDURE**

6.1 Uniform hand signals during a match.

6.2 See diagram in Appendix E for proper and uniform hand signals.

6.3 During the match, the umpire should:

6.3.1 Call the score in a clear and audible voice at a level that a person sitting at the coach’s chair can hear and understand the calls.

- 6.3.2 Time the play or designate the assistant umpire to time the match.
- 6.3.3 Monitor and enforce the service laws.
- 6.3.4 Monitor and enforce the behavior laws.
- 6.3.5 Make sure the players leave the rackets on the table between games.
- 6.3.6 Make sure play is continuous with no excessive delays during toweling or time out periods.
- 6.3.7 Monitor and enforce the coaching laws. Between points and particularly during a change of service or ends, the umpire should turn his/her head and look at both coaches. Alternately, the umpire and assistant umpire can agree – before the match starts – that each one will monitor the coach that is best visible to them or the one on their right.

## **7 POST MATCH ANNOUNCEMENT**

- 7.1 At the end of a match, the umpire completes the results of the last game on the match card and announces the match results and game scores.  
Exact words – in a calm non hurried manner:  
“Ladies and Gentleman, “Seventh game 11-9 to Boll”,  
“Boll” won the match 4 games to 3.  
This should take about 7 seconds to deliver.  
Substitute the Underline text with appropriate content.

## **8 POST MATCH PROCEDURE**

- 8.1 The umpire obtains players signatures – if required by the Referee.
- 8.2 The assistant umpire, returns the game and score indicator to blank
- 8.3 The assistant umpire collects the balls and returns the court to a proper condition.

## **9 END OF MATCH – UMPIRES WALKING OUT**

- 9.1 The umpire and assistant umpire would meet at the umpire’s chair and walk off the court together.
- 9.2 The umpire leads the way with the match card in the left hand and the assistant umpire following in step with the umpire – no accompanied music.
- 9.3 The umpire team returns the match card directly to the Referee’s desk for signature. The Referee (or designated Deputy Referee on duty) should check the match card for completeness and accuracy; signs the card and forwards it to computer operation for results processing.

- 9.4 Umpires should not linger or walk around the field of play once their assigned duties are completed. If they wish to watch other matches in progress, they should proceed outside of the field of play in the viewing areas open for officials and spectators.

## **10 SUMMARY**

- 10.1 While on the field of play – for any reason – umpires, referees, umpire evaluators should be in designated dress code or uniforms, alert and aware of their surroundings and mindful how their presence and conversations might affect ongoing play or visual perceptions.
- 10.2 Umpires should refrain from engaging players in idle chat before, during or after a match. An umpire may respond to a player's question or explain a call made but should not initiate a discussion on non-match related matter.
- 10.3 While in uniform, officials should be mindful that they represent their associations and most importantly their actions reflect on all officials.
- 10.4 During international events, it is implicit that all foreign Umpires and Referees are guests of the host associations and should respect their traditions and social customs inside and outside the field of play.
- 10.5 Under no circumstances should umpires engage spectators or members of the media with matters relating to their conduct or the conduct of other officials. All such matters should be directed to the Referee or Tournament Director.

## **Appendix G – A Summary of Law & Rule Changes since the last Issue**

The main changes made to laws and regulations since the last issue were:

### **LAWS**

A player obstructs the ball if he touches it when it is above or traveling towards the playing surface.

A game is played to 11 points instead of to 21, with the server changing after every 2 points.

A match consists of any odd number of games.

In the last possible game of a doubles match the players change ends and the order of receiving changes when first one pair scores 5 points.

Expedite begins after 10 minutes in a game unless both players or pairs have scored at least 9 points.

Expedite does not come into effect automatically at the start of a game unless it was introduced in the previous game.

In service the ball must not be hidden from the receiver by the server or his doubles partner.

### **REGULATIONS**

Toweling is allowed after each 6 points and at the change of ends in the last possible game of a match.

In group competition in World, Continental and Open International Championships, if 1 player is to qualify the final match in the group shall be between the players numbered 1 and 2; if 2 are to qualify the final match shall be between the players numbered 2 and 3 and so on.

Players may have up to 6 advertisements on the front, side or shoulder of the shirt with a total area of not more than 600 cm<sup>2</sup> with not more than 4 advertisements on the front and up to 2 advertisements on the back with a total area of not more than 400 cm<sup>2</sup>.

Players are under the jurisdiction of the referee while in the playing venue and under the jurisdiction of the umpire while in the playing area.

The umpire is not required to name the server at each change of serve.

If a player or pair and an advisor or captain disagree whether a time-out is to be taken, the final decision shall be made by the player or pair in an individual event and by the captain in a team event.

Players of the same Association forming a doubles pair in international competitions are allowed to wear clothes of different manufacturers, if the basic colours are the same and their National Association authorizes this procedure. In a World or Olympic Title Competition the players of the same Association shall be dressed uniformly, with the possible exception of socks, shoes and the number, size, colour and design of advertisements on clothing.

Marking on flooring shall not include white or orange.