

An Officials View

By Dr. Azmy

Another Successful Tournament

Let us congratulate ourselves for a successful U.S. Open Pro-Tour Tournament. I would like to extend my gratitude to all those who contributed in one way or another to the championships, especially the unknown soldiers. Such a tournament takes full work for at least six months, and many sleepless nights for at least the last three weeks before until its completion.

Many players expressed their satisfaction with the tournament on both sides, the U.S. Open and the Pro Tour. They enjoyed playing and watching others in their best matches. According to them it was a smooth running, well-organized tournament. One suggestion from many players was that the light should be brighter next year.

Congratulation also to Olga Kahan, who is now a member of the ITTF Veterans Committee. She is a symbol of dedication, self sacrifice, hard work, efficiency, courtesy, and sincerity. Olga has dedicated her life to the promotion of Table Tennis Senior Tournaments. She is Chairperson of the USATT Senior Committee.

USATT has been awarded the bid for 2007 World Junior Championships. This is the first major world table tennis competition in the U.S. since the Atlanta Olympics. There will be opportunities for umpires and volunteers.

I received an email from an IU stating that there are more than those five items, mentioned in my article in the last issue of the magazine, that are important for the evaluation of the umpires.

Yes that is true.

The five basic ones I mentioned were the hand signals, application of the service rules, enforcing the coaching guidelines, limiting unauthorized behavior of players and coaches, and accuracy of completion and delivery of match forms.

The evaluation form actually contains 33 requirements, 13 of them for Pre Match performance, 14 for During Match, and 6 for Post Match. Once again we have to remind the umpires that some of these activities are for presentations on TV and they have to be followed now in all tournaments. (A comment by an evaluator on most of these items is to improve the umpire's performance in future matches.) The evaluation is based on the umpire's overall performance.

Rules Changes: In the last issue I covered all of the propositions before the ITTF. Three of them have a direct bearing on players and umpires effective this September:

“In service, as soon as the ball has been projected, the server's free arm shall be removed from the space between the ball and the net.” This means that the server may bring the free hand to the body rather than moving it out of the way.

The Service against Players in Wheelchairs (applicable when playing standing athletes): When a player, in a wheelchair due to physical disability, is receiving a service in singles, the rally shall be a let if the ball leaves the table by either of the receiver's sidelines (on one or more bounces) or comes back toward the net.

The Doubles Play in Wheelchairs (applicable when playing standing athletes): When two players, in wheelchairs due to physical disability, are a pair playing doubles, the server shall first make a good service, the receiver shall then make a good return but thereafter either player of the disabled pair may make good returns.

However, no part of a player's wheelchair shall protrude beyond an imaginary extension of the centre line of the table. If it does, the umpire shall award the point to the opposing pair.

Specific wording on these changes will be published by the ITTF and USATT before September.