



PROCEDURES FOR REFEREES

MATCHES PLAYED WITHOUT A CHAIR UMPIRE

The ITF recognises that at some tournaments it is not possible to have a Chair Umpire for every match. In order to have a consistent approach, these procedures have been created so that matches can be handled in a similar manner worldwide.

Please find attached a Player Notice, which gives some procedures for players taking part in matches without a Chair Umpire. If you are the Referee at an event where matches will be played in these circumstances, please make sure that this notice is displayed for the players at the tournament site.

Obviously, a number of problems can occur in these matches so it is very important that the Referee (and assistants) walk around the courts as much as possible. The players appreciate having easy access to an official in case of any problems. Referees (or assistants) should use the following procedures when handling different situations.

Line Call Disputes (for matches **not** played on clay courts)

If the Referee (or assistant) is called to the court over a disputed line call and he/she was not watching the match, he/she should ask the player who made the call (on his/her own side of the net) if he/she is sure of the call. If the player confirms the call, the point stands with this call.

If it appears that it would be beneficial to have the match officiated, try and find a Chair Umpire who will assume all the duties and call all the lines from the chair. If this is not possible (e.g. no experienced Chair Umpire available, no Umpire's Chair), another option is for the Referee (or assistant) to stay on-court to watch the rest of the match. He/she should then tell the players that he/she will correct any clearly incorrect line calls made by the players.

If the Referee (or assistant) is off-court and happens to be watching a match when a player makes a blatantly incorrect call, he/she can go on-court and tell the player that the incorrect call was an unintentional hindrance to his/her opponent and the point will be replayed. The Referee (or assistant) must also tell the player that any further clearly incorrect calls may be considered as a deliberate hindrance and the player will lose the point. In addition a Code Violation for Unsportsmanlike Conduct can be given if the Referee (or assistant) is sure that the player is blatantly calling incorrectly. Referees (and assistants) must take care not to become too involved in matches when it is not required or necessary, or to use the Hindrance Rule for close calls that are incorrectly called. As a matter of practice, before using the Hindrance Rule, the Referee (or assistant) must be very sure that a very bad call has been made.

Ball Mark Disputes (clay courts only)

If the Referee (or assistant) is called to the court to resolve a dispute, he/she should find out if the players agree on which ball mark it is.

If the players agree on which mark it is, but disagree on their reading of the mark, the Referee (or assistant) should decide if the mark shows the ball was in or out.

If the players disagree on which mark it is, the Referee (or assistant) should find out from the players what kind of shot was played and the direction in which the ball was hit. This may assist in deciding which mark is the correct one. If this information does not help, the call by the player at the end where the mark is stands.

Score Disputes

If the Referee (or assistant) is called to court to resolve a score dispute, he/she should discuss the relevant points or games with the players to find out the points or games that the players agree on. All points or games which the players agree on stand and only those in dispute should be replayed.

For example, a player claims the score is 40-30 and his opponent claims the score is 30-40. You discuss the points with the players and discover that they disagree only on who won the first point in the game. The correct decision is to continue the game from 30-30, since both players agree that each of them has won two points in that game.

When a game is in dispute, the same principle applies. For example, a player claims that he is leading 4-3, but his opponent disagrees, claiming that he is leading 4-3. After discussing the games you discover that both players claim they won the first game. The correct decision is to continue the match with the game score 3-3, since both players agree that each of them has won three games. The player who received in the last game that was played will serve in the next game.

After resolving any score dispute, it is important for the Referee (or assistant) to emphasise the procedure that the server should call the score before each 1st serve, loudly enough for his/her opponent to hear.

Other Issues

There are a number of other issues that are difficult to handle when there is no Chair Umpire.

When there is a dispute regarding lets, not-ups and foul shots, the Referee (or assistant) should try to find out from the players what happened and either confirm the call that was made or replay the point, as he/she deems appropriate.

Foot Faults can only be called by a Referee (or assistant) and not by the receiver. However, to call foot faults the official must be standing on-court for the match. Officials standing off-court are not allowed to make foot fault calls.

Coaching, as well as other Code and Time Violations can only be handled by the Referee (or assistant), so it is extremely important that there are officials observing the conduct of the players and coaches. When issuing a Code or Time Violation, the Referee (or assistant) should go on to court as soon as possible after the violation and briefly inform the players that a Code or Time Violation has been issued.

The decision made by the Referee (or assistant) is final.

Players who do not fairly follow these procedures can be subject to the Unsportsmanlike Conduct provision of the Code of Conduct, but this should only be used in clear situations.

If you have any questions on these procedures, please contact ITF Officiating in London.