

QUESTION TIME

Occasional queries received by the ETTA about the action, or inaction, of umpires and referees suggest that the officials themselves are not always sure of their powers and responsibilities. As examples:

What can be done to discourage players from shouting every time they score a point? It seems to be the fashion in most sports nowadays for every minor success - or every mistake by an opponent - to be celebrated as though the successful player had won the lottery or found the answer to global warming. Clearly players should be allowed to express their pleasure in a reasonable way, but where excessively exuberant behaviour appears to be unfairly distracting an opponent or annoying spectators, they should be asked to desist. Serious and persistent refusal to do so can be treated as a breach of the behaviour regulations, starting with a formal warning.

Should a referee play in a tournament for which he or she is responsible? No, because there would be an obvious conflict of interests and the referee needs to be seen as an impartial figure of authority. In addition, the referee cannot risk being involved in any dispute in which it is not clear whether he or she is the judge or one of the judged. If, for example, there were a protest against something he or she did as a player, it would put the deputy referee in an almost impossible position. If the deputy's ruling went in favour of the referee, it would be seen as preferential treatment; if it went against the referee, his or her authority would be seriously diminished.

Can a coach or adviser challenge a decision by the umpire? In an individual match, only the player can make a protest and no-one else can do so on the player's behalf. Of course, an umpire's decision on a question of fact, such as whether or not the ball touched the top edge of the playing surface, cannot be challenged by anyone, but a player can protest against alleged wrong interpretation of a rule and in this case the referee must be asked to decide. Any other person who attempts to intercede should be sent away and the protest ignored; if he or she refuses to go the referee should be advised.

OBITUARY

With great regret we noted the deaths last season of David Poultney IU, David Perry IU and former NURC members Bill Goldfinch NU and Alan Porter IU.

CONTACTS

Comments, questions or suggestions on any aspect of umpiring or refereeing are always welcome and members of the committee can be contacted by email at the following addresses:

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ENGLISH TABLE TENNIS ASSOCIATION Ltd

NURC NEWS

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COMMITTEE 2009-10

The composition of the main committee and its specialist panels for this season is as follows:

NURC:	Stuart Sherlock (Chairman), David Edwards, Margot Fraser, John Mackey, Mick Strode, Roger Vardon & Colin Clemett (Secretary)
Umpire Review:	David Edwards, John Mackey & George Tyler
Umpire Selection:	Margot Fraser (Secy, foreign events), Alan Harwood & Roger Vardon (Secy, domestic events)
Referee Review:	Mick Strode
Referee Selection:	(foreign events only) Tony Chatwin and Colin Clemett

ITTF RULE CHANGES 2009

The misleading reference to ITTF-authorized racket coverings has been removed from Law 2.7.4, which now reads : "The racket shall be used without any physical, chemical or other treatment." We understand from the Chairman of the ITTF Equipment Committee that the intention is to prohibit the use of preparations such as boosters and tuners, and of cleaners other than plain water. Two changes have been made to the service Law. First, in 2.6.6, "see" had been replaced by "be satisfied", to make clear that the umpire/assistant umpire does not literally have to see the whole of a service to be certain that it is legal. Second, in 2.6.6.1, the one warning for doubtful service that a player may be allowed in a match can now be given by either the umpire or the assistant umpire. The latter change creates some possible problems and for it to work as intended close cooperation between umpire and assistant umpire will be needed. Either official should interrupt play to give a warning only when he or she has reason to doubt the legality of a service but cannot be sure that it is correct. Not being able to see the service is not a justification for either official to give a warning, provided he or she is confident that the other was in a position to judge its correctness. If, for example, a player serves facing the assistant umpire so that the service is completely hidden from the umpire, there would be no reason for the umpire to doubt its legality. But in the same circumstances the assistant umpire might give a warning if he or she was not sure that the ball had been thrown high enough or that it was not falling when struck. The assistant umpire does not have power to decide that the rally is a let, so to give a warning he or she should interrupt play by calling "stop". The umpire will then declare a let and the assistant umpire can give the warning. A copy of the current Laws, with changes underlined, is enclosed. There were no significant changes to the Regulations for International Competitions.

TIME-OUT PROCEDURE

Some confusion has been caused in the past by apparently contradictory instructions on the ITTF website. It has now been confirmed that the correct procedure is for the white card, having first been held up to show that a time-out has been requested, to be placed on the court of the player or pair making the request for the duration of the time-out, and that the umpire is not required to continue holding it up. The website will be amended accordingly

TRAINING AND RECRUITMENT

The numbers of LUs and CUs registered last season were the highest for many years, owing largely to a number of training seminars conducted in various parts of the country. We hope to maintain this level of activity and, provided there are enough candidates to justify the expense, we are prepared to stage courses at no cost to the host Association other than the provision of suitable premises. Candidates can complete both the written and practical tests for the LU qualification in the course of a day; those wishing to qualify as CUs will be able to take the written and the first practical test on the same day, but will need a second practical test on a separate occasion. Any CU Secretary interested on hosting such a course should apply to the NURC Secretary.

CU TEST PAPER

As promised in the previous newsletter, a new test paper, No 16, has been published and for CU Secretaries a copy, with answers and marking schedule, is enclosed. The content of this paper has been revised to provide a better balance of questions on Laws and Regulations, and candidates can now take this test without first having passed the LU test. The application form for CU registration has been amended accordingly.

HANDBOOK FOR UMPIRES

The ETTA Handbook for Umpires is being revised to take account of the latest ITTF rule changes and it is hoped that this will be published shortly. Copies will be provided free for all umpires on the current Active List and a copy will be issued to each CU when he or she is registered.

NATIONAL UMPIRES

Congratulations to John Hardcastle of Yorkshire, who qualified as National Umpire No 233 in March 2009. As usual, we propose to hold a National Umpire examination towards the end of the season and CU Secretaries should submit nominations as soon as possible so that we can arrange for practical assessment at one of the national championships. We should like also to know of any LUs or CUs who are not yet ready for the NU examination but who wish to progress their umpiring careers by officiating at competitions outside their own locality; their names and addresses should be sent to Roger Vardon.

INTERNATIONAL UMPIRE EXAMINATION

An IU examination is due to be held early in 2010 and when the details have been confirmed all those eligible will be invited to apply for nomination.

INTERNATIONAL UMPIRE SELECTIONS

The following umpires were selected to officiate at competitions abroad:

Danish Open Championships, Frederikshaven	John Mackey, Tom Purcell
Euro Youth Top 10, Rotterdam	Derek Sherratt
German Open Championships, Bremen	David Edwards
Luxembourg Open Championships, Luxembourg	Bill Moran
World Individual Championships, Yokohama	John Mackey
Spanish Youth Championships, Platja d'Aro	Eric Pentland, Bob Williamson
Commonwealth Championships, Glasgow	David Brown David Edwards, Stan Clarke, Margot Fraser, Alan Harwood, Lynda Reid, Derek Sherratt, Mick Strode, Karen Tonge, Bob Williamson

Euro PTT Championships, Genoa	Bill Moran, Eric Pentland
US Open Championships, Las Vegas	Russell Sutcliffe
Euro Mini Championships, Schiltigheim	Lynda Reid
European Championships, Stuttgart	David Cochrane, Peter May
German PTT Open Championships, Stuttgart	Tom Purcell, Lynda Reid
UK School Games, Newport, Wales	David Goulden, Brian Gibbs, John Hardcastle, Peter May, Nick Osland, George Tyler, <i>Ken Eliot, Bob Evans, Alex Mercer, Alan Thomas (CUs in italics)</i>

ENGLISH OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2009

The following umpires for the 2009 English Open in Sheffield were selected by a panel consisting of the Competition Manager (Richard Scruton), the Referee (Stuart Sherlock) and the Deputy Referee (Steve Welch):

28.10.09-30.10.09: Eileen Allison, Derek Baseley, Neil Curtis, John Hardcastle, Nick Osland and Derek Sherratt

28.10.09-1.11.09: David Brown, Denis Calver, Stan Clarke, David Cochrane, David Edwards, Margot Fraser, Alan Harwood, John Mackey, Peter May, Tom Purcell, Lynda Reid, Andy Seward, Mick Strode, Russell Sutcliffe, Karen Tonge and Bob Williamson

REFEREE APPOINTMENTS

The following referees have been appointed by the National Championships Committee for the 2009/10 national championships:

	<u>Referee</u>	<u>Deputy Referee</u>
Senior	Karen Tonge	David Cochrane
Junior/Cadet	Aubrey Drapkin	Steve Welch
Under 11-14	Steve Welch	TBD

Steve Welch was Referee of the European Nations League match in Sheffield and of the UK School Games in Newport, and David Cochrane refereed the Primary Schools International Championships in Blackburn. Mick Strode was appointed Referee of the Cardiff and Jersey Open Championships and Deputy Referee of the 2009 European Championships in Stuttgart.