

**The International Table Tennis Federation**

# **Handbook for MATCH OFFICIALS**

**Sixteenth edition July 2019**

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## FOREWORD

Sections of previous editions have been modified to provide 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 Chair of the Umpires and Referees Committee.

*URC - ITTF*  
*March 2019*

First edition	March 1982
Second edition	September 1983
Third edition	January 1989
Fourth edition	September 1989
Fifth edition	September 1991
Sixth edition	November 1993
Seventh edition	September 1995
Eighth edition	October 1997
Ninth edition	July 2000
Tenth edition	June 2004
Eleventh edition	December 2005
Twelfth edition	December 2006
Thirteenth edition	August 2007
Fourteenth edition	June 2011
Fifteenth edition	February 2014
Sixteenth edition	July 2019

*Published by*  
The International Table Tennis Federation

ISBN 0 946587 69 8

The International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF), founded in 1926, is the world-governing body of the sport with 226 member Associations in the world. ITTF supervises the staging of annual World Championships, which involve over 800 players from all continents, and several other world title events. Its main function is to govern and develop the sport for the benefit of over thirty million competitive players in all parts of the world. Table tennis is both an Olympic and Paralympic sport and is in the program of the respective Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games.

# HANDBOOK FOR MATCH OFFICIALS

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# HANDBOOK FOR MATCH OFFICIALS - 2019

## 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 (also available from the ITTF website). It deals mainly with the duties of umpires and assistant umpires, but it also includes 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. Match officials should also refer to the URC Newsletter, videos and FAQ on the URC website for the latest update information, recommended procedures and rules changes.
- 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 these are included as Appendices A, D, E, F and G.
- 1.3 Appendix B contains Directives for Match Officials at World Title Competitions and ITTF Sanctioned Events; 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, Appendix H covers some aspects of Para table tennis and Appendix I is a summary of law and regulation changes made since the last edition in 2014.

## 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. 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 senior, one junior and one veterans' open tournament, which it organises as its Senior, Junior or Veterans' 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. An Association, in addition, may also organise a Para table tennis tournament.

- 3.1.4 Since 1996, a number of Open International Championships have been included in a "World Tour Circuit" (previously known as Pro-Tour Circuit). They are organised directly under the auspices of ITTF and, from time to time, they incorporate experimental variations of laws and regulations authorised by ITTF Board of Directors. Such variations may apply to all World Tour tournaments in a season or be on an individual basis, and details will be given in the relevant entry form.

### **3.2 Restricted Tournaments**

- 3.2.1 Domestic tournaments, in which all the players are from the same Association and tournaments that 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 or her 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 or she 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 or she must act consistently and avoid any suspicion of partiality to particular players. In major competitions, it is recommended that the referee and his or her 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 or she will not normally make such appointments himself or herself, he or she must be satisfied that the officials are competent and that they act fairly and consistently. He or she should explain to the umpires, in his or her pre-tournament briefing, how he or she 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 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 or she 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, he or she has 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 or she is directly responsible also for timing the duration of play, but when the expedite system is in operation he or she 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 or she is entitled to seek an explanation if he or she believes that an official has made a decision that is outside his or her jurisdiction. If, on enquiry, he or she finds that an official

has acted in this way he or she 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 metres 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 or her seat is not high enough for him or her 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 or she 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 or her, and he or she 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 that 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. The assistant umpire should not stand for doubles.

### **4.4 Timekeeper**

- 4.4.1 The 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 or her 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 or her decision on this question of fact cannot be overruled. If the assistant umpire does act as stroke counter, he or she still retains his or her full responsibilities as assistant umpire. **The recommended position for the stroke counter is standing next to the umpire so the umpire can clearly hear the counting (in a large court with a vocal crowd it can be difficult to hear from the opposite side of the playing area). If this is not possible for reasons of TV cameras, or blocking the sight of spectators, then the stroke counter should stand next to the assistant umpire. Exceptionally, if both positions would cause issues for TV and/or spectators, the stroke counter may be seated next to the umpire.**

### **4.6 Appeals**

- 4.6.1 A player, or in a team match his or her captain, may appeal against what he or she 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 or her 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 a rule.

- 4.6.3 In responding to appeals, the referee must take care to observe the relevant procedures. In an individual event, he or she should deal only with the player or pair; a team captain or coach should not be allowed to intercede on his or her 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 or her 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 or her statement he or she 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 or she has been appointed. Such occasions are rare but when they do occur the referee must be ready to use his or her 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 in 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 or her simply because his or her 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 or her application of the laws or that he or she has been the subject of a previous protest by the player does not automatically disqualify him or her 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 a match, 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 or her 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 or her 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 or her jurisdiction. If they were made through a misinterpretation of rule or were outside his or her 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, E, F & G)**

- 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 each match is 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 must 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 immediately. Only officials directly concerned with a match should be allowed in the playing area, positioned so that they are as unobtrusive as possible consistent with their being able to carry out their duties.



- 4.8.5 Organisers, normally in conjunction with the referee, 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 **If wearing a jacket it is suggested** to close jackets when entering the field of play, and during the pre- or post-match presentation. However, whilst sitting down, it may be better to open the jacket for easier arm movements. 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 Uniform for Umpires**

- 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, for example, 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 a standard umpire's uniform for **major ITTF Events**. Refer to Appendix G for details.
- 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.
- 4.9.5 In some events, such as the Olympic and Paralympic Games, the organisers provide a uniform for match officials which should be worn during the event.

## **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 or she can report promptly to the referee any variation that is not within his or her 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 or herself 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 or herself but if he or she cannot do so without holding up play, he or she 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 or she 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 number, 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 or assistant umpire to check the net. When checking the net ensure that the clamp is attached as close as possible to the table and make sure that there is no cord hanging down from the net post which could affect the ball or distract the players. Then check both the tension of the net-cord and the height of the net. This should be done prior to every match, including individual matches within a team match. It is not really satisfactory just to estimate the tension by touch and several manufacturers have produced weighted net gauges, which ensure consistency. These gauges, which weigh exactly 100g, have two steps, one at 15.25cm and the other 1cm lower. However, the weighted gauge should only be used to check the tension – it should not be used for checking the height. The lower step of the weighted gauge is rested on the top of the net, in the centre, and the tension adjusted until the bottom of the gauge just touches the playing surface. After the tension has been checked, the height is then checked at each end using a plastic net gauge.**

Do not use the plastic gauge and weighted gauge at the same time.

## **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 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. The match will be played with the ball chosen by the players. If the match ball has not been agreed by both players before the match, the umpire will take at random one of the first preferred match balls by either player. If a ball has not been chosen before players come to the playing area, the match is played with a ball taken at random by the umpire from a box of those 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.

6.2.2.1 The "multi-ball" system means that the assistant umpire has a certain number of balls and delivers the next ball to the player, between points during the match, and at the start of each game, and the players do not need to pick up the ball from the floor or retrieve it from the back of the playing area (the net balls can be replayed). Prior to each match, the players are free to select 20 balls (10 balls per player) or more from the approved balls for the tournament. The box containing the selected balls remains on the assistant umpire's desk during the entire match. The assistant umpire immediately throws the next ball to the serving player for each point, except when the player has picked it up. Once the point has been determined and the ball is out of play, the ball persons run on the short side of the playing area from one corner to the other collecting the ball from the floor. The balls picked up from the playing area are deposited in containers at each corner. All collected balls are usually deposited in the assistant umpire's desk box between games.

## **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 or her umpires accordingly but, as a guide,  $\pm 2\text{mm}$  would be an acceptable margin to most referees. This may particularly be the case with Para class 1 and 2 players as they often use their racket hand to push themselves back up into a sitting position after striking the ball, and, in doing so, touch the table top with their rackets. Thus, an overhang can help to protect the tabletop and a slightly larger margin may be allowed.
- 7.1.2 In competitions played under international regulations, the covering must be of a type authorised by ITTF. Coverings authorised in this way carry the ITTF logo, the ITTF number (when present), and the supplier'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 handle of the striking surface so that they can be checked by the umpire.
- 7.1.3 The umpire must check the racket covering against a list of currently approved racket 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/equipment/](http://www.ittf.com/equipment/) has a list of currently approved racket coverings (LARC).
- 7.1.4 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. The covering must be used as it has been authorised by ITTF and is not allowed to be treated in any way, either by physical, chemical or other treatment that could modify the playing properties, such as friction, colour, surface, etc., and shall successfully pass all parameters of the racket control tests.

- 7.1.5 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 gauge is placed at an angle to the racket surface. However, the umpire will only be required to check the glossiness if he or she receives a complaint from the opposing player.

## **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 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 Glues containing harmful volatile compounds are no longer approved by ITTF. ITTF has informed all players to cease using glues containing volatile compounds and any player using such glues will be doing so at his or her own risk. ITTF has implemented a zero tolerance racket testing program and protocol, using mini RAE instruments, to ensure that all rackets used by players are free of volatile compounds. Adhesives containing volatile organic solvents cannot be used at the playing venue.
- 7.2.3 In major competitions, a racket control centre is established and rackets are tested for the presence of banned solvents, thickness, flatness, etc., normally before the matches.
- 7.2.4 A racket that does not pass a pre-match test, 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 in a paper envelope (or bag if envelope is not available) for issue at the match table.
- 7.2.5 If a racket fails a post-match test, the offending player will be liable to penalties as detailed in Referee Directives regarding Racket Control, which are available on the ITTF website.
- 7.2.6 All players are entitled to have their rackets tested voluntarily without any penalties before the match. Full details of Racket Control can be found on the URC page of the ITTF web site.

## **7.3 Inspection**

- 7.3.1 The umpire should inspect the rackets that players intend to use, if possible before arriving at the playing area, but before they start their pre-match practice, to avoid unnecessary delay at the start of the match. This is normally done in the Call Area before the match, and the rackets are kept in a paper envelope with the umpire for bringing into the playing area. 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 or she should explain why to the player. Even where this is a question of fact, such as an over-thick covering, the player may not accept the ruling. In such a situation, 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 leave their rackets on the table during the intervals between games and other authorised intervals and must not remove them without the specific agreement of the umpire. If, with the agreement of the umpire, a player removes his or her 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. The only exception to this is a disabled player whose racket is strapped to his or her hand.

## **7.4 Damage**

- 7.4.1 A racket that is legal when a player starts to use it may become damaged to an extent that 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 or she 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.

The Racket Control Workflow Procedure is also applicable and can be found at

<https://www.ittf.com/committees/umpires-referees/documents/>

## **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 larger percentage of the same colour evenly dispersed could be relatively unnoticeable. The purpose of this clause is to ensure visibility of the ball, and for that reason the colour of the back of the shirt can be disregarded (however refer to 8.1.6).
- 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 different colours. The umpire must resolve any question in this regard before the players start their practice period and, preferably, **at the Call Area**.
- 8.1.5 An umpire who considers that the shirts worn by opposing players are not sufficiently different should ask them to decide which of them will change; if they do not accept his or her 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 the umpire 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 **or on TV**, and opposing players' shirts should preferably be of different basic colours and not just different shades of the same colour. In some circumstances, this could also extend to the back of a player's shirt, especially in TV matches, where it is important that players are easily distinguishable. If a player has to change a shirt for any reason during a match the new shirt does not have to be the same colour as the one being changed, but still has to comply with the above clauses.

### **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 that would be precluded are obscene pictures or lettering and political slogans or messages in any language.
- 8.2.2 In a World, Olympic or Paralympic Title Competition, players of the same Association must be dressed uniformly, with the possible exception of socks, shoes, and the number, size, colour and design of advertisements on clothing (noting that no advertisements are allowed in Olympic and Paralympic competitions except for the clothing manufacturer). In other events, different coloured clothing for doubles pairs is allowed.

### **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, **such as tobacco goods, alcoholic drinks, harmful drugs or illegal products**. 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 Usually the umpire first has the opportunity to consider whether players' clothing complies with the relevant regulations. If he or she is sure that it is illegal, he or she should explain why to the player and, if the player accepts his or her decision 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 decision 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 or herself, 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 or she is uncertain, he or she 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 or she will allow, taking into account 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 Some players 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 or she 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 or her 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. A player with a physical disability, in either a wheelchair or standing, may wear the trousers portion of a tracksuit during play, but jeans are not permitted.

## **8.6 Changing**

- 8.6.1 If a player needs to change a playing garment because it is torn or wet through perspiration, in many cultures it is acceptable for male players to change shirts on the field of play, but outside the playing area. However, for some cultures or religions, this is unacceptable behaviour, and, in almost all cultures, it is not acceptable for females. In those circumstances, he or she may be allowed to leave the playing area to do so during any authorised interval in play, accompanied by an official. This should be done as quickly as possible, but it is accepted that it may take slightly longer than the statutory interval. The referee may give permission on each occasion or as a general dispensation to umpires before play begins, and this should be covered in the briefing to the umpires and also to team managers. Female players should always be allowed to leave the field of play to change clothing.

## **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 or her racket during a rally but attempts to return the ball by hitting it with the hand in which he or she had been holding the racket cannot make a good return, because he or she is not “striking” the ball according to the definition.
- 9.3 For the same reason he or she cannot make a good return by throwing his or her 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 or her 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 or she starts to throw it his or her 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 or her free hand and hold it stationary but then change his or her mind about the type of service he or she will make and move to another position to do so. Provided he or she 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 or her end line without touching his or her court since last being struck by his or her opponent.
- 9.7 The intention of “obstruction” is that a player will be penalised under this law only if he or she 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 or her 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 or she 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 or herself that the ball is resting freely on the server’s 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 or her arm and part of his or her 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 or her 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. In Diagram 10.3.1.1 services B and C are acceptable, whilst A and D are not. The height of the toss is also a factor in determining whether the toss is near vertical. In

Diagram 10.3.1.2, the ball is projected from, and struck at, the same place, but service A is a fault, whilst B is acceptable.

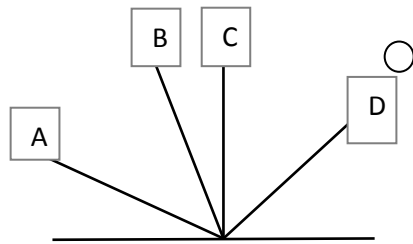


Diagram 10.3.1.1

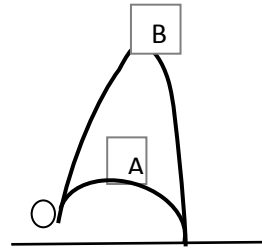


Diagram 10.3.1.2

- 10.3.2 The lower limit of 16cm 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 current service law is for the server to ensure that the receiver can see the ball throughout the service, and the umpire or assistant umpire must be satisfied that this is the case. The umpire or assistant umpire should look to see that the ball is not hidden from the receiver at any stage by any part of the body, or anything he or she or his or her doubles partner is wearing or carrying, and that the server's free arm, which includes the free hand, **is not in the space between the ball and the net, once the ball has been projected upwards.**
- 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 or her back.
- 10.5.3 From their positions in line with the net, **especially in case of one umpire per table in the qualification stage,** it may be impractical for the umpire and/or the 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 or her service action can be seen and if he or she serves near the margins of illegality, he or she runs the risk of being penalised.

## 10.6 Warning

- 10.6.1 An umpire or assistant umpire, who suspects, but is not sure, that a **player's service action is illegal,** may call a let and warn the player without awarding a point. Either the umpire or assistant umpire can issue a service warning (see Appendix D for appropriate hand signals). **Only one warning may be given during a match.** If any of his or her, or his or her doubles partner's, subsequent services in that match is of doubtful legality, for the same or for any other reason, a point will be awarded to his or her opponent. A yellow card should not be used for a service warning.
- 10.6.2 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, by either the umpire or assistant umpire, 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.
- 10.6.3 The umpire or assistant umpire has no power to ignore an infringement of the service law because he or she 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 or she had been given no earlier indication that the action was illegal.

## 10.6 Exceptions



- 10.7.1 The umpire may relax the requirements for a correct service if he or she is satisfied that compliance is prevented by a physical disability. This will always be done for Class 1 and Class 2 players (refer Appendix H). The player's international classification card contains a section indicating any physical limitations that the player may have affecting compliance with the requirements of a correct service e.g. where a player with a disability is either not able to straighten his or her palm or does not have a hand, the player may serve with a curved palm or toss the ball from his or her stump.

## **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 temporarily suspend play. 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 When the ball touches the net during service, the umpire and assistant umpire wait until the ball touches the correct court and then make the appropriate call, rather than introduce an additional signal before the rally is over that may interfere with play. (See Appendix E – Recommended Hand Signals and Calls).
- 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 or her arm or catch the ball and ask the umpire to declare a let. Unless the umpire is certain that it did not he or she will usually concur, especially if the server agrees with his or her opponent, but he or she should make clear that he or she 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 that 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 that were present at the start of a rally. For example, a player who fails to make a good return because he or she collides with his or her 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 or his or her partner is not ready, provided the receiver 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.

### **11.5 Wheelchair Play**

- 11.5.1 If the receiver is in a wheelchair due to a physical disability, the rally is a let if the ball comes to rest on the receiver's court, or after touching the receiver's court returns in the direction of the net, or, in singles, leaves the receiver's court after touching it by either of the sidelines.



This is because a player in a wheelchair, by definition, is restricted in the extent of his or her ability to stretch and a service returning towards the net or going out from the sidelines is regarded as unfair. The ball can cross the sideline after one or more bounces. However, in singles play and where the ball is travelling towards the sideline, if the receiver strikes the ball before it crosses a sideline or takes a second bounce on his or her side of the playing surface, the service is considered good and no let is called.

## **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 or she expects to happen, without allowing for the possibility that the rally may be ended in some quite different way that may invalidate his or her 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. The rule regarding moving the playing surface is more than 50 years old, and comes from a time where we had no rollaway tables; nowadays tables have hinges and a light push or even stamping on the floor can move the playing surface. Because of this, most umpires do not apply the rule strictly and it would be impossible to play wheelchair table tennis if "moving the playing surface" was enforced. Only lifting, permanent shifting or displacement, or intentional shaking the tabletop should result in the awarding of a point.
- 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 hit a player accidentally touches the playing surface with his or her free hand or moves the table while the ball is in play, his or her opponent will score a point, whether or not he or she 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 or she 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 or she makes by reference to a law and it is for this reason that he or she 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 or her decision. He or she may be able to do so by means of signs or by using one of the standard terms of explanation (18.4.2).
- 12.1.6 A player who is in a wheelchair due a physical disability and who does not maintain a contact with the seat or cushion with the rear side of at least one of the thighs just before striking the ball is considered to be gaining an unfair advantage and the opponent is awarded a point.
- 12.1.7 If a player is in a wheelchair due to a physical disability, he or she may only touch the table with his or her racket hand to restore balance, only after a shot has been played, provided the playing surface does not move. The player is not allowed to use the table as an extra support before striking the ball. Similarly, the player may not use his or her free hand on the table as an extra support, or touch the playing surface at any time during the rally. In a doubles match this applies to both players.

### **12.2 Edge Balls**

- 12.2.1 It is necessary to decide whether a ball that 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 the table can help the umpire or assistant umpire to 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, 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 or her. If he or she believes that the ball touched the side he or she 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 or her.

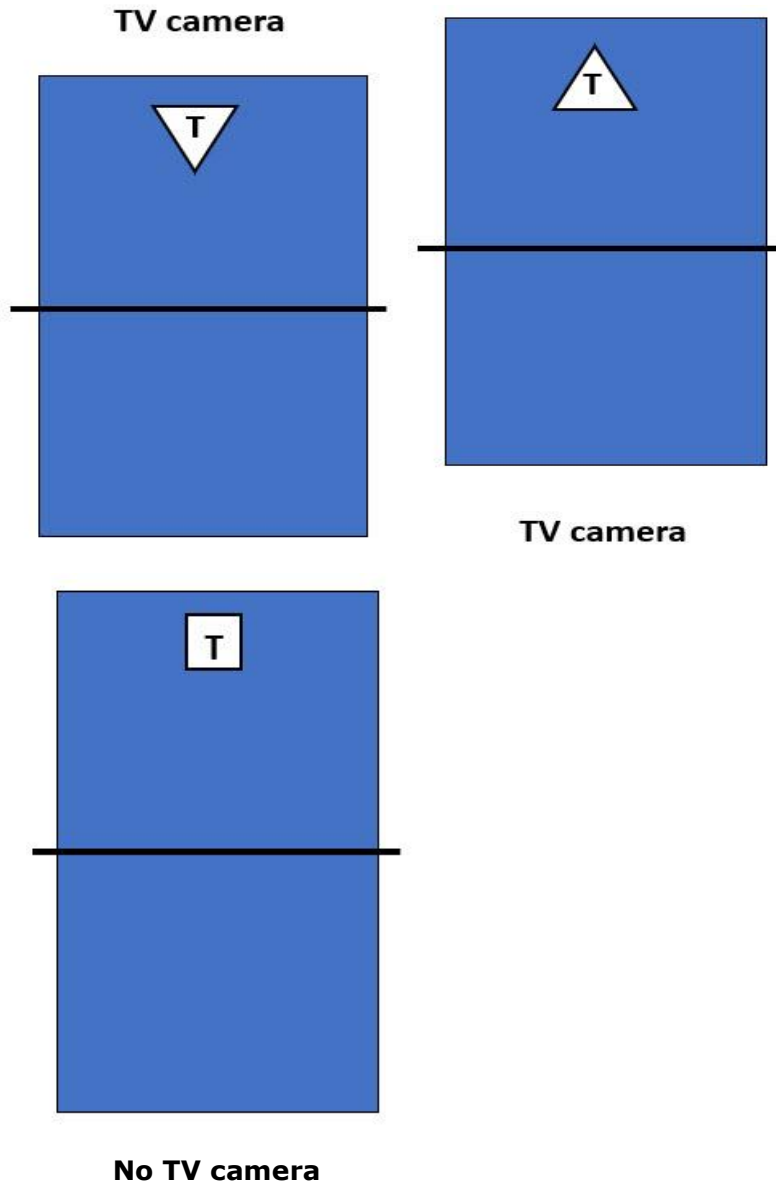
### **12.3 Doubt**

- 12.3.1 An umpire who is certain that he or she has made a correct decision should not change it simply because the players think he or she is wrong, but he or she may appear officious if he or she 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 or her 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 or she may have been mistaken, he or she would be wise to accept the correction.
- 12.3.3 When there is a genuine doubt in the mind of the umpire, he or she should give the benefit of the doubt to the player who may have committed an offence, provided he or she 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 or she too suspected that his or her opponent infringed a law or regulation 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 one time-out period of up to 1 minute during an individual match. Making a T-sign with the hands indicates the request, which can be made only between rallies after the start of the game. In the unlikely event of one player requesting a time-out and the other player also requesting a time-out before play has resumed this is allowed. The intention of the rule is that requests for a time-out may be made in the period between successive rallies in a game.
- 13.1.2 On receiving the request, the umpire should suspend play and hold up a white card, calling "Time Out" and raising the arm above the head, on the side of the player or pair making the request. The assistant umpire should then place a special signboard (or white marker) on the court of the player or pair making the request, approximately 15cm from the end of the table and on the centre line, and according to the Referee briefing. After placing the special signboard (or white marker) and before removing it from the table, the assistant umpire shall stand beside his or her table. 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 special signboard (or white marker) should then be removed from the table and a white marker be placed near the score indicator, next to the score of the player or pair who requested the time-out. If an umpire is working without an assistant, he or she should show the white card, and, if it can be done easily, place a special signboard (or white marker) on the court of the player or pair making the request.



- 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 may practice for up to 2 minutes, but as soon as they have finished they should 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. 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 or she is using is damaged, because he or she is required to be able to replace it in the playing area. **If he or she is unable to replace a racket immediately, call the referee.**
- 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 or she 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. The timekeeper should time the suspension from the time when the referee is called, not from the time he or she arrives at the playing area.
- 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 or she 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.
- 13.5.4 If a player with a disability is unable to play temporarily due to the nature of his/her disability or condition, the referee may, after consulting a medical classifier or doctor at the competition, allow a medical recovery time of the shortest practical duration, but in no circumstances more than 10 minutes.

### **13.6 Leaving Playing Area**

- 13.6.1 Players must normally 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 or she decides to serve or receive first his or her 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. **Between games, it is best to wait until both pairs have returned to the table before asking which player is to serve.**
- 14.1.4 When a doubles pair comprises two players who are in wheelchairs due to a physical disability, the server first makes a service and the receiver makes a return, but thereafter either player of the disabled pair may make a return. However if any part of a player's wheelchair protrudes beyond the imaginary extension of the centre line of the table, the umpire will award a point to the opposing pair. This also applies when a "mixed" pair (one standing and one wheelchair) are playing together. Either player may return the ball (after initial service and return), but each player has to remain in his or her own half of the court. No part of the player's wheelchair can cross the imaginary extension of the centre line and the standing player cannot put a foot over this line either.

## **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 or she should ask them immediately who would have been their first server, and he or she 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 18 points in total have been scored, 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 18 points have been scored, 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 Players may receive advice at any time except during rallies provided that continuity of play is not affected. Whilst there is no longer any specific regulation regarding advice between the end of practice and the start of play, this is to be actively discouraged as it would delay the start of the match.
- 16.2 In a team event, he or she may receive advice from anyone authorised to be at the playing area, but in an individual event, he or she 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 gives advice illegally after either has been warned, both should be sent away from the playing area.
- 16.3 When anyone tries to give advice illegally the umpire should first warn him or her by holding up a yellow card so that it is clearly visible to everyone concerned, but there is no need for him or her to leave his or her 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 adviser cannot replace an adviser 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 or she cannot influence play. In an individual event, he or she may not return until the match ends; in a team event, he or she may not return until the end of the team match except to play, when he or she may return only for the duration of his or her individual match. If he or she refuses to leave, gives advice from spectator seats, or returns before he or she is entitled to do so the umpire should suspend play and report to the referee.
- 16.5 The "behaviour" regulations include provision for use of the penalty point system to control advice given illegally, 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 or she has not sought and may not want and in most cases it is better to deal directly with the illegal adviser.
- 16.6 The assistant umpire may often be in a better position than the umpire to see that advice is being given illegally during play. If 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 or her hand. The umpire should then take any appropriate action.

## **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 or she tolerates early lapses in good behaviour, however trivial, without even a disapproving glance he or she will find it much harder to impose proper discipline if these lapses later become more persistent or serious.
- 17.1.3 The umpire should, however, avoid over-reaction to possibly unintentional instances of unseemly behaviour, for this could lead to resentment and animosity that will undermine his or her authority. When he or she takes action, he or she 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 or she 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.
- 17.1.7 The assistant umpire may often be in a better position than the umpire to see misbehaviour. If this occurs, the assistant umpire should immediately draw this to the umpire's attention, interrupting play if necessary by calling "stop" and raising his or her hand. The umpire should then take any appropriate action.

## **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 or she 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. Similarly, if a player has had a penalty point awarded against him or her, both a yellow and red marker should be placed near the score indicator, if space permits. If both the umpire and assistant umpire are using score indicators then the cards **should be placed on both the umpires' indicator**. These warnings apply 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 offences 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 or she may find that he or she 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 or her opponent and for a third offence he or she should award 2 points, each time holding up a yellow and a red card together to show the action he or she has taken. Should misbehaviour continue after the umpire has imposed these penalties he or she 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 or she wishes, to come to the playing area so that he or she will be readily available in case of any further trouble. If the referee or his or her 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 or her 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). In this case, the server is the one who should have been serving at that score according to the sequence established at the beginning of the match.
- 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. The following examples illustrate this point:

In a team match with 4 singles and 1 doubles matches, players A & B are paired to play the doubles match. In their first singles matches in this team match, A was warned and B incurred a penalty point. In the second game of the doubles match A intentionally breaks the ball by stepping on it. The umpire awards 2 penalty points against A/B. In their next singles matches, each player carries forward a yellow/red card – i.e. they each have 2



misbehaviour offenses.

Both players of a doubles pair (A and B) have misbehaved immediately following the loss of a game (one player threw the racket, the second one shouted bad words). Yellow card to player A and yellow/red to player B. It makes no difference whether it is in the same moment or a little bit later. A warning or penalty incurred by either player of a doubles pair shall apply to the pair. In the next individual match of this team match each player starts with a yellow card. The next game of that individual match starts at the score of 0-1 or 1-0 in favour of the offender's opponent.

Cards carry forward but penalty points do not.

- 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 scoresheet, stating who was warned or penalised and at what stage of the match, with a brief description of the offence. This recording of warnings should also be applied to coaches for similar reasons.
- 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 or she may be protesting. If, after a formal warning, a coach continues to misbehave he or she 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 or her judgment, but, when a player is reported for continuing to misbehave after the award of 2 penalty points, the referee would normally disqualify him or her, holding up a red card. In very serious cases, he or she 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 or she may sometimes be able to see them and to take action before the umpire has invoked his or her attention. He or she 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 is/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 or she should take action on his or her own initiative, either by telling the umpire what he or she 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 or her voice does not suggest partiality towards one player or pair; he or she may place a slight emphasis on the number of points that has changed as a result of the rally. If he or she is using a microphone he or she may need to adjust his or her speaking level, and/or the position of the microphone, and he or she 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 or she 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 or she may prefer to delay his or her call slightly until he or she 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 or pair due to serve next, then the number of points scored by the opposing player or pair. At a change of service, he or she should point to the next server. This may be followed by the name of the next server. Whether or not to name the server should be covered at the referee's briefing, with the main aim being that all umpires at an event act consistently. **If it is not covered at the referee's briefing, it is recommended not to call the server's name at each change of service.** At the start of a game, the server's name should be announced first.
- 18.1.4 Whilst it is optional for the umpire to use the players' names, he or she 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 should announce "Smith to serve", "Love all" or "Zero-Zero", 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 to Poland 11-6, Poland wins by 3 games to 0; 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, it is recommended that the umpire 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 or her 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 or her hand to the next server at a change of service. He or she may also indicate the award of a point by raising the arm nearer to the player or pair who won it, so that the upper arm is horizontal and the forearm is vertical, with the closed hand upward. If he or she declares a let or wishes to delay the resumption of play he or she should raise one hand above his or her head, and the assistant umpire should use the same signal to attract the umpire's attention when he or she makes a decision within his or her 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 and recommended calls by the umpire and assistant umpire during match situations. The judgement on illegal services is one of the most challenging situations of table tennis officiating because there are so many kinds of illegal service actions that cannot be expressed by a single hand signal. Both umpire and assistant umpire are recommended to use these hand signals to allow not only players but also coaches and spectators to understand the situation better. The umpire or assistant umpire will first show the hand signal for the illegal service. If the player questions or asks for clarification, the umpire or assistant umpire will verbally communicate using the simple term e.g. not high enough or below the playing surface.

## 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 or she 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,
- |   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| service not good                          | "fault"         |
| 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 deliberately 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 or she 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 (See Appendix E).

## 19 SCORE INDICATORS

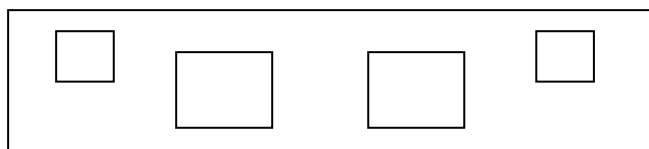
- 19.1 The score is usually displayed on one or more score indicators. The correct use of score indicators is an important element in the presentation of a match and the umpire should make sure that the officials operating them are aware of their duties. Operators must await the umpire's call or signal 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 0-0 (see Appendix A) until both players or pairs arrive in the playing area, as a guide to whoever is controlling the programme 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 point's 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. The operator may rotate it by up to 45° to his or her left and/or right at suitable intervals during play, such as at a break for towelling or when retrieving the ball from the rear of the playing area, or at change of service. Provided the score indicator is reasonably light, and the operator feels it is necessary to do so, the operator may also raise the score indicator whilst rotating it.
- 19.6 Most mechanical score indicators can display points scores up to about 20 and rarely will the score in a game exceed this figure. If this stage is reached it is suggested to revert to 10-10, a score at which the alternation of service is expected. However if there are electronic scoreboards also in use, or the manual score indicator doesn't stop at 20 (e.g. 25), it is better to revert to 0-0 (or 5-5 if the scoreboard stops at 25) to avoid confusion. For example, if the score is shown as 21-20 on the electronic scoreboard (or 26-25 on a manual scoreboard which goes to 25) it is better to show 1-0 (or 6-5) on the manual indicator rather than 11-10.
- 19.7 See Appendix A for examples of the correct use of score indicators.

## 20 CONCLUSION

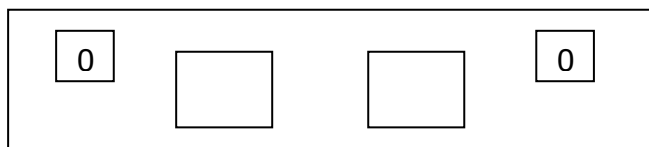
- 20.1 Whether working alone or as part of a team, the work of match officials can be difficult and demanding. They must be fair but not indulgent, firm but not officious and confident without being obtrusive. For most people these qualities are acquired only through experience, but it is hoped that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

## Appendix A - Match Procedure for Match Officials

- 1 If there is a call area, umpires have to be present at the time given by the referee. In the call area the umpire should get the scoresheet, check the colour of the shirts, and shorts/skirt for team matches and doubles, that are brought by the players, check the name or back numbers, register the name of the advisers, execute the ball selection and test the rackets (except for VOC). In case the racket is selected for official racket control, the racket should be brought to the Racket Control Centre.
- 2 Before going to the playing area, check that you have all the necessary equipment, such as net gauges (plastic and weighted), disc or coin for tossing, towel, balls, scoresheet, pen, stopwatch and coloured cards. Make sure that you understand how to complete the scoresheet.
- 3 If possible, and not done earlier in the call-area, before entering the field of play make sure that team players, and doubles pairs of the same Association, are similarly dressed and that opposing players or pairs are wearing shirts of clearly different colours; report any non-compliance that you cannot resolve, or any doubt about clothing or rackets, to the referee.
- 4 On arrival at the playing area, check that the table and surrounds are correctly positioned and that the net is properly adjusted for tension and height, that the clamp is properly affixed to the table and the net cord is not hanging down. The table should be quickly checked for cleanliness and wiped down if necessary. If a microphone is to be used, if practical make sure that it is working properly and that you know the correct voice level.
- 5 Set the indicators to the blank position – that is, so that they show no points or game scores (Figure 1). In a team match, check that the match score indicator is set correctly. When both players or pairs arrive in the playing area, set both game score indicators to "0" (Figure 2).



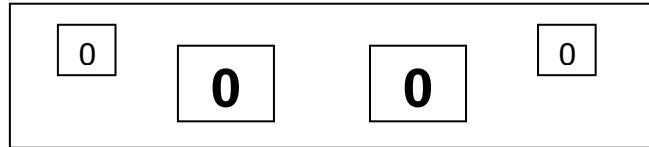
**Figure 1: Before players arrive**



**Figure 2: When players arrive**

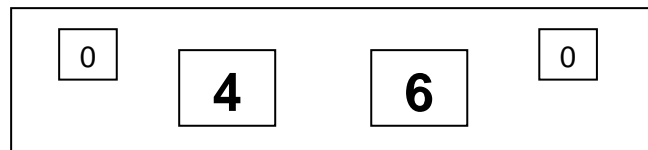
- 6 If not done earlier, before practice begins, check that the players shown on the score sheet are in the playing area and are wearing either their correct number or have their name displayed, and that their rackets are acceptable. If you leave this until later and there is a wrong player or an illegal racket, time spent practising will have been wasted.
- 7 Decide who will have the choice of service and ends by tossing a two-coloured 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 to the table and, preferably, not on to the floor.
- 8 When both players or pairs have made their choices, note on the scoresheet who is 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.
- 9 In an individual event, establish who the designated advisor is 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.
- 10 Give the players a ball that you have taken at random, either from those 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. When the multi-ball system is in place use any one of the selected balls (see 6.2.1).

- 11 Time the practice period and recall players as soon as the permitted time is up. Make sure that they **do not delay the start of the match** after the practice period has ended.
- 12 Before play starts, ensure that towels are placed in a receptacle provided near the umpire or assistant umpire and are not left draped over surrounds. Any other items, such as tracksuits and bags, should be placed outside the playing area.
- 13 When the players are ready point to and name the first server, call "love-all" or "zero-zero". 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).



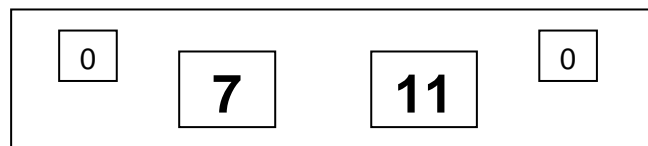
**Figure 3: At 0-0 in 1<sup>st</sup> game**

- 14 Start the timer as the first player serves, stop, and re-start it for substantial breaks in play, such as time spent for towelling or retrieving the ball from outside the playing area. Call "time" if play lasts for 10 minutes, unless expedite is already in operation or 18 points in total have been scored.
- 15 After the end of each rally indicate the result by the appropriate hand signal, and as soon as practicable thereafter by calling the new score, or repeating the last score in the event of a let. If there is to be a change of service, point to the next server. You may also name the next server. Do not change the indicators until the umpire has signalled or called the award of a point (Figure 4).



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

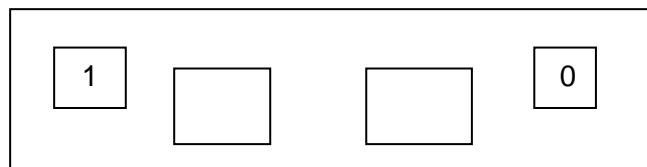
- 16 Discourage players from wasting time by such means as **seeking advice**, wandering around the playing area between rallies, persistent bouncing of the ball before serving or prolonged discussion with a doubles partner.
- 17 **Only during rallies**, make sure that the players are not given advice, either by speech or by signals. On the first occasion warn anyone advising illegally; if the offence is repeated, send the adviser away from the playing area for the remainder of the match or, in a team match, for the remainder of the team match.
- 18 At the end of a game, call the score, announce the winner and the current games score and record the result on the scoresheet. Leave the indicators showing the final points score, without changing the games score (Figure 5). Be alert and look for any misbehaviour immediately following the end of a game.



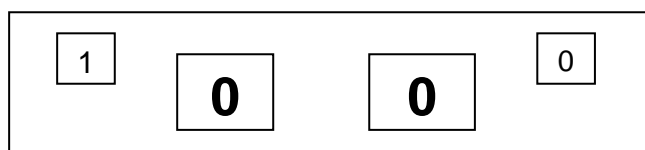
**Figure 5: At end of 1<sup>st</sup> game**

- 19 If necessary, remind players that they must leave their rackets on the table between games unless you give permission for them to be removed. If they are removed, remember that they must be inspected again before the next game. However if the racket is strapped to the hand allow the player to retain it that way.
- 20 After each game, and during authorised intervals, collect and retain the match ball. Check that surrounds are in their correct positions. Time the interval between games, and other authorised intervals, and recall players as soon as the permitted time is up.

- 21 During intervals, do not wander round 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 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, red or white markers. Set the points indicators to "0-0" when the umpire calls that score (Figure 7).

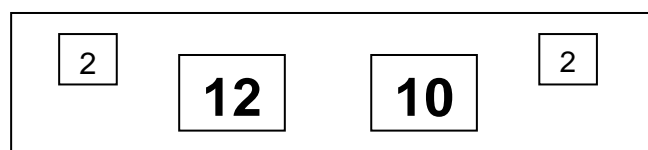


**Figure 6: Just before 2<sup>nd</sup> game**



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

- 23 At the end of a match, announce the result and, in a team match, the new team match score. Complete the scoresheet and ask the players (in an individual match) or the team captains (in a team match) to sign it, as required. Often this is not necessary and whether or not to have the scoresheet signed should be covered at the umpires' briefing by the referee. Leave the indicators showing the final points score and the previous games score (Figure 8).



**Figure 8: At end of match**

- 24 Return the scoresheet 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 have been left behind. If necessary collect rackets designated for an after match test. Reset the indicators to the all-blank position (Figure 1).
- 25 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.

Training videos on procedures can also be found on the URC website:

<https://www.ittf.com/committees/umpires-referees/videos/>

## Appendix B - Qualifications of Umpires

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 titled "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. A basic level of English comprehension is encouraged, as it is the base level of communicating with players, coaches and other officials.

The 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 comprising 40 questions with 4 possible options from which to choose the correct answer and another 10 situational questions. The candidate has to select the correct answers within a fixed time, 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 IU demands not just a general knowledge of the Rules but also a strong understanding of the intention and interpretation of the laws and regulations.

Once qualified, an IU may have an 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 IU.

In 2002, ITTF took the first step towards instituting a higher-level qualification for IUs. Through attending the Advanced Umpire Training (AUT) seminar at designated ITTF events, passing an advance level – ITTF supervised – written exam (the Advanced Rules Exam (ARE)), successfully completing multiple field of play evaluations by different evaluators at various events as well as passing an oral interview in English, an IU can qualify toward the next level of "Blue" badge certification.

Every year at designated ITTF events, and also at the request of event organisers, qualified trainers will conduct an AUT seminar as well as field of play evaluations by qualified evaluators of IUs officiating in those events. The AUT seminar is designed to impart the ITTF uniform method of performance for all IUs. The evaluation process – with immediate feedback to each umpire – is designed to assist umpires in improving and standardising 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.

Umpires attaining – and maintaining their "Blue" badge certification through regular activities and evaluations – will have greater opportunities to be 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. Consistent performance among all IUs – irrespective of language and cultural differences – is the primary objective of the ITTF umpire qualification process.

## Umpires Progression and Advanced Umpire Training

### Introduction

Since the start of the International Umpires (IU) certification in 1973, ITTF has qualified more than 5 000 IUs. It has set a minimum standard for umpires of all Associations, which have different training methods with no uniform standard of performance.

Since 2002, the Umpires and Referees Committee (URC) of ITTF has taken an important step towards one of its major objectives: "To raise and level the standard and consistency of umpires from all Associations/Federations".

This has been done by creating two levels of certification for IUs, expressed in the colour of badges, namely the White Badge and the Blue Badge. These badges only exist in name and on paper: IUs will continue to wear the copper-coloured badge issued by ITTF **and their nametag, unless directed otherwise.**

### White Badge

All current IUs will be considered as qualified for the White Badge. URC will develop training facilities, and perhaps the exam procedure will be adapted. In the future, there will be additional conditions to maintain the active status, such as secure knowledge of rules **through a re-certification process.**

### Blue Badge

Umpires with excellent performance who have the ambition can try to achieve the Blue Badge qualification. This qualification has been and will be an increasing factor in umpire selection.

### How to qualify for Blue Badge

Requirements:

- Be an active White Badge umpire for at least 2 years
- **Officiate as an IU in at least 2 international events;**
- Comply with the URC code of conduct and dress-code;
- Attend the Advanced Umpire Training (AUT) **seminar;**
- Pass the written Advanced Rules Examination (ARE);
- **Obtain 4 "Meets Expectation" (ME) evaluations from at least 3 different trainers in at least 2 different competitions;**
- **Pass an oral interview in English either by a face to face or via Skype or similar video teleconference to demonstrate one's competency in English to communicate with players and officials during tournaments.**

### Additional requirements

- Evaluation can start only after attending the AUT and passing the ARE;
- **If a candidate fails the ARE, it cannot be retaken less than 12 months after the 1st attempt and shall also not be the same question paper;**
- After obtaining the first "meets expectations" the remaining 3 should be obtained within 7 attempts;
- No evaluations can be from an evaluator from that umpire's own Association;
- **The oral interview can be requested after attending the AUT and passing the ARE, or after obtaining the 4th "meets expectations";**
- After obtaining the 4<sup>th</sup> "meets expectations" the candidate will have a maximum of 12 months to take the oral interview;
- If a candidate fails the **oral** interview they will have a maximum of 2 years from their first interview to re-take it;
- **The ARE and oral interview may not be taken more than twice within a 5-year period;**
- **The Blue Badge process must be completed within 5 years of attending the AUT or passing the ARE, whichever comes first (for example attended AUT on 10 May 2017 and passed ARE on 12 August, 2018, the process has to be completed no later than 9 May, 2022);**
- Candidates not taking the interview or not completing the Blue Badge process **within the specified time(s),** revert to the White Badge status and must restart the complete Blue Badge **process;**
- **Evaluations only count if the umpire is part of the regular umpires' squad, performing daily duties. All others, though part of the tournament, shall not be evaluated even if they make themselves available as an umpire only for the sake of being evaluated;**
- Any "meets expectation" evaluations **obtained in a competition shall be** considered as "conditional meets", which will only be confirmed after continuous observation and further evaluation throughout the tournament. Any inconsistent or poor performance could result in deletion of such positive result, and the evaluator will notify the umpire;
- After having obtained the first "meets expectation" getting a "does not meet" (not a "near") will cancel a **previous** "meets expectation";
- If a Blue Badge candidate is not present at the "Referee's Briefing" he or she will not be evaluated during the respective **competition,** unless the absence was for an acceptable reason, at the discretion of the evaluator.



## How to maintain the Blue Badge status

Requirements:

- Obtain 3 "Meets Expectation" (ME) evaluations from at least 2 different evaluators in at least 2 different competitions in the last 3 calendar years;
- Meet the re-certification process of White Badge umpires, as soon as re-certification is in place;
- No evaluation can be from an evaluator from that umpire's own Association;
- After passing the oral interview and with 4 confirmed "meets expectations" any further "meets" will count for the following period of 3 years (for example candidate was qualified on May 31, 2018, the 3 year period will end in December 31, 2021) for maintaining the blue-badge qualification, but "meets" between the 4<sup>th</sup> meets" and the oral interview shall not be reckoned;
- Blue Badge umpires not meeting these requirements by December 31 of any year, would be qualified as White Badge umpires for the following year;

Blue Badge umpires who lose their status and are reverted to White Badge IUs, may regain their Blue Badge status by meeting the requirement of obtaining 4 "meets expectations" from at least 2 different evaluators in 2 successive calendar years, and this must be achieved within 3 years of losing their Blue Badge status. The condition of achieving this within 3 years of losing the BB status will take effect from 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020. A BB who loses his or her status and fails to regain his or her BB status within the specified time shall revert to the White Badge status and must restart the complete Blue Badge process.

## Advanced Umpires Training (AUT) Seminar

The AUT seminar is normally scheduled one day before the start of several ITTF sanctioned events. White Badge umpires officiating in these events are invited to attend the training. The URC will announce the schedule of the organised AUT seminars on the website.

The training is based on the concept: "I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand". There is a high degree of active participation.

Global summary of subjects:

- Introduction activities;
- Presentation & Communication;
- Standards for service & behaviour;
- Duties of Umpires and Assistant Umpires;
- Management of a Match;
- Hand signals & field of play procedures;
- Evaluations;
- Knotty problems;
- Special characteristics of Para TT events;
- Written examination (ARE).

## Advance Rules Examination (ARE)

The AUT does not cover the material asked in the ARE.

The written examination consists of 60 multiple-choice questions, of which 15 will be only in English, the other 45 will be available translated into 8 other languages: French, German, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Arabic. This is to ensure that candidates have a sound knowledge in the application of laws and regulations, as well as a reasonable command of English that is required in major ITTF events.

Participants must have a very strong knowledge of the rules and must be up to date on recent rule changes. The examination may not be re-taken less than 12 months after the first attempt, shall not be the same question paper and not more than twice within a five-year period.

Attending the AUT and passing the ARE are prerequisites for those who want to become Blue Badge umpires. The ARE can be taken before or after attending the AUT. The ARE will be a supervised exam with the supervisor being appointed by URC.

## The Trainers

The trainers for AUT seminars are experienced International Umpires / Referees who are nominated by their respective Continental Federations or identified by the URC. All trainers are specially trained and updated regularly on requirements of the Blue Badge Programme, with an aim to maintain consistent application of laws and regulations, as well as a standard presentation at major ITTF events.

## Costs for Participants



A fee will be charged depending if ARE, AUT or combined ARE/AUT is taken (please see current fee structure on the ITTF URC website).

The AUT fee will include attending the seminar, the field of play evaluations, and the evaluations thereafter in subsequent tournaments should the candidate have passed the ARE. However, if a candidate fails in the written examination (ARE), there will be no more field of play evaluations conducted until he or she successfully takes the examination again.

The AUT is conducted for one whole day prior to the start of the tournament and participants for the AUT are responsible for the costs of the additional night's meals and accommodation.

### **Costs for Organisers**

For URC approved events, ITTF will be responsible for the following costs:

- Travelling expenses and training fee for the appointed trainers;
- Course and examination materials.

Where more than two trainers are required, then the Organizers shall be responsible for the travelling expense(s) and training fee of the additional trainer(s).

The Organisers are responsible for the following:

- Hospitality (accommodation in a single room + meals + local travelling + daily allowance) for the trainer(s);
- Airport transfer and local transportation for the trainer(s);
- Training facilities – classroom, equipment such as computer, projector, screen, white board, flip charts, copying services, etc.;
- Refreshments during breaks would be appreciated.

To qualify for ITTF expenses, please refer to the current document "Call for Hosting AUT, ARE and Evaluation".

The URC may also send trainers to specific events upon request of the Organisers, who agree to cover all related costs of the seminar and/or evaluations, including transportation and honorarium for trainers.

### **Contact**

Organisers wishing to organise an AUT course, or to have trainers/evaluators at their events, are requested to contact the Chair of the URC.

## **Appendix C - Match Officials Code of Conduct**

As with the high standard of professionalism and conduct required of players, ITTF requires a high standard of professionalism and conduct from its officials as well as all officials participating in ITTF sanctioned and recognized events. ITTF officials not observing the stated guidelines may be subject to a formal disciplinary process.

Match officials, especially while in **official clothing**, are ambassadors of the sport, of ITTF and of their Associations. At an international competition, they are the guests of the host Association and 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.

### **1 MATCH OFFICIALS SHOULD**

- 1.1 Study and make sure they understand all the relevant rules, duties and procedures for the competition at which they are officiating;
- 1.2 Be in good physical condition, with normal or corrected vision and normal hearing;
- 1.3 Be in appropriate uniform and maintain their appearance and personal hygiene;
- 1.4 Be prompt for all assignments;
- 1.5 Maintain strict impartiality and avoid any relationship with players or coaches that might cast doubt on that impartiality;
- 1.6 Refer all issues not related to their duties to the referee or other appropriate tournament official;
- 1.7 Wherever practical, avoid unaccompanied and unobserved one-on-one activity (when in a supervisory capacity or where a power imbalance may exist) particularly with people under the age of 18 years;
- 1.8 Ensure their decisions and actions contribute to a safe environment;
- 1.9 Ensure their decisions and actions contribute to a harassment free environment;
- 1.10 At all times conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner, respecting the authority and interests of the referee, the organisers, other tournament officials, players and the public.

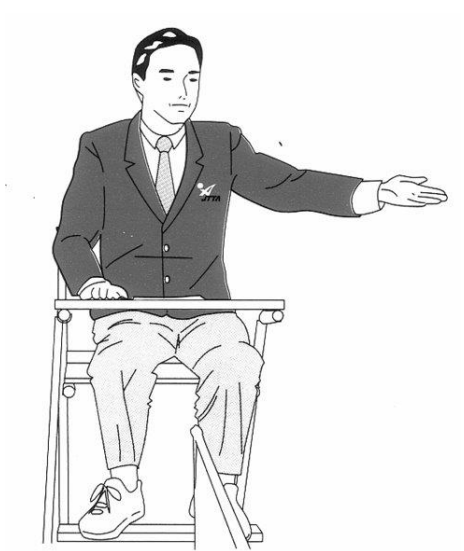
### **2 MATCH OFFICIALS SHOULD NOT**

- 2.1 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;
- 2.2 Accept personal gifts from players, coaches and teams. Gifts provided by a host organisation to all officials can be accepted;
- 2.3 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 criticise other officials or otherwise bring the sport into disrepute, including use of social media;
- 3.5 Tolerate harmful or abusive behaviours but report them to the Chair of the URC where the issue is not resolved to the satisfaction of the parties concerned;

Please refer to the ITTF Handbook for the policies adopted in relation to Anti-Harassment and Illegal Betting and Corruption.

The URC reserves the right to take action if an official deviates from this code of conduct.

## Appendix D – Recommended Hand Signals and Calls



1. Next server and winner of game/match



2. Let



3. Point

When making hand signals ensure that they are clearly separated. For example, do not indicate a point with one arm and at the same time indicate the next server with the other arm.

## Hand Signals for Illegal Services

- 1 If the ball does not rise at least 16cm after leaving the palm of the free hand, umpire or assistant umpire shall show the hand signal as shown in Figure 1

**Verbal communication: Not high enough**



Figure 1 Not high enough

- 2 If service does not start with the ball resting freely on the open palm of server's stationary free hand, umpire or assistant umpire shall show the hand signal as shown in Figure 2

**Verbal communication: Palm not open**



Figure 2 Palm not opened

- 3 If service start with the ball resting freely on the fingers of server's stationary free hand, umpire or assistant umpire shall show the hand signal as shown in Figure 3

**Verbal communication: Ball resting on the fingers**

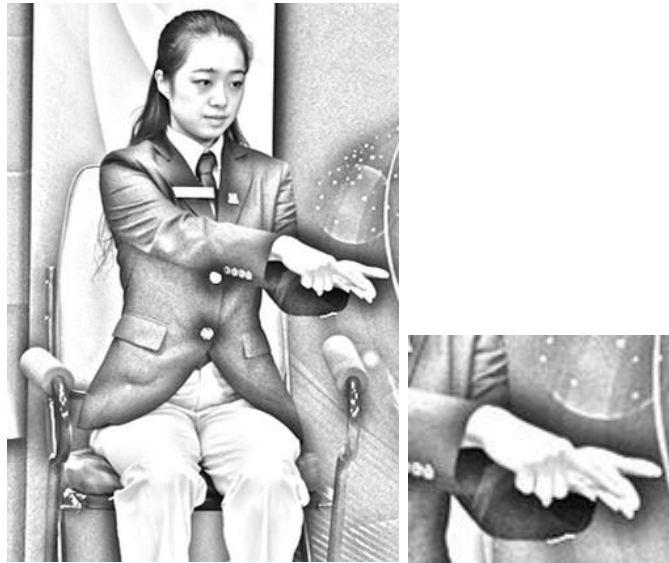


Figure 3 Ball resting on the fingers

- 4 If the ball is under the level of the playing surface from the start of service until it is struck, umpire or assistant umpire shall show the hand signal as shown in Figure 4

**Verbal communication: Below the playing surface**

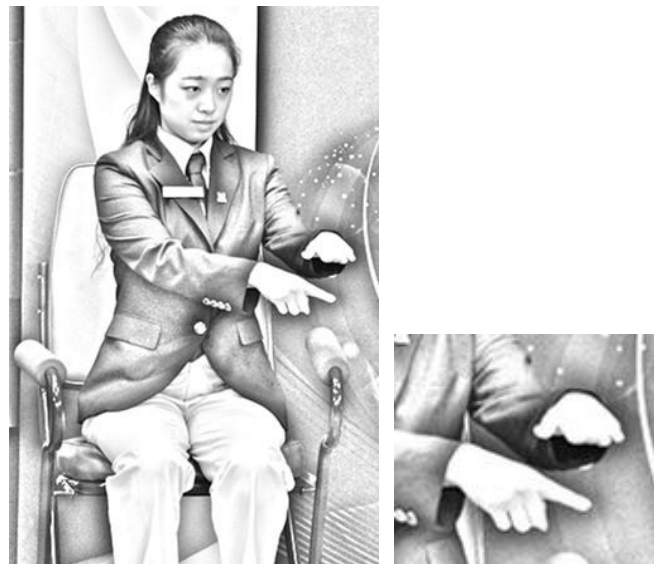


Figure 4 below the playing surface

- 5 If the ball is inside the server's end line from the start of service until it is struck or is struck inside the server's end line, umpire or assistant umpire shall show the hand signal as shown in Figure 5

**Verbal communication: Inside the end line**

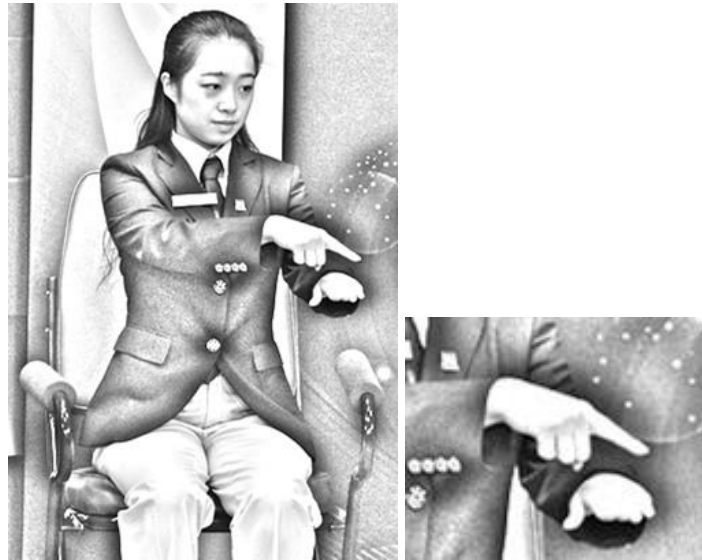


Figure 5 inside the end line

6 If the ball does not project near vertically upwards, umpire or assistant umpire shall show the hand signal as shown in Figure 6 (1) to 6 (2)

**Verbal communication: Not vertically**

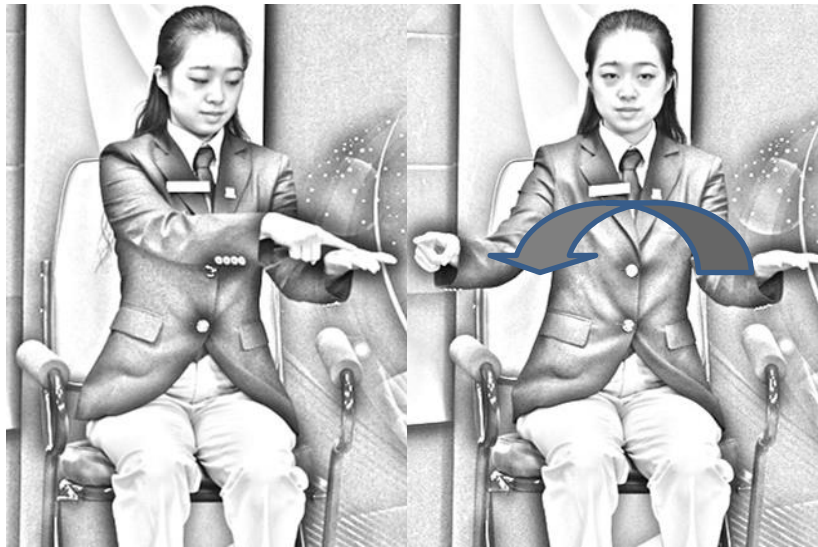


Figure 6(1) Not vertically

Figure 6(2) Not vertically

7 If the ball is hidden from the receiver by the server or his or her doubles partner or by anything they wear or carry, umpire or assistant umpire shall show the hand signal as shown in Figure 7

**Verbal communication: Hidden by what or whom (elbow, shoulder, head or partner)**



Figure 7 Hidden by what or whom

If the player asks the reason why or where, the umpire will use his or her index finger to show it . For example, if the ball is hidden from the receiver by the server's shoulder, the umpire shall show the hand signal as shown in Figure 7 (1)

**Verbal communication: hidden by shoulder**



	A	B	C	D	E
1	SITUATION	UMPIRE'S SIGNAL	UMPIRE'S CALL	AU'S SIGNAL	AU'S CALL
2	Start of game	Point with open hand to first server <sup>1</sup>	"X to serve, 0-0" (or other agreed announcement)	None	None
3	Change of service	Point with open hand to next server <sup>1</sup>	None	None	None
4	Resumption of play after authorised interval	Point with open hand to next server <sup>1</sup>	Repeat score	None	None
5	Point	Raise the arm nearer the winner(s) of the point so that the upper arm is horizontal and the forearm vertical, with the closed hand upward <sup>3</sup>	New score	None	None
6	Net-cord service	As soon as the ball touches the correct court raise arm above head <sup>2</sup> , point to net if necessary	"Let" and repeat previous score	As soon as the ball touches the correct court raise arm above head <sup>2</sup> , point to net if necessary	None*
7	Illegal service	Raise the arm nearer the receiver so that the upper arm is horizontal and the forearm vertical, with the closed hand upward <sup>3</sup>	"Fault" and new score	Raise arm above head <sup>2</sup>	"Fault" and advise umpire if necessary who will call new score
8	In doubles service, ball bounces on wrong half- court	Indicate point for receiver <sup>3</sup> , point to centre line if necessary.	"Fault" and new score	None	None
9	Fault service (e.g. ball misses table)	Indicate point for receiver <sup>3</sup>	New score	None	None
10a	Service of doubtful legality where decided by the umpire (1st occasion in a match)	Raise arm above head <sup>2</sup>	"Let", warn server, and repeat previous score	None	None
10b	Service of doubtful legality where decided by the assistant umpire (1st occasion in a match)	Raise arm above head <sup>2</sup>	"Let", and repeat previous score	Raise arm above head <sup>2</sup>	"Stop", warn server and advise umpire, who will call "Let"
11a	Service of doubtful legality where decided by the umpire (further occasion by same player or pair)	Indicate point for receiver <sup>3</sup>	"Fault" and new score	None	None
11b	Service of doubtful legality where decided by the assistant umpire (further occasion by same player or pair)	Indicate point for receiver <sup>3</sup>	New score	Raise arm above head <sup>2</sup>	"Fault", if necessary advise umpire, who will call new score
12	Interruption of play (e.g. ball coming into playing area)	Raise arm above head <sup>2</sup>	"Let" and repeat previous score	Raise arm above head <sup>2</sup>	"Stop"
13	Error in order of serving, receiving or ends discovered during a rally	Raise arm above head <sup>2</sup>	"Let", correct order and repeat previous score	None	None



	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
14	Advice given during play, first occurrence	Raise arm above head <sup>2</sup> holding up a yellow card towards offender, without leaving chair	"Let", if ball is in play, warn adviser and repeat previous score	Raise arm above head <sup>2</sup>	"Stop" and inform umpire
15	Advice given during play, subsequent occurrence	Raise arm above head <sup>2</sup> holding up a red card towards offender, without leaving chair	"Let", if ball is in play, send adviser away from the playing area, and repeat previous score	Raise arm above head <sup>2</sup>	"Stop" and inform umpire
16	Ball obstructed by player	Indicate point for the winner(s) of the point <sup>3</sup>	New score	Raise arm above head <sup>2</sup>	"Stop" and advise umpire
17	Any other situation which does not automatically stop play	Raise arm above head <sup>2</sup>	"Stop" , new score, plus any additional call necessary under 18.4	None	None
18	Edge ball at side nearest to AU ending the rally	Indicate point for the winner(s) of the point <sup>3</sup>	New score	Point to place of contact if necessary	"Edge"
19	Edge ball at any other side ending the rally	Indicate point for the winner(s) of the point <sup>3</sup> Point to place of contact if necessary	New score	None	None
20	Ball hits side of table top nearest to AU ending the rally	Indicate point for the winner(s) of the point <sup>3</sup>	New score	Raise arm above head <sup>2</sup>	"Side"
21a	Time reached for end of practice or between games (if assistant umpire is timekeeper)	None	None	Raise arm above head <sup>2</sup>	"Time"
21b	Time reached for end of practice or between games (if umpire is timekeeper)	Raise arm above head <sup>2</sup>	"Time"	None	None
22	Time limit (if assistant umpire is timekeeper)	Raise arm above head <sup>2</sup> , after AU's signal and call	"Let" if necessary, announce that expedite will apply and repeat previous score	Raise arm above head <sup>2</sup>	"Time"
23	Time limit (if umpire is timekeeper)	Raise arm above head <sup>2</sup>	"Time", announce that expedite will apply and repeat previous score	None	None
24	Request for time-out	Raise arm above head <sup>2</sup> holding up white card to the side of the player or pair requesting the time-out until the AU has placed a special signboard on the table	"Time-out"	Place a special signboard (or white marker) on court of requesting player or pair. Stand next to the AU table until it is time to remove signboard (or white marker)	None
25	Request for time-out (if no assistant umpire)	Raise arm above head <sup>2</sup> holding up white card to the side of the player or pair requesting the time-out	"Time-out"		
26	End of time-out (if assistant umpire is timekeeper)	When players return, point with open hand to next server <sup>1</sup>	Repeat previous score	Remove special signboard (or white marker) from table and place white marker by score indicator	Raise arm above head <sup>2</sup> and call "Time" if players have not returned

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
27	End of time-out (if umpire is timekeeper)	When players return, point with open hand to next server <sup>1</sup>	Raise arm above head <sup>2</sup> and call "Time" if players have not returned; repeat previous score	Remove special signboard (or white marker) from table and place white marker by score indicator	None
28	Bad behaviour (1st occasion)	Hold up yellow card towards offender, without leaving chair	"Let" if ball is in play, warn offender and repeat previous score	Raise arm above head <sup>2</sup> Place yellow marker by score indicator	"Stop" and inform umpire
29	Bad behaviour (2nd and 3rd occasions)	Hold up yellow and red card towards offender, without leaving chair, indicate point for the winner(s) of the point <sup>3</sup>	"Let", if ball is in play, new score after awarding penalty point(s)	Raise arm above head <sup>2</sup> Place yellow/red markers by score indicator if space allows	"Stop" and inform umpire
30	End of game	Point with open hand to winner <sup>1</sup>	Game score and agreed post-game announcement	None	None
31	End of match	Point with open hand to winner <sup>1</sup>	Match score and agreed post-match announcement	None	None

When the ball touches the net during service, the umpire should wait until the ball touches the correct court and make the appropriate call, rather than introduce an additional signal or call before the rally is over that may interfere with play.

\* If the service is a let and the umpire does not stop play then the assistant umpire should call "Stop"

Superscript numbers in the table refer to the Hand Signals diagrams.

## Appendix E - Field of Play Procedures

### INTRODUCTION

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 playing areas, performing their pre- and post-match duties as well as interactions with players, spectators and other officials on the field of play.

### PRE-MATCH PREPARATIONS

Umpires should report to the Referee - or designated assistant who handles umpire schedules – at least 55 minutes, for team events, or 30 minutes for individual events, before the start of their assigned session, to prepare and get ready to perform their duties.

The umpire is responsible for the draw (team events) as well as pre-match ball selection, racket inspection and control of shirts (colour and advertisements), and in doubles/teams also shorts or skirt check. He or she should check the players' numbers or name if they are to be used and, in some events it is recommended to ask coach or player for the preferred side of bench. The umpire should ask for the name of the designated advisor in non-team events. He or she should conduct these duties at the designated area at least 20 minutes before the start of a match and make sure the choices are recorded on the scoresheet.

After having done these duties, the umpire waits in the Call Area before going to field of play. The umpire team should be ready with the scoresheet and balls (as well as tested rackets when applicable). Approximately 5 minutes before the scheduled start of each match (or immediately after the end of the previous match), the umpire team starts the "walk-in procedure" to their designated table.

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 period, intervals between games (typically the assistant umpire) and who will time the time-outs taken (typically the umpire). They should both be clear on how they will communicate during a match without necessarily having to confer physically between points or between games.

Just before entering the field of play, the umpire and assistant umpire should 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 scoresheet and ball box held in his or her left hand. When the multi-ball system is in use, the balls are preferably brought in earlier; either by the assistant umpire or another match official, e.g. ball boy/girl.

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 carry out their duties – pen, stop watch, net gauges (plastic and weighted), yellow/red/white cards, coin, towel - should be in the folder used as a clipboard for the scoresheet or in their pockets and not externally visible or dangling from the uniform or around the neck. Place all handbags and personal belongings in a designated area outside the field of play. The only exception to this may be rackets which have been tested and are carried in paper envelopes (or bags if envelopes are not available) by the umpire or assistant umpire. These should be carried as if they were a folder, not a bag.

### ARRIVAL AT PLAYING AREA – RECOMMENDED WALK-IN / WALK-OUT PROCEDURES

When the umpire team is ready, they enter the field of play in a straight line, in uniform step, with the umpire leading the way to the assigned playing area. During the feature matches on the last day there may be appropriate introductory music announcing the presentation of the players and officials to the field of play.

With or without introductory music, the umpire team should walk in a straight line, calmly, with deliberate step, and 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.

It is usual that there will be an assembly of 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. Umpire teams will line up in order of their table assignments and walk into the field of play as a group, in step, following the first person in line.

As each team of officials reaches their respective playing area, they turn and continue according to the procedures without or with formal presentation. With formal presentation on several tables, the umpires are sometimes instructed to stand and wait until all umpire teams have arrived at their respective positions.

#### Without formal presentation

At the start of the match, the umpire and assistant umpire walk in to the playing area as a team. They should go to each one's station directly to start their duties, without shaking hands.

At the end of the match, after all post-match duties are completed, the umpire and assistant umpire should wait for their partner at their own station and then walk out as a team when ready, without standing at attention. The umpire is to lead when walking out.

#### With formal presentation

At the start of the match, the umpire and assistant umpire should follow the directions of the Referee / Competition Manager. Upon the entering the playing area, the umpire team stands, feet together and hands to the side. The umpire should keep scoresheet and balls in left hand in the absence of any alternative directives by the Referee / Competition Manager. If tested rackets are brought in, the umpire or assistant umpire should keep those also. There is no need to step forward when introduced, just a nod (not bow) will do. The umpire-team may shake hands before starting their pre-match procedures.

At the end of the match, after all post-match duties are completed, the umpire and assistant umpire should wait for their partner at the designated spot as directed by the Referee / Competition Manager. If no instruction is given, the umpire and assistant umpire should wait for his or her partner at their own station and then walk out as a team when ready, without standing at attention. The umpire is to lead when walking out.

An umpire should never step over any barrier. He or she should always open a space between two barriers, step around gently, and close that space after passing through.

There may be a designated entry point for the umpire team to enter each playing area. Typically, the entry point into each playing area should be one of the nearest corners on the side of the umpire's chair.

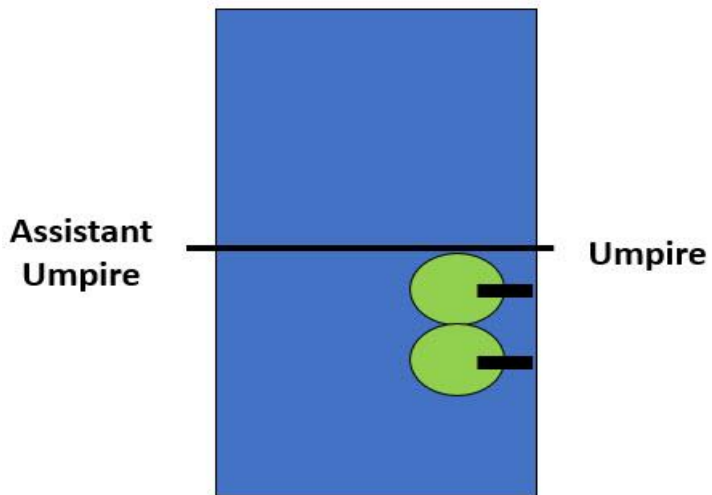
When available, the field of play announcer should present the umpires to the spectators and the media by name and association.

Under some conditions – typically during feature matches – players will also walk in with or after the umpire team. The normal order is umpire-players-assistant umpire. In that case, players, pairs or teams would stand next to the umpire and the other players, pairs or teams would stand next to the assistant umpire.

## **PRE-MATCH PROCEDURE**

Before the start of the warm up period, the umpire should:

- Complete racket checks. If rackets have been checked pre-match, which will be the case in most major tournaments, rackets will be brought to the table in paper envelopes (or bags). The umpire (or assistant umpire) takes the rackets out of the envelopes and places the rackets on the same half of the table for the players to pick up. Place the rackets so that no part extends outside the table to minimize the risk of falling off. It is recommended rackets are placed with the red side up. Do not hand the envelopes containing the rackets to the players. For full details of workflow procedures regarding racket checking please refer to the URC page of the ITTF web site.



Bench



- Check shirt colour, if not completed earlier
- Check short/skirt colour (in doubles/team), if not completed earlier

- Check player numbers (neatly pinned and advertisement fully visible) or names, if required by the Referee or organising committee
- Confirm the designated advisor for non-team events
- Perform the coin toss to determine serving/receiving and choice of ends
- Ensure the assistant umpire is ready to start the stop-watch for the practice period if he or she is keeping time
- Complete the relevant information on the scoresheet
- Sit in the umpire's chair for the duration of the practice period.

While the umpire is conducting his or her duties with the players, the assistant umpire should:

- Ensure the point and game indicators are cleared to blank. Once both players or pairs are present in the playing area change the game indicators to 0-0
- Check that net clamps are fastened tightly to the table and don't leave the cord hanging
- Check the net tension and height
- Check the cleanliness of the table and floor – remove any debris
- Organise and straighten out surrounds
- Place name cards in proper place, if provided by the referee or organising committee
- Start the stop-watch as soon as practice starts
- Sit in the assistant umpire's chair during the remainder of the practice period.

Occasionally the umpire's chair does not have a table or place to put the scoresheet. In this case, it is recommended that the assistant umpire completes the scoresheet.

## START OF THE MATCH

At the start of the first game:

- When time is up, whoever is keeping time should raise his or her hand and call "Time"
- Ensure that the server has the ball before making any announcement. Do not ask for the ball back before making the announcement and then subsequently give it back after the announcement, as this is not a good presentation.
- When the server is ready, glance to see that the receiver is ready
- Announce the players' family names

*"Keen versus Boll"*

*"First game"*

- Point to the server and call;

*"Keen to serve"*

*"Love all" or "Zero-Zero"*

As soon as the umpire announces "love all" the assistant umpire changes the score to 0-0, the timekeeper starts the stopwatch, and the match begins.

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.

In a team match, substitute the team name with the player's name.

## DURING MATCH PROCEDURE

See diagram in Appendix E for proper and uniform hand signals, and explanation of when and how to use them.

During the match, the umpire should:

- 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
- Time the play or designate the assistant umpire to time each game
- Monitor and enforce the service laws
- Monitor and enforce the behaviour regulations
- Make sure the players leave the rackets on the table between games, unless it is strapped to their hand
- Make sure play is continuous with no excessive delays during towelling or time out periods
- Monitor and enforce the advice regulations.
- During authorised intervals, the assistant umpire collects the ball and hands it to the umpire to retain until the end of the interval.

## END OF GAME PROCEDURE

At the end of a game, the umpire should:

- Call the score, point to winner, and announce "Game to Keen"
- Record the score on the scoresheet
- The assistant umpire collects the ball and hands it to the umpire to retain until the start of the next game
- When the multi-ball system is in place, the balls should always be kept by the assistant umpire, and the assistant umpire should also hand/throw the balls to the players, from the very first point and throughout the match.

## START OF GAME PROCEDURE

At the start of other games, the umpire should:

- Hand the ball to the server; if the multi-ball system is being used, the assistant umpire will give the ball to the server
- When the server is ready, glance to see that the receiver is ready
- Announce

"Second game"

- Point to the server and call;

"Ball to serve"

"Love all" or "Zero-Zero"

As soon as the umpire announces "love all" the assistant umpire changes the score to 0-0, the timekeeper starts the stopwatch, and the match begins.

## POST MATCH ANNOUNCEMENT

At the end of a match, the umpire should:

- Call the score, point to winner, and announce "*Game and match to Keen*"
- "*Keen wins 4 games to 3*"

and in a team match

"*Netherlands leads by 1 match to 0*", "*Netherlands and Germany 1 match all*" or "*Netherlands wins 4 games to 3*".

## POST MATCH PROCEDURE

After the match, the umpire should:

- Record the score on the scoresheet
- Obtain the players' signatures in an individual match or the team captains' signatures in a team match (if required by referee)

The assistant umpire returns the score indicator to blank, collects the balls, racket(s) if necessary and returns the playing area to a proper condition.

## END OF MATCH – UMPIRES WALKING OUT

At the end of the match, after all post-match duties are completed, the umpire and assistant umpire should wait for their partner at their own station and then walk out as a team when ready, without standing at attention.

With formal presentation, the umpire and assistant umpire should wait for their partner at the designated spot as directed by the Referee / Competition Manager.

The umpire leads the way with the scoresheet/folder in the left hand and the assistant umpire following in step with the umpire - no accompanied music.

The umpire team returns the scoresheet correctly completed (double-checked by both umpire and assistant umpire) directly to the referee's desk for signature. The referee (or designated deputy referee on duty) should check the scoresheet for completeness and accuracy; sign the card and forward it for results processing.

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 the field of play to the viewing areas open for officials and spectators.

## SUMMARY

While on the field of play – for any reason – umpires, referees and 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.

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 matters.

While in uniform, officials should be mindful that they represent their associations and, most importantly, that their actions reflect on all officials. During international events, all foreign umpires are guests of the host association and should respect their traditions and social customs inside and outside the field of play.

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.

Training videos on procedures can also be found on the URC website:

<https://www.ittf.com/committees/umpires-referees/videos/>



## Appendix F - Uniform for International Umpires

The ITTF Umpires and Referees Committee (URC) has adopted the following uniform colour combinations for umpires and referees working at major ITTF events.

International Umpires working at other ITTF events may wear their National Uniform (if one exists) or the ITTF International Umpire Uniform.

The objective of a uniform dress code for across multiple associations is not to stifle individuality, self-expression or national identity, but to have near uniformity in presentation of officials for spectators and TV coverage.

### New umpire and referee uniform (Li Ning)

	Men	Women
Umpire Shirt / Blouse	Light blue short or long sleeved shirt with collar	Light blue short or long sleeved shirt or dress blouse with collar
Umpire Pants / Skirt	Black dress pants / trousers	Black dress pants or skirt, which should be just above or below knee height at a length which will allow umpire to be seated comfortably in public
Referee Shirt / Blouse	Dark blue shirt or long sleeve dress shirt with collar	Dark blue short or long sleeve dress shirt or dress blouse with collar
Referee Pants / Skirt	Khaki/Tan dress pants / trousers	Khaki/Tan dress pants or skirt, which should be just above or below knee height at a length which will allow umpire to be seated comfortably in public
Jacket (for cold weather)	Navy blue single breasted tailored jacket / blazer to be worn over the shirt	
Tie	Not Necessary - But Referee can decide to use the tie	
Belt – if worn	Black dress / leather belt with a small buckle	
Shoes	Black dress or sports shoes with non-marking soles; women's high-heeled shoes are not to be worn	
Socks	Black ankle length or higher socks	Hosiery when worn with skirt
Badge / Pin	The ITTF International Umpire Badge / Pin may be worn on the left side of the shirt	

### Standard full dress Umpire uniform for working in mild / air-conditioned environments

	Men	Women
Jacket / Blazer	Solid Navy Blue single breasted - tailored jacket / blazer	
Shirt / Blouse	Light blue dress shirt with collar	Light blue dress blouse with collar
Pants / Skirt	Black dress pants / trousers - But referee can decide to use Khaki pants/trousers	Black dress pants or skirt, which should be just above or below knee height at a length which will allow umpire to be seated comfortably in public - But referee can decide to use Khaki pants/skirts
Tie	Not Necessary - But Referee can decide to use the tie	Not Necessary - But Referee can decide to use the tie/scarf
Belt – if worn	Black dress / leather belt with a small buckle	

Shoes	<b>Black</b> dress or sports shoes with non-marking soles. High-heeled shoes are not to be worn.	
Socks	<b>Black</b> ankle length or higher socks	Hosiery when worn with skirt
Sweater (Optional for cold weather)	Solid <b>Navy Blue</b> sweater worn under the jacket if the temperature inside or outside the playing hall is too cold.	
Badge / Pin	The ITTF International Umpire Badge / Pin – worn on the left lapel of the jacket.	
Other badge / pin (optional)	Only one other badge / pin that is smaller than the IU badge / pin representing the home association. Worn on the right lapel. There should be no other patches identifying home Associations, region, and membership in other organizations or participation in previous events.	
Other National and International credentials	While working as an International Umpire, only the IU badge / pin should be worn even if the umpire has other national or international qualifications (i.e. National or International Referee)	
Hats and other head gear	None – unless approved by the Referee	
Name tag	<p>A white nametag with black lettering in Times New Roman font with the last name all in CAPITAL / UPPERCASE letters, followed by a comma then the first name (or preferred name) in lower case letters with the first letter capitalized.</p> <p>The nametag should be 2 cm wide by 8 cm long and is worn on the right lapel of the jacket about the same height as the IU badge / pin.</p>	

<b>Examples of name tags</b> One LAST name and one first name Two first names Two LAST names and two first names One first name & nickname (in brackets) Two first names with a nickname Junior, Senior, III Compound LAST name Compound LAST name and two first names	DILLON, Steven MOHAMMED, Hassan-Ibrahim LIEBANA ANDRES, Juan-Carlos ZHANG, Cheong (Joe) ZAKI, Mohammed Hassan (Mo) ZIPPER, José (Jr) LAI-FATT, Liu ABDEL-MEGEED, Khaled-Ali
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#### Standard light dress Umpire uniform for working in hot / non air-conditioned environments

	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
Jacket / Blazer	None	
Shirt / Blouse	<b>Light blue</b> short-sleeve dress shirt with collar. NO T-SHIRTS.	<b>Light blue</b> dress blouse with collar
Pants / Skirt	<b>Black</b> dress pants / trousers - But referee can decide to use Khaki pants/trousers	<b>Black</b> dress pants or skirt, which should be just above or below knee height at a length which will allow umpire to be seated comfortably in public - But referee can decide to use Khaki pants/skirts
Tie	Not Necessary - But Referee can decide to use the tie/scarf	
Belt – if worn	<b>Black</b> dress / leather belt with a small buckle	
Shoes	<b>Black</b> dress or sports shoes with non-marking soles.	

Socks	<b>Black</b> ankle length socks	Hosiery when worn with skirt
Badge / Pin	The ITTF International Umpire Badge / Pin – worn on the left side of the shirt.	
Other badge / pin (optional)	Only one other badge / pin that is smaller in size than the IU badge / pin representing the home association, worn just below the name tag	
Name tag	A white nametag with black lettering (same as above) worn on the right side of the dress shirt at about the same height as the IU pin.	

## Appendix G - Para Table Tennis Rules and Regulations

With the merger of IPTTC with ITTF, the laws and regulations are now an integral part of the ITTF rules. For further information on ITTF Para Table Tennis Division please go to the ITTF website <http://www.ittf.com> More/Para Table Tennis or <http://www.ipttc.org/>

### GENERAL

Athletes with a disability are separated into classes, depending on lesions and limitations described in a classification system. An international classification panel is responsible for classifying players at international events.

- Class 1-5 for wheelchair players
- Class 6-10 for standing players
- Class 11 for players with an intellectual disability

The lower the number of the class, the more severe the disability.

After they have been classified at an international level, all players hold an international classification card (ICC) that specifies the sport class and sport class status. The ICC contains sections indicating any physical limitations (e.g. in making a legal service) or permanent requirements for medical reasons (strapping, binding, corset, modified wheelchair).

If a player plays in an international championship for the first time and does not have an ICC, his or her Association will give him or her a temporary classification. He or she will be then classified at the championships and be assigned a sports class and sports class status. It is also sometimes necessary for players, over time, to be reclassified due to a progressive disability or lesser disability due to recovery. They are specified in a list communicated to the appointed Classifiers, Referee and Organising Committee before the relevant tournament. The classification or review for specified players is organised by classifiers the day before the start of the tournament and is concluded before the referee conducts the draw for the singles events, taking into account any changes to players' classification.

If a player has deliberately misled the classifiers, he or she may not be permitted to compete at the discretion of the Referee and may face further sanctions from ITTF.

If a player must use a belt (around the waist) and/or a corset due to his or her disability, he or she must prove that it is required to the satisfaction of the classification panel. The onus is on the player to draw attention to the use of such equipment to the Chief Classifier, either for the initial or review of classification. Permission for use of a belt and/or a corset may be given under the following conditions:

- permanent – this must be written on the player's international classification card (ICC) by the Chief Classifier at the relevant international tournament.
- temporary – the player must provide a full explanation from his or her own doctor who must certify the period which the belt and/or corset is/are required. This certificate must be signed and dated by the medical doctor and submitted to the Chief Classifier at the relevant tournament. The player must report this to the Referee before the start of competition in which he or she participates.

### WHEELCHAIRS

Wheelchairs must have at least two large wheels and one small wheel at the start of **and throughout** a rally. If, for any reason during a **rally these conditions are not met**, then the rally must be stopped immediately and a point awarded to his or her opponent.

In individual and team events, no part of the body above the knees may be attached to the chair as this could improve balance. However, should a player require some strapping or binding for medical reasons, this must be noted on his or her classification card and it will be taken into account when assessing the player's sports class.

The height of one or maximum two cushions is limited to 15cm in playing conditions with no other addition to the wheelchair.

Should additions of supporting structures be made to the wheelchair, whether attached to the wheelchair or not (except cushions), players must ask for a classification or a re-classification in

this modified wheelchair. Any additions to the wheelchair without re-classification and authorisation written on the ICC shall be considered as illegal and the player may be disqualified.

### **2.10.1 Unless the rally is a let, a player shall score a point**

#### **CONTACT WITH WHEELCHAIR**

2.10.1.14 if **both** players or pairs are in a wheelchair due to a physical disability and  
2.10.1.14.1 his or her opponent does not maintain a minimum contact with the seat or cushion(s), with the back of the thigh, when the ball is struck;

A player who is in a wheelchair due to a physical disability and who does not maintain a contact with the seat or cushion with the rear side of at least one of the thighs just before striking the ball is considered to be gaining an unfair advantage and the opponent is awarded a point. (HMO 12.1.6)

#### **CONTACT WITH TABLE**

2.10.14.2 his or her opponent touches the table with either hand before striking the ball;

If a player is in a wheelchair due to a physical disability, he or she may only touch the table with his or her racket hand to restore balance, only after a shot has been played, provided the playing surface does not move. The player is not allowed to use the table as an extra support before striking the ball. Similarly, the player may not use his or her free hand on the table as an extra support, or touch the playing surface at any time during the rally. In a doubles match this applies to both players. (HMO 12.1.7)

#### **CONTACT WITH FLOOR**

2.10.1.14.3 his or her opponent's footrest or foot touches the floor during play.

#### **WHEEL OR FLOOR CROSSING CENTRE LINE**

2.10.1.15 if, where an opposing doubles pair includes at least one player in a wheelchair, any part of the wheelchair or a foot of a standing player crosses an imaginary extension of the centre line of the table

If any part of a player's wheelchair protrudes beyond the imaginary extension of the centre line of the table, the umpire will award a point to the opposing pair. This also applies when a "mixed" pair (one standing and one wheelchair) are playing together. Either player may return the ball (after initial service and return), but each player has to remain in his or her own half of the court. No part of the player's wheelchair can cross the imaginary extension of the centre line and the standing player cannot put a foot over this line either. (HMO 14.1.1)

#### **TABLE**

3.2.1.4 Table legs shall be at least 40cm from the end line of the table for wheelchair players.

Tables shall allow access to wheelchairs without obstructing the player's legs and shall allow access to two wheelchairs for doubles.

#### **CLOTHING**

A player may not normally wear any part of a tracksuit during play but in some circumstances the referee may give permission for him or her to do so. Examples of such circumstances are extremely 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. A player with a physical disability, either in a wheelchair or standing, may wear the trousers portion of a tracksuit during play, without the permission of the referee, but jeans are not permitted. (HMO 8.5.1)

#### **RACKET COVERING**

... 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 or her umpires accordingly but, as a guide,  $\pm 2\text{mm}$  would be an acceptable margin to most referees. This may particularly be the case with Para class 1 and 2 players as they often use their racket hand to push themselves back up into a sitting position after striking the ball, and, in doing so, touch the table top with their rackets. Thus, an overhang can help to protect the tabletop and a slightly larger margin may be allowed. (HMO 7.1.1)

### **ORDER OF PLAY - DOUBLES**

2.8.3 In doubles, when at least one player of a pair is in a wheelchair due to a physical disability, the server shall first make a service, the receiver shall then make a return but thereafter either player of the disabled pair may make returns.

When a doubles pair comprises two players who are in wheelchairs due to a physical disability, the server first makes a service and the receiver makes a return, but thereafter either player of the disabled pair may make a return. (HMO 14.1.4)

### **RELAX SERVICE REQUIREMENTS**

2.6.7 Exceptionally, the umpire may relax the requirements for a correct service where he or she is satisfied that compliance is prevented by physical disability.

The umpire may relax the requirements for a correct service if he or she is satisfied that that compliance is prevented by a physical disability. This will always be done for Class 1 and Class 2 players. The player's international classification card contains a section indicating any physical limitations that the player may have affecting compliance with the requirements of a correct service e.g. where a player with disability is either not able to straighten his or her palm or does not have a hand, the player may serve with a curved palm or toss the ball from his or her stump. (HMO 10.7.1)

### **LET SERVICES**

2.9.1.5 If the receiver is in wheelchair owing to a physical disability and in service the ball, provided that the service is otherwise correct,

2.9.1.5.1 after touching the receiver's court returns in the direction of the net;

2.9.1.5.2 comes to rest on the receiver's court;

2.9.1.5.3 in singles leaves the receiver's court after touching it by either of its sidelines.

If the receiver is in a wheelchair due to a physical disability, the rally is a let if the ball comes to rest on the receiver's court, or after touching the receiver's court returns in the direction of the net, or in singles, leaves the receiver's court after touching it by either of the sidelines. This is because a player in a wheelchair, by definition, is restricted in the extent of his or her ability to stretch and a service returning towards the net or going out from the sidelines is regarded as unfair. The ball can cross the sideline after one or more bounces. However, in singles play and where the ball is traveling towards the sideline, if the receiver strikes the ball before it crosses a sideline or takes a second bounce on his or her side of the playing surface, the service is considered good and no let is called. (HMO 11.5.1)

### **LEAVING RACKET ON THE TABLE**

3.4.2.5 Unless otherwise authorised by the umpire, players shall leave their rackets on the table during intervals; but if the racket is strapped to the hand, the umpire shall allow the player to retain his or her racket strapped to the hand during intervals.

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 or her 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. The only exception to this is a disabled player whose racket is strapped to his or her hand. (HMO 7.3.4)

### **INTERVALS – Medical recovery time**

If a player with a disability is unable to play temporarily due to the nature of his/her disability or condition, the referee may, after consulting a medical classifier or doctor at the competition, allow a medical recovery time of the shortest practical duration, but in no circumstances more than 10 minutes. (HMO 13.5.4)

### **PRE-MATCH PREPARATION**

For matches involving players in a wheelchair, the umpire should also check:

- The number of wheels on the wheelchair
- The player does not have his or her backpack on the back of the wheelchair
- The height of the player's cushion or 2 cushions
- The player is wearing tracksuit pants and no jeans
- The player has his or her name and 3 letter code for the association on the back of his or her shirt

## **LAWS FOR STANDING PLAY**

There are no exceptions to the laws of table tennis for standing players with a disability. All players play according to the laws and regulations of ITTF. On the classification cards there is a section indicating what limitations, if any, a player has in making a legal serve.

Training videos on PTT rules and procedures can also be found on the URC website:

25. Accessibility for PTT

26. Call area PTT

27. PTT services

28. PTT Others

<https://www.itf.com/committees/umpires-referees/videos/>

## **Appendix H – Useful links**

<https://www.ittf.com/committees/umpires-referees/videos/>

### **Umpire Training Videos**

1. Umpire uniform
2. Playing clothing
3. Call area set up
4. Call area reporting for singles
5. Call area reporting for team
6. Call area racket check
7. Coordination between RCC and umpire
8. RCC set up
9. RCC racket check
10. Equipment for UM and AU
11. Entering and leaving FOP
12. Umpire's duties before match
13. AU's duties before match
14. Sitting postures
15. Hand signals1
16. Hand signals 2
17. N/A
18. Time out
19. Misbehaviour
20. Illegal advice
21. Damaged equipment
22. Using of score indicator
23. Time keeping
24. The expedite system
25. Accessibilities for PTT
26. Call area PTT
27. PTT services
28. PTT other

### **Referee Training Videos**

1. Communication and cooperation
2. Knockout methods
3. Group methods
4. Calculation of group ranking
5. Qualifying competitions
6. Team competition methods
7. Entries
8. Scheduling
9. Preparation for the draw
10. Draw by card1
11. Draw by card2
12. Draw by balls1
13. Draw by balls2
14. Meetings
15. Playing area
16. Other facilities
17. Clothing
18. Control of play
19. Referee report
20. Dr Wu program1
21. Dr Wu program2
22. Dr Wu program3
23. Referee at PTT events

### **Hand Signals for Illegal Services**



## **Other Documents**

<https://www.ittf.com/committees/umpires-referees/documents/>

### **General**

- URC Structure
- Advanced Rules examination
- Fees training and examination
- Referee Career Development
- Trainers and Evaluators
- New Hand Signals for Illegal Services
- Walk-in Walk-out Procedures
- FAQ

### **Workflow Procedures**

- Workflow Description
- Before Match Racket Control – No VOC
- Before Match Racket Control –VOC
- After Match Racket Control – No VOC
- After Match Racket Control –VOC

### **Umpires**

- Upcoming Training & Educational Events
- Electronic Scoring TouchPad test link (Individual Matches)(Team Matches)

### **Referees**

- List of active referees
- Directives for Match Officials
- Racket Control Requirements
- Racket Control Schedule Form
- Racket Control Form 3
- Referee Checklist
- Referee Report
- Umpire Invitation Template
- Umpires Briefing
- Match Officials bulletin
- Umpires Briefing Presentation Template
- Jury Meeting info for Delegates
- Standardised Procedures CM & Referees
- Questionnaire Umpire
- Guideline for Electronic Referee report
- Referee Career Development

### **LARC**

[www.ittf.com/equipment/](http://www.ittf.com/equipment/)

### **ITTF Para Table Tennis Division**

[www.ittf.com/para-table-tennis](http://www.ittf.com/para-table-tennis)