

# BEHIND THE GLASS

Squash Canada's Officiating Newsletter

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## FALL 2018

And so another season is under way. And would you believe it, we here at BTG world headquarters still haven't received notice of our Pulitzer Prize in journalism! The mind boggles – so we can only assume that the ongoing postal strike is the problem and that the award is possibly somewhere like Kuujuaq up there in Nunavik. Or maybe the changes wrought by the infamous October 17<sup>th</sup> changes have led to some highs when people should have remained low. Anyway, we soldier on with our reporting – and maybe with a chuckle or two.

### THE DATABASE

We're gonna keep telling you about this in each edition, because this is *the* site for Canadian refs to find out pretty much everything about our program – including the records of your assessments. The site has recently been updated for smoother operation, and if things go as planned – you'll soon be able to keep your own match logs there as well. Remember also that there's also a bunch of video modules there, touching on just about all of the troublesome aspects of officiating – including giving proper explanations, blood and injury situations, behavioural issues, and of course, the 3 most common forms of interference.

**Available soon – Assessment Form Version 'K':** Assessors will like this new edition of the form. It features place on each page to include pooled matches so that you don't have to scribble all over the place to keep track of them. As well, the program's competency list has been trimmed to a more manageable 6 (down from 15 in the 2016 version) – all to make recording more intuitive. Keep checking the site.

Visit the Squash Canada Officials website at [www.squashcanadaofficial.com](http://www.squashcanadaofficial.com)

### THE PSA 2-REFEREE SYSTEM

We've explained here before that this is now the new system adopted by the PSA. It's a system used in concert with video review, which normally requires a pretty sophisticated operation as you've seen if you've ever watched SquashTV. Of course, most events in Canada don't have video technology available to review situations - so we're currently refining a version of it that could be used where no technology is available. The key innovation of the 2-Referee System (with or without video) is that for the first time in the history of Squash, it makes it possible for the officials to confer before issuing a final decision. Players are allowed one appeal per game, and when it occurs, the Appeal Referee is called upon to make a final decision, usually after consulting with the Match Referee. If the Match Referee's decision is overruled – the player gets to keep the appeal; otherwise, it's lost. Stay tuned for use at an event near you.

## TIME FOR GLORY

The following folks are moving on up the ranks – possibly now needing to hire a PR manager with all the attention they are about to get.

- **David Fishburn:** designated as a National Referee
- **Rob Heaton:** designated as a Provincial Referee

Indeed, they deserve much praise because getting there is the end result of countless matches officiated and assessments passed. These are the people who ratchet up our standards and make our program among the best on the planet. Congratulations!

## RULES NITTY GRITTY

So far, this video-based series has touched on ‘ball’ (so-called ‘front wall’) interference, as well two facets of access interference – the paired topics of blocking & trapping, and created interference & wrong footing. We now move to swing interference - probably the greatest source of inconsistency in decision making.

There are 2 key characteristics you need to keep in mind:

- **Sensitivity of the motion:** The swing is the most sensitive of movements; virtually any obstruction to it will have a drastic effect on the return – meaning that the concept of ‘minimal interference’ is not applied to it.
- **Irrelevance of the outcome:** The rules only refer to the amount of swing interference, not to the (usually great) effect that it has – meaning that whatever happens to the ball itself after contact is not a consideration.

The rules allow for two degrees of swing interference, namely ‘prevented’ or ‘affected’ – and unfortunately, there are no measurements included to help you figure out the difference. But, consider this analogy: you are prevented from crossing the street. That means you didn’t make it across; it’s not that you were deflected from crossing; you simply never got there. Applying ‘prevented’ to a swing means that its full motion could not be completed due to the obstruction. On the other hand, ‘affected’ is simply whatever is not ‘prevented’ – meaning a lesser obstruction that allows (or would have allowed, if refraining) the swing to continue, even though deflected.

Here then are some rules-based guidelines to decision making:

- For a prevented swing: It’s always a **Stroke**, no matter the opponent’s clearing effort
- For an affected swing:
  - It’s a **Stroke** if the opponent was not making every effort to clear
  - It’s a **Let** if the opponent was making every effort to clear

Pretty simple, eh? Well yes - as far as reading it on a page. It can be another story in real play, with its flurry of player motions and ball speed – accompanied by a bunch of uncertainties. You can make your life easier if beforehand you think about all this and adopt a set of reasonable standards for all the elements discussed above.

We end on a note of caution: You’d be mistaken to think that assessing strokes generously will encourage better clearing. The reason is that the vast majority of swing interferences are surprises, usually due to unexpected mis-hits, or due to surprise rebounds from the front corners. No number of easy penalty strokes can prevent such unanticipated returns; easy strokes only serve to encourage more stoppages.

The short video provides some examples of what we’re talking about.





We're mentioning this once more because we just didn't want you to forget that our Officiating Program has its own YouTube site where video modules (listed in the 'Resources' area of our database) are available for immediate playback – without any time-consuming download time (unless of course, you want the module stored on your own computer).

**TIP FOR USE:** *Simply click on the camera icon to the right of the title.*

## CALLS FOR OFFICIALS

There are no formal calls for officials at this time – but Penny Glover is the TR for the Canadian Masters Team Championships at Squash Outaouais in Gatineau from January 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>. If any of you are interested in helping out to contact her directly at: [pennyglover@sympatico.ca](mailto:pennyglover@sympatico.ca)



The PSA put out Update #9 in September and it had some interesting announcements – and you can read it in its entirety in our database at: <https://www.squashcanadaofficial.com/Documents/DocumentsList>

The most notable announcement is that they have decided to do away with the convention of just awarding lets in cases where the striker refrains from hitting the ball into the non-striker (clearly in the danger zone) if the ball has first hit the back wall before reaching the striker. We know darned well that the rules call for a stroke – but it's almost unheard of to see one awarded. This convention is also quite common in amateur play – having trickled down from the pro level. If you have any doubts about what we're talking about, check out our program's video module dedicated to this topic (The Danger Zone Convention) - also found on the database.

So, what to do; what to do? The best advice for when your turn comes to make those decisions is to stick with the rules – an approach now made easier with the PSA on board. If your habit was to abide by that convention, this is your chance to get back on track.

**BE CAREFUL:** If you do indeed decide to check out Update #9, you may be surprised to read that, for the convention dealt with above, if the striker hit the non-striker but the Referee deems that to have been dangerous play, or felt it was necessary to warn the striker – then the stroke is not to be awarded. Unfortunately, no provision allows for that. Yes, there are rules which deal with dangerous play, but that's not what they say. Of course, the PSA can do whatever it wants for its tour – but us regular refs have to apply the rules as they are.

## SQUASH CANADA OFFICIATING COMMITTEE

Again, we just want you to be aware of the folks keeping all of this together - the 5-person SCOC composed of Dave Howard (ON) (Chair), John Roche (BC), Les Homme (ON), Joe Ellis (AB), & Barry Faguy (QC). The committee also includes Squash Canada Programs Manager (Geoffrey Johnson) and a WSF representative (Wayne Smith).

# WORLD SQUASH

WSF

It came as a surprise in early November when a notice arrived that the WSF has issued a 2019 edition of the rules. In fact, it's just a few minor changes – with a couple of them unfortunately seeming to add a bit of confusion. Here is the notice and summary:

Dear WSF Referees:

A motion to amend some of the Rules were approved at the WSF AGM in Cairo which will come into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019. The new Rules can be found on the WSF website at:  
<http://www.worldsquash.org/ws/rules-of-squash-2>

For ease of reference, the changes approved were as follows:

- Time period allowed for the Warm up in Rule 4 .1: changed to 4 minutes with half time to be called at 2 minutes.
- Rule 8.11 amended to read: “Freedom to strike the ball to any part of the front wall” (leaving out the word entire).
- Rule 8.1.4 amended to read: “the freedom to strike the ball to any part of the front wall” (leaving out the word entire).
- A new rule added 8.9.3: “Where there has been no actual contact and the swing has been held by the striker for fear of hitting the opponent, the provisions of 8.6 apply.”

So, does leaving out the word ‘entire’ imply that the non-striker no longer needs to give the striker the whole front wall to hit the ball to? It seems to have drifted from clarity to doubt.

As for the last bullet, if you read the 2019 rules, you’ll see that this newly added 8.9.3 makes clear that in cases where the striker refrains – you should then look to 8.6 for how to decide the call. They probably didn’t intend it – but with that reference, one could imply that the concepts of ‘affected’ and ‘prevented’ no longer apply for swing interference. Can that be true?

So unless clarifications are nigh – it would seem that for now, the only thing you would need to do differently is to call “Half time” after 2 minutes.

## QUALITY CONTROL PROCESS - REMINDER

If you're a National Referee, your QCP status should be 'Active' – meaning that you should always have at least two QCP signatures less than 3 years old – along with your annual QCP Activity Log submitted to the QCP Administrator prior to July 1<sup>st</sup> each year. This status will ensure that you are eligible for selection for both Canadian and out-of-country events – to say nothing of the glory and attention that such a status garners! If you have any questions about where you stand, contact Dave Howard at: [dave.squash@sympatico.ca](mailto:dave.squash@sympatico.ca)



We've spoken here before about this new initiative undertaken as a cooperative effort by the WSF & PSA, designed to create a world-wide standard of officiating levels – such that all member countries could revise their systems to harmonize with the 5 levels established by the WSO. And at the same time, their plan is to develop a new class of highly competent Referees to handle the highest level of play – the PSA Tour.

On November 2<sup>nd</sup>, the WSF sent out another notice entitled "WSO Assessment Process" - and here are some key points:

- WSO will set standard courses for refereeing levels from Level 1 (Introductory) to Level 5 (Highest), in conjunction with National Federations for Levels 1 - 3.
- All current WSF referees will be given the opportunity to apply to transfer their skills to WSO international Levels, (Level 4 or Level 5, subject to assessment) ... will need to gain as many assessments as possible up to August 2020 ... will aide transition to the appropriate WSO level. An important note in relation to this is that any televised match can be used as part of the assessment process.
- There will need to be a transition period ... so that referees who have approved national qualifications can be integrated into the new grading system by August 2020. After this point WSO qualifications will need to be secured via WSO courses that will be offered in conjunction with national federations who are participating in the WSO programme.
- Due to the current situation, where it is not possible to allocate Assessors to every event, and many major matches are available on SquashTV, video footage on matches and a referee's performance will be made available to a nominated panel of three assessors for feedback and assessment purposes.
- This footage **will** form part of the reviewed nomination/assessment programme as well as the transition process from WSF to WSO referee.

Also, based on recent conversation with a WSO director, it appears that the launch of the WSO and its web site are but 4 months away. There will be an access fee, but well worth it as the site will contain a comprehensive collection of manuals, updates, video clips, materials, training aids, and so on.

So there you have it – in particular for those who have attained National status here in Canada.

## FEEDBACK & INPUT

That's all she wrote, folks. The winter 2019 edition will come out in February, but if any significant items need immediate circulation, then we'll send out a 'flash' edition. Of course, if before then you've got something to say - email Geoffrey Johnson (Squash Canada Programs Manager) at: [geoff.johnson@squash.ca](mailto:geoff.johnson@squash.ca)