

BEHIND THE GLASS

Squash Canada's Officiating Newsletter

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SPRING 2018

Yes, it may be traumatic to find out that this is the last edition of the season, but courage; the fall will come. In a related matter, here at BTG central, we're still trying to find out if maybe the Pulitzer Prize committee has gotten our address wrong given that there's no sign of our award for journalism just yet! Regardless, we've gone ahead and prepared the usual assortment of stuff with a crack crew of BTG international correspondents – including a laugh here and there.

OUR OFFICIATING DATABASE (<https://www.squashcanadaofficial.com>)

We know you've heard it before, but we're gonna keep telling you about this in each edition, because we're obsessive about such things. Actually, it's because this is *the* site for Canadian refs to find out pretty much everything about the program – including your assessment records. The site was recently updated for a smoother operation, and if things go as planned, you'll soon be able to keep your own match logs there as well.

Rumour has it that the world's best collection of officiating video modules is there, touching on just about all of the troublesome aspects of refereeing – including the 3 most common forms of interference, proper explanations, blood and injury situations, behavioural challenges, and so on.

Visit the SCO website at www.squashcanadaofficial.com

Near the end of a match, Jonathon Power was expressing his displeasure to the ref about one decision among many others: *"What are you trying to do - screw up one more time before you go home for the night?"*



THEY DID IT! LATEST OFFICIALS TO REACH A NEW DESIGNATION

At the Nationals in Calgary last month, with over 70 assessments completed, Officiating Committee chairman Dave Howard announced the following achievements:

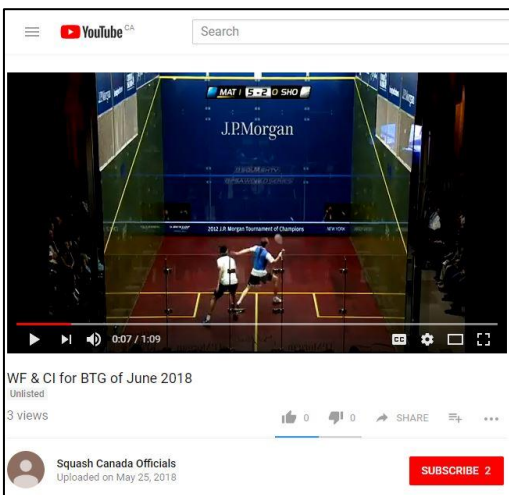
- **Curtis Gillespie (AB), Viano Oghenekevwe (QC) & Ted Horbulyk (AB)** have achieved 'National Referee' status
- **Gaby Sonego (AB), Safwan Rafique (AB) & Jeff Hipfner (NWT)** move up to the 'Provincial Referee' level

RULES: THE NITTY GRITTY

THIS ISSUE'S TOPIC: WRONG FOOTING & CREATED INTERFERENCE

This topic can get quite involved, but given the available space, we'll get right to the nitty gritty. Let's start with some distinctions:

- **WRONG FOOTING** refers to a good-faith action by the striker who goes the wrong way by mistake. He/she has taken the wrong path to the ball because they either guessed wrong or because they were fooled by the opponent. The fact that an interference and a subsequent request for let occurred is immaterial to your decision making process. That sure sounds counter-intuitive – but in fact, the only factors you need to consider are whether the striker was making every effort to recover and if the ball would have been reached. How the situation came about simply doesn't matter. Any of the 3 decisions are possible.
- **CREATED INTERFERENCE** (an expression no longer in the rules - but that makes no difference to the concept explained here) on the other hand, refers to a bad-faith action by the striker who deliberately and artificially takes the wrong path to the ball so as to generate an interference. It's done either to avoid having to get to a difficult return, or to get a break when fatiguing, or to try to garner a stroke where none is deserved. You may have guessed at this point that 'created interference' is a euphemism for cheating. Only a 'No Let' decision is possible. As previous guidelines explained, there was "no genuine reason" for the striker's choice of direction to access the ball.



<https://youtu.be/sHebfVWNRfM>

In this video, you will first see 2 examples of wrong footing. Note the characteristics we've discussed: the striker has made an honest mistake by first going the wrong way; he then attempts to recover to the ball. Given those circumstances, a Let is entirely justified if the ref believes the striker could have recovered to get to the ball, and was indeed making the effort to do so.

In contrast, the 3rd example shows a case where the striker has not made a mistake; he deliberately and artificially chose to encounter the opponent. In addition, there is clearly no effort to recover from the original wrong direction in order to go play the ball (which is way to the left). This meets the criteria for "indirect path" (Rule 8.8.2) - and the proper decision should have been a No Let.

Click on the video to view (if the video does not open 'copy & paste' it directly into your browser)

POSTSCRIPT

Unfortunately, in the current rules, the provision dealing with the idea of created interference (8.8.2) is the first and only place where we find the use of the words 'indirect path' – and a No Let is mandated. The prominence of this provision often causes Referees to be sidetracked and reflexively think that if there was an indirect route – then they must deny the Let. Yet, the far, far more common occurrence of wrong footing is then treated as an exception, and its provision (8.8.3) arrives almost as an afterthought – thus causing it to be lost in the shadow of the first provision.



LIES, DAMNED LIES & STATISTICS

Well, that famous phrase from Mark Twain really doesn't really apply here because these stats from PSA Director of Officiating, Lee Drew, are the real thing.

For the last few years, there has been a push on three fronts to help reduce interruptions: firstly, encouraging players to play on through interference where possible; secondly, encouraging coaches to study and adapt their player's shot selection to result in fewer strokes being awarded against them; thirdly, encouraging Referees to give decisions and explanations which promote continuity of play.

These stats are collected from the PSA SquashRef iPad computer system which logs all decisions by the Match Referee – thus avoiding the need for an observer to manually record the data. This data represents the average number of decisions per match.

EVENT	MEN	WOMEN
JP Morgan Tournament of Champions 2015	23.3	19.6
Case Swedish Open 2015	15.6	n/a
Guggenheim Partners Windy City Open 2015	20.7	14.2
Canary Wharf Classic 2015	20.8	n/a
El Gouna International 2015	19.4	n/a
Grasshopper Cup 2015	19.2	n/a
Allam British Open 2015	19.6	15.9
British Grand Prix 2015	14.9	n/a
Netsuite Open 2015	17.9	10.0
US Open 2015	15.9	15.3
St Georges Hill	19.5	n/a
Qatar Classic 2015	16.5	14.6

EVENT	MEN	WOMEN
Hong Kong 2016	19.3	15.1
Nantes 2016	14.9	16.7
Al Ahram 2016	14.7	10.4
NetSuite Open 2016	10.7	11.8
US Open 2016	18.6	11.8



We don't want you to forget about the program's own YouTube site where video modules (in the 'Resources' area of our database) are available for immediate playback – without any time-consuming download being necessary (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 of the module to bring you right to the YouTube channel.*

So, the above demonstrates how the PSA is achieving fairly consistent scores at all events. The average number of decisions per match at World Series events is staying just below 20 – but they hope to move towards an average of 15 in the men's game and around 12 in the women's. Of course, the entire point is to make the game more attractive for playing – and for viewing. It seems to be working.

There's a big move afoot to radically revamp international officiating, and it goes by the name you see in the title. A newsletter issued in March of this year explained that the WSF and PSA are in a partnership to create a world-wide structure to handle referee training, qualification, development, and assessment. We're told it may be years before full implementation and we aren't quite sure of it's potential impact on our own program here in Canada. The newsletter offered this additional information:

WSO Branding

The WSO logo represents the visual component that is World Squash Officiating, synonymous with the best that squash officiating has to offer. It conveys a commitment to the development of officiating qualification and standardisation throughout World Squash through the training & development of referees & assessors.

WSO Consultant Group

The WSO Consultant Group, led by Roy Gingell of the WSF and Lee Drew of the PSA, is a team of specialists from each of the Regional Federations around the world. The group carries the overall responsibility for putting together the entire program – including officiating levels, Referee & Assessor numbers, and quality standards.

Officiating Levels

There are five levels of formal qualification, plus an introductory 'Level 0':

Level 0: This is a pre-cursor to the formal qualification structure, available to anyone, and provides a basic understanding of the rules, including Marker functions.

Level 1: Entry level is meant to officiate squash at a club event / state / province or county leagues. This is the equivalent of Squash Canada's initial certification.

Level 2: Qualification level for selection to officiate at junior competitions

Level 3: Qualification level for referees to officiate at both junior and senior matches at

National Level. This is equivalent to Squash Canada's National level.

Level 4: Qualification level for referees to officiate up to both junior and senior matches at National and International competitions

Level 5: Highest level of referees who officiate at WSF and PSA events around the World. This is equivalent to the current World Referee level.

A player, walking on to the court for what he knows will be a very tough match, asks the ref: *“Do you take Visa, Mastercard, American Express?”*

THE PSA 2-REFEREE SYSTEM VARIATION

A notice went out recently about a couple of new rules which the PSA has adopted for itself (not changes to the Rules of the Game). Therefore, should you be one of those lucky refs who gets to participate in those events, you'll need to be aware of the following:

The new timings for the referees are as follows:

- Warm-up, as per previous trials, will consist of four minutes warm-up time followed by a one minute* interval.
- Game intervals will remain at two minutes as per the current PSA Tour Rule Book.

**The warm-up interval may be increased to 90 seconds if the player areas are situated in what is deemed to be an excessive distance from the court door. This determination can only be made by the PSA Representative, Tournament Promoter or Tournament Referee.*

Note: referees will be encouraged to ensure play starts immediately after the one-minute post warm-up interval and after the two-minute interval between games.

THE SQUASH CANADA OFFICIATING COMMITTEE



This is just the usual reminder about what the 5-person SCOC is – a committee appointed by the board of Squash Canada to manage our Officiating Program and related affairs.

The current members are Dave Howard (ON) (Chair), John Roche (BC), Les Homme (ON), Joe Ellis (AB), & Barry Faguy (QC). The committee also includes a Squash Canada representative & Director at Large (Steve Wren), SC Programs Manager (Britany Gordon), and a WSF representative (Wayne Smith).



Like athletes, coaches, and facilities, officials are an integral part of any sport. Ensuring officials are properly trained and certified is, therefore, a top priority to Squash Canada. The first level of certification in the National Officiating Program certifies you as a **CLUB Referee** – and getting started is as easy as a click of the button...so click the button!

During another match, explaining to Jonathon Power why a stroke was awarded against him, the ref said: *"He was right there."* Power then retorts: *"Yeah well I wasn't!"*

FEEDBACK & INPUT

That's all she wrote, folks. The fall edition will come out in November, 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 Britany Gordon (Squash Canada Programs Manager) at: britany.gordon@squash.ca