

BEHIND- THE GLASS

*Squash Canada's Officiating Newsletter
Published by: Squash Canada's Officiating Committee*

WELCOME!

"May you live in interesting times" is a saying (or curse?) that rings true for most of us because once again, we are in the dead of winter and it's still 'all pandemic all the time'. Do you remember that light at the end of the tunnel we were told about last fall; turns out it was an oncoming train hauling Covid, with a locomotive called Omicron. This of course, continues to have a drastic impact of our beloved sport, making actual playing next to impossible – and making officiating even less possible by virtue of a trickledown effect. Nonetheless, we here at BTG world headquarters have managed to put together yet another page-turner (so to speak) addition to the annals of squash-officiating. It's got news, interviews, reports, articles, resources – and attempts at humour. Let's have a look..... ED

[View BTG Newsletter as Webpage](#)

TIME FOR GLORY

Well, even though Squash activity is at a slow pace, we still have some accomplishments to announce. A full review of assessments contained in our Squash Canada Official database has been completed with the following promotions noted:

- Congratulations to **Connor Batchelor, Peter Bennett, Graham Brown, Larry Caza, Eleanor Fitzpatrick, Sandra Gad, Hannah Guthrie, Sara Khan, Sheila Proteau, Caleb Quinlan, Sebastian Singodia** and **Jeff Tudhope** in taking the first step of assessments and obtaining their Local Referee designation.
- Congratulations also to **Andrew Boumford, John De Vries, Terry Pritchard**, and **Safwan Rafiq** for having taken a major jump to Provincial Referee designation.
- **Viano Oghenekevwe** has now reached the lofty level of National Assessor. Well done Viano !

If we've missed you on promotion, or you would like more details on what you need to progress, or any other program questions, please contact Dave Howard at dave.squash@gmail.com or Geoffrey Johnson at geoff.johnson@squash.ca . You can also contact us at any time in the future to individually review your progression status.

Worth repeating for those aspiring to the heights:

"Nothing in this world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan Press On! has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race." (Calvin Coolidge – 30th president of the United States)

On the other hand, you might be of the same mind as comedian Mitch Hedberg who said: *"I'm sick of following my dreams, man. I'm just going to ask where they're going and hook up with 'em later."*

At the Bluenose Classic in Halifax a few years ago, a player, Grayson, asks for a let while attempting to retrieve a soft drop at the front along the wall. The refs says: *Yes Let*. The opponent, Coppinger, reacts with: *Really* (as ball sits motionless against side wall). *It's still pretty tight?* The ref answers: *It wasn't tight actually*. Coppinger, still looking at the ball: *Really!? It's still pretty tight*.

RULES NITTY GRITTY THE VERTICAL-NICK REBOUND (VNR)

Huh? Yes, those three words are probably the best technical description of a phenomenon known to every squash player – and certainly to Referees. Colloquially we often refer to it as the ball cracking out, popping out, jogging out, or even squirting out (as though it were a liquid J) from the tall junction of the side wall meeting the front wall.

Typically, the striker has hit a hard drive forward, fairly tight to the wall, which when it reaches that vertical junction of the front wall and side wall – suddenly jumps out towards the centre of the court instead of returning tight to the side wall as expected. This often surprises both players: the incoming striker, who typically has prepared to take the return off the sidewall, must now change from forehand to backhand (or vice versa) to properly shape to hit it; the non-striker, who, having expected the ball to remain tight to the wall, has most often cleared towards the centre of the court. Unfortunately, that's where the ball is headed – and so this latter player must now change course and scramble to avoid causing interference.

It's easy to understand why the VNR is the source of a great many appeals for interference – more often than not to the swing. Watch the video linked here to see a compilation of several examples. When you're done, don't forget to come back to read a few of the comments below which you might find useful for decision making.



CONSIDERATIONS FOR DECISION MAKING

The very first thing to keep in mind for VNR situations is that the fact that the ball rebounded oddly from the vertical nick is completely immaterial for decision making. It is not some special circumstance with its own rules; it's not turning; it's not a further attempt; it's just bad luck for the non-striker who must now do everything possible to get the heck out of the way or be penalized.

So, as implied above, all the normal rules apply. If the interference was to the swing, you then must first decide if it was affected or prevented. If affected and the opponent's clearing effort was good – it's a let; if affected and the opponent's clearing effort was poor – it's a stroke. If prevented, it's a stroke no matter the opponent's clearing effort. On the other hand, if the interference was to the direct path of the ball to the front wall – it's a stroke.

It's worth noting that if you're a Referee who relishes being called upon to make lots of decisions, then you should be thankful for the existence of this VNR phenomenon – simply because of the decision-making opportunities it presents. Hey, who just wants to be a scorekeeper, eh!

While using the 3-ref system at the Bluenose Classic, the Central Referee calls the wrong score before the serve. One of the players, Peter Barker, questions that score – so one of the side-refs then proceeds to confirm that same wrong score. The other side-ref, who happened to also be keeping score, then gets it right. Barker then says: *It's incredible that two of you got it wrong?* His opponent, David Palmer says: *That's why we have three!*

SQUASH CONFIRMED AS LATE

ADDITION TO THE 2023 PAN AM GAMES PROGRAM



This news came out in December 2020, and at this point in 2022, everything is still on – barring an unfortunate continuation of you-know-what. There's hope, since the games are over 600 days away (late October 2023). This event is simply a wonderful opportunity for keen refs because the high level competition provides great challenges, and the social aspects provide lasting memories.

Squash has been included in every Pan Am Games since the 1995 Games in Mar del Plata, Argentina. Canada has excelled in them, winning a total of 41 medals over that time span, including a best-ever haul of 7 medals at the 2019 Games in Lima, Peru.

There'll be some 6000 athletes present – participating in 38 sports and 57 disciplines within those sports. So when the time comes and the call goes out – will you be eligible and ready?

Canada Games Council Statement on COVID-19 Vaccination Policy 2023 Canada Games

The 'Call for Officials' for the 2023 Canada Winter Games should go out in the latter part of this year. Meanwhile, here's the core message about vaccination for those games.



December 6, 2021 / Ottawa, Ontario - Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Canada Games Council (CGC), with the endorsement of the 2023 Canada Games Host Society, will implement a mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policy for all accredited individuals at the 2023 Canada Winter Games on Prince Edward Island.

All accredited athletes, coaches, managers, technical officials, participant assistants, venue pass holders, mission staff, guests and media must receive and provide proof of a complete and up-to-date series of a Health Canada approved COVID-19 vaccine at least 14 days prior to their arrival at the 2023 Canada Games.

THE DATABASE

We have to repeat that this is **the** site for Canadian refs to find out pretty much everything about our program.

Check out the 'Reports' menu option to find the information on all our Referees, the status of your overall match assessments, individual competency assessments, and assessments you have done on others if you're an Assessor. As well, PT Administrators can view

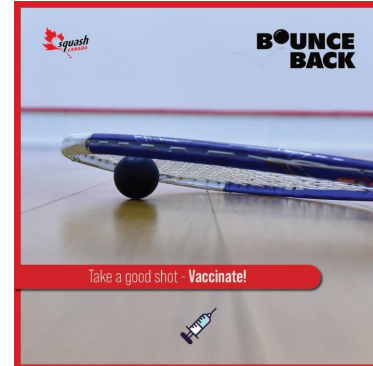


all of this information for members of their association. These reports can be sorted by any of the column headings (Name, Province, Referee Level,...) and can also be downloaded to an Excel compatible file.

There have also been some enhancements to information in your profile (Click on your Name in the upper right corner next to 'Log off'). To keep your P/T association current, please take this opportunity to update your profile, especially your contact information.

SQUASH CANADA NOW REQUIRES VACCINATIONS TO ATTEND EVENTS

On September 11th, 2021, Squash Canada announced that all athletes, coaches, officials, fans, volunteers, media, event staff and contractors aged 12 and above will have to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 in order to participate in, and attend, Squash Canada national and international events.



The Squash Canada COVID-19 Vaccination Policy started on October 6th, 2021 - and will be extended to all events put on by Squash Canada, including in-person meetings, clinics, national championships, and for athletes representing Canada at international events, regardless of location.

THE RETURN OF THE CANADIAN JUNIOR OPEN

December 11th TO 14th, 2021

Report by BTG International Correspondent, Les Homme

After a one year hiatus, the CJO successfully returned to White Oaks with over 200 entrants. A new addition for this year was Squash Canada's "Jonathan Power" glass court which will travel across the country. Also new for this year was the introduction of a new U23 division.

Many thanks to the fine team of officials who helped deliver a great outcome.

From the left, we have:

- **Les Homme** – Tournament Referee
- **Darrin Manley** – National Referee
- **Steve Flude** – National Assessor
- **Dave Fishburn** – National Referee
- **Steve Bachiu** – Provincial Referee
- **Roozbeh Amirian** – National Referee
- **Bob Mansbridge** – National Assessor
- **Viano Oghenekevwe** – National Assessor



Missing:

- **Dave Howard** – National Assessor
- **Wayne Smith** – WSF Referee
- **Murray Harper** – National Referee

With the assistance of Squash Ontario and Squash Canada, candidates were recruited to participate in a referee mentorship program at the CJO to get experience and upgrading opportunities. We were blessed with having five national assessors available and they did 24 assessments which resulted in several upgrades from club to local. Also upgraded was Viano Oghenekevwe to a National Assessor – congratulations Viano.

Our technology keeps improving as well. Gone are the paper scores sheets and the big white board with all the matches. The Club Locker system with tablets, monitors on each court and web browsers for court schedules and scores has brought us into the modern era. We also have integrated the assigning of referees with Club Locker by using a spreadsheet and downloads from Club Locker. The spreadsheet allows Referees and Assessors to be assigned and to update results. The team also shared the live assignment spreadsheet and communicated through a 'WhatsApp' group.

If you want to utilize the spreadsheet for your tournaments managed by Club Locker, contact Squash Canada.

2021 Canadian Junior Open presented by Forthlane Partners Sunday, December 12, 2021					No Match	No Match
0					Ref 25	Ref 26
Time		1	2	3	4	
8:30AM	Referee Appeals Ref Assessor	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	BU13 Singles R2 (1st Consolation) Tsou, Ander Rosoreo, Owen Ref-DM	BU13 Singles R2 (1st Consolation) Bayaha, Mostafa Wang, Daniel Ref-DM	
9:05AM	Referee Appeals Ref Assessor	BU15 Singles R2 (1st Consolation) Lee, Jaden Baksh, Mohryan Ref-RA	BU15 Singles R2 (1st Consolation) McKay, Liam Jain, Ethan Ref-DF	BU15 Singles R2 (1st Consolation) Song, Orin Li, Jet Ref-DM	BU15 Singles R2 (1st Consolation) Simmons, Logan Eberafy, Mohamed Ref-DM	
9:40AM	Referee Appeals Ref Assessor	BU15 Singles R2 (1st Consolation) Song, Isak Izhar, Arham Ref-Winner	BU15 Singles R2 (1st Consolation) Sahia Ripoll, Oriol Gwadry, Kamran Ref-Winner	GU15 Singles R2 (1st Consolation) Chopra, Ananya Ng, Yu Ying Ref-Winner	GU15 Singles R2 (1st Consolation) Shemirani, Hasti Tejani, Aneesa Ref-Winner	

RETURN TO PLAY – RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOURCES

If you want to be up to date on this crucial topic, use this link below to access the many return to play recommendations, tools, and risk management resources.

[CLICK HERE](#)



At the 2008 TOC in Grand Central Terminal, the following exchange took place between David Palmer and Borja Golan: Palmer: Let please. Ref: Yes Let. Golan: No! Ref: He tripped on your foot. Golan: Why? Palmer: I tripped on your foot.

AT THE SCOC?

THE SQUASH CANADA OFFICIATING



In late November of 2021, the Board of Squash Canada approved the appointment of **Sofia Navadeh**, of Ontario, to the SCOC. Sofia comes to us from Iran, and holds a Master's degree in Sports Injury. That she is the only woman Referee on the committee is surely a sign of things to come.



Sofia joins the SCOC team that works under the leadership of Curtis Gillespie (Chair) from Alberta, ably assisted by Les Homme (ON), Joe Ellis (AB), Viano Oghenekevwe (QC), and Barry Faguy (QC). Of course, Geoffrey Johnson (Squash Canada Director of Sport Development) remains on the committee – along with Sandra Thompson as the Squash Canada board liaison to the SCOC. And finally, Dave Howard (ON) continues to tether us to the rest of the Squash world as our representative to 'World Squash Officiating' and the 'Pan-American Squash Federation'.

In case you've never been there, our Officiating Program has its own YouTube site where video modules (listed in the 'Resources' area of our [Squash Canada Officials 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.*



FOR ASSESSORS - INDEX TO RULES CLINIC

Once again we're reminding Assessors of changes to the program's teaching aids, all found on the [Squash Canada Official database](#)

The Rules Clinic presentation has been modified to be more amenable to the typical club player who is mostly interested in a casual review of the rules. You may present it in its full and current form – but you also have the option of creating a custom version to meet the needs of a given club. To help with that, we've created an INDEX which allows you to locate specific slides by topic - which you can then collate to suit the request. You just need to click on 'Resources' in the menu bar – then scroll down to 'Restricted Training Modules' and choose 'Rules Clinic'. In the 'Notes' at the bottom of the title slide, you'll find a link to the full instructions.



At the Montreal Open a few years ago, David Palmer asks for a let. The ref says: *No Let*. Palmer, smiling, says: *No stroke?* The ref answers: *No!* Palmer then quips: *I'm joking – but hey, you never know!*



BTG has several times reported to you about the WSO initiative to standardize and promote officiating worldwide. The program has been launched and its website can be found [HERE](#)

You'll find pretty much anything you want to know about the organizational aspects, and then plenty of information about the interpretation of the rules – including a raft of video clips to help with that. As well, once you're signed in there, you'll be able to catch these interviews with a couple of WSO refs:

Jason Foster: Click [HERE](#)

Andrea Santamaria: Click [HERE](#)

NEW REFEREE CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN CANADIAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

As of December 1st, 2021, a new policy came into effect, essentially to “... *mandate competitive players to take the online officiating course and exam to become a Certified Referee*” as an entry requirement for Canadian Championships.

This will achieve two benefits:

- To better educate players on the rules of squash to aid in their own play;
- To also increase the number of people in a better position to referee matches at events (from their Club level up to Nationals) when called upon to do so.

A survey was conducted of all P/T's Executive Directors/Presidents and the Squash Canada Officiating Committee to determine the best approach – and the results were overwhelmingly in favour of a motion which required a minimum 'Club Referee' certification level for all players entering U15, U17, and U19 categories in the Canadian Junior Open (Canadian players only) and the Canadian Junior Closed - as well as players entering the Canadian Squash Championships, Canadian Masters Teams Championships, Canadian Men's and Women's Teams Championships and Canadian U23 Championships.

YET MORE CHANGES TO THE RULES OF THE GAME

You'll remember that the WSF issued updated rules as of December 5th, 2020 (mainly featuring Blood Injury categories) – but as of late November 2021, a slight change to the self-inflicted provisions of the Blood Injury rule came into effect. That change was the addition,

within that rule, of the 2nd last paragraph you'll see highlighted in yellow:

14.4.1. Self-inflicted: where the Blood Injury is caused by a player's own action or condition, such as a fall, lunge, dive, crowding, nosebleed or similar, the player is permitted 5 minutes to stem the flow of blood and cover the bleeding. The referee is in charge of starting the timer, which will start from when the injured player's

treatment begins. If the injured player is not ready to resume play after 5 minutes has elapsed, the player must concede the game and take the game interval, if available, for further recovery.

If the same Blood Injury reoccurs, no further recovery time is permitted, and the injured player must concede the game and take the next game interval, if available, for further recovery.

If the same Blood Injury reoccurs and is caused by both players' actions (see 14.4.2 Contributed) the injured player shall have further reasonable time to address the Blood Injury.

If the injured player cannot resume play within the permitted time allowed, the referee will award the match to the injured player's opponent.

The entire rules package is found: [Click Here](#)

ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE GETS ANOTHER UPDATE

Following the rules changes that the WSF instituted back in December 2020, at that time we updated our Referee Certification course to reflect those changes. Then, this past November 2021, the WSF added to the rules a minor tweak (referred to in an item above) – and so once again, we modified the online course.



However, while we were at it, we decided to create a better gender balance in the course content. So in that light, over the past couple of months, SCOC members consulted and came up with a few new interference video clips (including their text explanations and translations) featuring women players to replace certain clips with men players. It's now up to date, so if some of your friends are still unva... er ...uncertified as refs – tell them this is their chance to get on board. The course is only \$35 – a steal by any measure!

Finally, the actual location of the course has changed as of the start of 2022. The entire production is now housed on the web site of the Coaching Association of Canada – specifically here: [Click Here](#)

Once a candidate is registered (an NCCP is required), click on the 'ELEARNING' option, followed by selecting 'Squash' in the 'Multi-Sport' dropdown box on the left side, will then bring up the 'Online Referee Certification' link to start the course.

The SCOC is especially grateful to Tim Birch-Jones who had the job of implementation of all the modifications into the course - and then housing the whole thing in its new location.

IN THE CHAIR

Profiling Canada's Squash Officials Vol. 3: Joe Ellis



Over the last thirty years or so, if you have played in, officiated at or observed a squash event in Canada and particularly in Western Canada, you have almost certainly come across Joe Ellis, who hails from Calgary, Alberta. He has been mentoring officials in Canada and around the world for decades, and emerging officials in Western Canada in particular have long benefitted from his insight and experience. Joe's refereeing began with the 1991 Canadian Nationals at the Edgemont Club in Calgary and he has been pretty much all over the world since then. We recently caught up with Joe to ask him a few questions about his experiences and what he's learned over the years.

Joe, thank you for joining us for this edition of In The ChairMy pleasure.

You've done so much in the world of squash officiating. Tell us how you got started with it all. Well, like so many, it was through being a player first. I had played, (badly in retrospect), for about 11 years, and had won an Alberta "D", so I was a bit overconfident when it came to the rules! I attended a referee certification course with Dave Clements and thought I was ready. What a mistake!

Was that back at the old Edgemont Club in northwest Calgary, now a World Health Club? Correct.

And so was that where you reffed your first big tournament?The first of any kind, really. That was the 1991 Nationals being held at the Edgemont. But I was very fortunate to be given favourable treatment by the Tournament Referee, primarily because I was part of the organizing committee for the tournament headed by Ian and Beryl Paton.

Boy, you really got thrown into the lion's den, didn't you?!Yes! My first memorable match was within the first five that I refereed at the 1991 Nationals. The match was either +35 or +40 men, and I think a quarter final. There was lots of tension and a number of people watching. The game score was 2 all and the match got to 9 all in the 5th game. Player A chose 1 point to decide the winner. Player B served and after a lengthy exchange, Player A hit a very poor shot directly back into the middle of the court and player B moved into position to hit the ball but knew he had A in bad spot and continued to back into A until he could not swing. My decision was a stroke, thereby ending the match. Player A exploded and the crowd reacted with a mix of positive and negative sounds. I descended from my chair, somewhat apprehensive, while B stormed off the find someone who would reverse my decision. I was very concerned

that I had been unfair. There stood Penny Glover, a National Referee, who calmly assured me that my decision was OK, but, by implication, obviously not perfect.

That sounds pretty tense! It was. But it was also at that moment I realized that being a referee required a lot of effort to be as just as possible and as knowledgeable as possible so that the result of each match would be fair. I knew I needed a lot of experiences to ever achieve a reasonable level of competence.

That's an insight to last a lifetime! Where did you go from there? I was very fortunate to gather so many great experiences since then. Calgary has been a great place for that. The city has hosted so many great tournaments at all levels, from club tournaments all the way up to many professional tournaments for both women and men, which included many players in the top 20. Several have been world number ones. So not only did I get a lot of chances to ref good players, but I was able to watch and learn from world referees. I started out doing a lot of early round matches, but eventually semis and final matches.

But it hasn't just been Calgary? No, true. I feel privileged to have refereed Pan Am events in Canada, Argentina and Columbia, US Squash events, many professional events and all Squash Canada events. I've seen a lot of the world through officiating.

What do you think has changed the most in the game since you started out, especially with relation to officiating? Today there is an abundance of video and live TV coverage of squash. Squash TV allows a new and emerging referee to see the best referees in the world make decisions, manage the match and interface with the players. That kind of access was not there when I was starting out.

You say that emerging officials can now watch and learn from the best. Who were the people you learned from? I learned from a number of mentors and will be grateful to them forever, including Graham Waters, Rod Symington, Gerry Poulton, Barry Faguy and Adeline Clements. But it's not just me. They and others built a program to develop referees and their program has been recognized worldwide as one of the best to develop referees. Subsequently I was honored to join another group of Canadian referees to take that program to another level and incorporate technology to hopefully improve that program further.

You've probably seen it all. What do you get from officiating nowadays? I still really enjoy being a referee and relish the challenge. To me, the challenge is to strive for a fair result from every rally and to ensure safe play. I have learned how to anticipate when I might be called upon to make a decision, when I might have to manage the match more forcefully and when I might be required to communicate my expectations to the players. I have learned how to relieve my personal tension during a match so that I can concentrate when I have to and be consistent for two hours or even more. (And this length of match has occurred). This all comes with experience and feedback.

Speaking of which, what is the best advice you have been given that you might pass along to other officials? The best feedback I have received is to

focus on being fair and consistent.

You mentioned earlier all the people you've learned from over the years, and you now find yourself in the position of mentoring and teaching many others. How do you approach that role? I really enjoy being a mentor to emerging referees through the assessment and feedback processes. In many ways, it's about spending as much time as you can with a referee to learn what they need to improve on so you can help them improve. I view this as the payback to all of those referees who helped me throughout my journey.

And what a journey it's been! True! But the most significant aspect of my journey has been the ongoing support of my wife Susan, who has encouraged me throughout, despite the weekends away and, at times, journeys to faraway places. She has heard her share of my frustrations and provided excellent guidance.

Joe, thanks for sharing your experiences and insights with In The Chair! Anytime.



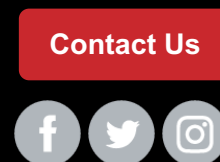
FEEDBACK AND INPUT

Here we are, done with this winter edition and on the verge of spring. Hopefully our summer edition will bring news of re-openings and the renewal of competitions, so that our world of squash frees itself from the shackles of this pandemic - relegating it to the department of unpleasant memories. Meanwhile, if you've got something to say, email Geoffrey Johnson (Squash Canada Director of Sport Development) at: geoff.johnson@squash.ca

[View BTG Newsletter as Webpage](#)



Squash Canada
2nd Floor, 20 Jamie Avenue
Nepean, ON K2E 6T6
P. 613-228-7724
E: info@squash.ca



Squash Canada Partners

O|X|F|O|R|D

SYRA
GROUP

SLAIGHT
MUSIC

AMJ
MAKE YOUR BEST MOVE

DUNLOP
SPORT

Canada

SQUASH
REPUBLIC
POWER TO THE PLAYER

Squash Design