

USAPA/IFP Official Referee Handbook



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USAPA/IFP Referee Handbook

Version 04 – 01/31/18

Introduction and Purpose

Refereeing can be easy and fun! The more thoroughly you know the rules and the more matches you referee using the standardized, tried-and-tested best practices tools contained in this handbook, the easier it becomes. The *USAPA/IFP Referee Handbook* is intended as a guide for referees at all levels of officiated pickleball events, and encompasses both singles and doubles play. The procedures, techniques, and tips in this handbook are based on the USAPA/IFP Rules, as well as the experiences of seasoned referees who regularly officiate USAPA-sanctioned tournaments. Accordingly, this handbook documents the USAPA officiating best practices and serves as the official resource for referee training and reference.

The Referee Handbook is not a replacement for the 2018 *USAPA/IFP Official Tournament Rulebook*. (<https://www.usapa.org/ifp-official-rules/>). The handbook does not go into a detailed explanation of every rule but focuses on standardized refereeing procedures and techniques. It is designed primarily for referees who already know the rules and have at least some experience officiating, even if that experience is only shadowing an experienced referee or refereeing recreational games for practice. The handbook can be used to train total novices to referee, but it is more effective if you come to the training with basic knowledge of the game and a good understanding of the rules.

The goal of this handbook and the associated *USAPA Referee Trainer Guide* is to provide the resources necessary to establish best practices on how referees are trained and perform their duties on the court. This will result in more knowledgeable and better prepared referees, and produce uniformity in how the rules are interpreted, consistency in how they are applied, and standardization in how pickleball tournaments are officiated. Well-trained and better-prepared referees will eliminate much of the frustration sometimes experienced by players and referees alike during officiated pickleball competition. Best practices are the tools that will help you be a competent and confident referee.

How to Use This Handbook

The first major step to becoming a competent and confident referee is to know the USAPA/IFP rules. Therefore, it is important to read the 2018 *USAPA/IFP Official Tournament Rulebook* and understand not only the language, but what the rule is stating and how it would be used when refereeing a match. To ensure that you have thoroughly mastered the rules and best practices, take the Referee Test, the Line Judge Knowledge Review, and the Player Rules Quiz provided under Rules & Referees on the USAPA website. Upon completion of the tests, you will see your score, as well as an indication of which questions you missed and the associated correct answers.

Your scores will be recorded in the USAPA referee database; 90 percent is considered passing; 100 percent is preferred. After exiting the test, you will receive an e-mail confirming your score. You may retake the test. Since new questions appear each time it is taken, it is highly recommended that you take the test at least twice each year. After studying the rulebook, if you have a question about a rule, e-mail ref-certification@usapa.org.

Once you know the rules, refer to this handbook to learn how to apply them efficiently and effectively - according to tested best practices, as well as standard tournament procedures and how to complete the scoresheet. This handbook, which is available in downloadable format only to USAPA members, is the official reference for use during USAPA Referee Training courses.

Passing the tests, studying this handbook, and completing a local USAPA Referee Training course are the initial steps in becoming a competent pickleball referee. However, knowing the tournament rules and refereeing using the Best Practice tools will not by themselves guarantee effective refereeing. You need to get out on the court and practice, practice, practice using the techniques presented in this handbook. Shadowing an experienced referee is a good way to start, but it is important to shadow a referee who uses all the best practice tools contained in this handbook. Learning and practicing non-standard methods and techniques only create a false sense of security. Learn how to use the best practices tools, then begin refereeing in a non-tournament situation as you build confidence and work your way up to more competitive matches. If there is no provision for scheduled referee practice at your home court, consider asking recreational players if they mind having you referee one or two of their games; most are happy to oblige. If your home court has a referee trainer, ask him or her to observe and critique your performance.

Blank [USAPA official scoresheets](https://usapa.org/rules%20&%20referees) can be downloaded from [usapa.org/rules & referees](https://usapa.org/rules%20&%20referees). Pickleballtournaments.com scoresheets can be copied directly from the figures in Appendix C of this document. When you are comfortable using the scoresheet, calling the correct score, watching for foot faults, and keeping the game moving at the players' pace, don't be reluctant to volunteer to referee in a tournament. For your first couple of matches, consider asking the referee coordinator to have an experienced referee stand with you; this provides an immediate reference should a question arise and ensures the players a well-officiated match. See Appendix E for *15 Steps to Becoming a Certified Referee*.

The future of refereeing is the development of electronic scoring tablets. They are under development and may be introduced in major tournaments. These tablet-size devices will allow the referee to record necessary match information in electronic format with the touch of a button. Match data is then transmitted wirelessly to the event desk. Once proven efficient and effective, when used by a well-trained referee, electronic scoresheets are expected to reduce errors and help tournaments run more smoothly. However, fundamental referee responsibilities and procedures will not change.

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Section I: Responsibilities and Code of Conduct

The responsibility of the referee is to ensure that USAPA/IFP rules, as stated in the 2018 *USAPA/IFP Official Tournament Rulebook*, are followed. The purpose of the rulebook is to “*provide pickleball players with the rules necessary for organized league and tournament play.*” The rules have been designed to “*preserve the traditional nature and character of the sport and the skills traditionally required to play the sport.*” Rules will be updated on an annual basis. Each year, major changes will be listed on the usapa.org website under [Rules & Referees/Major Rulebook Changes](http://www.usapa.org/rulebook-changes/) (<http://www.usapa.org/rulebook-changes/>). It is **your responsibility** to stay current on the rules.

During an officiated match, the primary responsibilities of the referee are to:

- Keep and announce the correct score.
- Recognize whether server and receiver are the correct players in the correct positions.
- Call service and non-volley-zone (NVZ) faults.
- Maintain control, and keep the match moving efficiently.
- Resolve disputes, and interpret and enforce the rules.
- Rule on line calls *when appealed by a player*.
- Issue technical warnings and fouls as appropriate.

Each referee develops his/her own officiating style, but all must adhere to the Referee Code of Conduct. It is important that referees and line judges:

- Be professional while maintaining a pleasant demeanor.
 - Avoid overfriendliness with players and spectators while on the court.
 - Treat players, line judges, and spectators with respect.
 - Avoid emotional reactions, either positive or negative, to the play of either side.
 - Do not comment, either positively or negatively, regarding the play of either side.
 - Avoid anger or confrontation.
- Enforce ALL rules impartially, fairly, and consistently, even if you do not agree with a particular rule.
- Maintain control without being dictatorial.
- Devote full attention to the match being refereed.
- Stand and be ready to referee in a professional manner. Avoid leaning on fences or against a wall.
- Avoid using any device that could interfere with play. Note: Tournament directors may authorize use of a chair if required due to medical reasons and as space allows.
- When refereeing, be sure your cellular phone is on silent or is turned off.
- Excuse yourself from refereeing a relative, close friend, or doubles partner.

Section II: Referee Tools

The Scoresheet:

The scoresheet is the official document used to record game activity and transmit match results to the event desk. A number of different manual and computer-generated scoresheet formats are available. For samples of scoresheets, see Appendix C. Scoresheets may be designed to serve one specific tournament format (e.g., 2 out of 3 to 11, 1 to 15, or 1 to 21) or a single scoresheet may accommodate all formats. The same scoresheet format is commonly used for both singles and doubles matches.

The scoresheet design used in your area may differ from the pickleballtournaments.com scoresheet utilized in this handbook to illustrate how to record match data. Regardless of the specific format, all scoresheets should allow space for the following information:

Entered by the event desk and/or referee coordinator before the referee receives the scoresheet:

- Type of event (e.g., Mixed Doubles 4.0)
- Player names
- Referee name
- Match format (e.g., 2 out of 3 to 11, win by 2; round robin 1 to 21, win by 1, etc.)
- Court number assigned
- Service choice number handwritten on back (number 1 or 2)
- Bronze or Gold/Silver medal match (if applicable)

Scoresheets generated by a computer program (e.g., pickleballtournaments.com) may also contain data such as:

- Tournament name
- Match number
- Date and time
- Computer ID tags (e.g., SYSID, barcode)

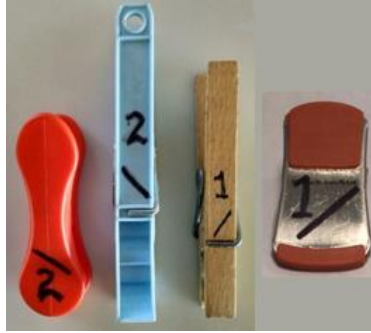
Entered by the referee before, during, and after the match:

- Circle first server on each team
- Player/team serving each game
- Reference mark for switching sides
- Points scored, side out
- Time-outs and associated score
- Technical Warnings/Technical Fouls issued
- Final game score(s) and winning player/team initials

Other tools:

- Stopwatch or other device for timing between-game breaks, time-outs, etc.
- Two pencils, at least one with eraser
- Clipboard for holding scoresheet
- The numbered server clip is mandatory for keeping track of first and second server (Figure 1 on the next page: numbered server clip styles)

FIGURE 1



Different styles of numbered server clips

Section III: Refereeing Best Practices Procedures

Best practices procedures for singles and doubles matches are the same, except in singles, when it is not necessary to keep track of first and second server. For that reason, singles matches are, in general, easier to referee and are a good alternative for initial referee practice.

Before the tournament

Review the rules in the *2018 USAPA/IFP Official Tournament Rulebook*. You must know the rules and standardized on-court procedures and techniques thoroughly to avoid on-court mistakes that delay play, frustrate players, and cause them to lose confidence in your ability to referee. Check the Major Rulebook Changes document under Rules & Referees at usapa.org.

Reread this Referee Handbook. It is also recommended that every referee retake the Referee, Rules, and Line Judge tests at least twice each year, as new questions appear each time it is taken.

Before a match:

- Prior to being called to referee your first match of the day, think about your refereeing responsibilities. Consider how weather, lighting, court conditions, etc., might affect play. Note special procedures applicable to this tournament (warm-up time, etc.).
- Prepare physically by anticipating your restroom and hydration needs and appropriate clothing. Stretch to loosen muscles before standing for the length of a match. Wear your referee credentials.
- When your name is called to referee, immediately proceed to the event/referee desk to collect the match scoresheet and supplies.
- Know the court layout in advance, and try to arrive before the players. Wait at the entryway for all players if the tournament venue requires that you cross a match in progress to reach your court. Enter and exit the court as a group.
- To control the time between matches, as soon as the match is called, start your watch or stopwatch (unless it is started at the desk by the referee coordinator).
- Pick up supplies: two pencils, numbered server clip, and possibly spare ball and first-server band, just in case.
- Take personal items such as water, lip protection, and sunglasses, if needed.
- Know where an official rulebook can be easily accessed.

The following information will be on the scoresheet:

- Player names (ask if you are not sure of name pronunciation)
- Type of game (2 out of 3 to 11 win by 2, 1 to 15 win by 2, 1 to 21 win by 2) [Rules 12.B. and 12.C.]
- Event type (e.g., MD 55-59, MX 3.0, etc., WD Age, etc.)
- Court number
- Your name as referee
- Number on back (1 or 2) for determining which team will choose serve, side, or receive. Check back of scoresheet to ensure a number has been recorded. If none, write a 1 or a 2 (check this prior to getting to the court).
- Place change side marks at 6 of third game (at 8 for game to 15, at 11 for game to 21).

Pre-match on court checklist [Rule 13.C.]:

- Confirm net height and positioning, especially for movable temporary nets. The net height should be checked by the tournament director at the start of each day.
- Look for safety hazards such as debris or liquid on the court.
- Make sure there are two or more balls for the match.
- Consider sun, shadows, line judge positions, spectators, etc., when determining the best side to stand. If you must stand where your shadow is visible on the playing surface, move as little as possible during rallies to avoid creating a distraction.

Conducting pre-match orientation:

- Start the pre-match orientation when all players are present at the net. Be thorough. Each question you anticipate and answer in advance helps to establish confidence and control. When you have a professional demeanor and are well prepared, you are setting the right tone for the match. During later rounds of an event, it may be prudent to reduce the amount of information imparted during the orientation, since by that time, players have heard it repeatedly. (See Appendix A for briefing details.)
- Introduce yourself and players, and confirm each player's identity; mark clothing or distinguishing characteristic on scoresheet if necessary to identify players/teams (Figure 2: distinguishing characteristic next to name).
- State type of match (2 out of 3, 1 to 15, etc.) [Rule 12.B.].
- Confirm with each player that the paddle he/she is using is listed on the USAPA approved list. [Rule 2.F.3.]. If the player is unfamiliar with the list, pay close attention in the next step.
- Check paddles, looking for [Rule 2.E.]:
 - Manufacturer name and model name or number; it may contain the USAPA Approved Seal. It is your responsibility to be familiar with the USAPA Approved Paddle List. If you encounter a paddle you do not recognize, you should have someone check to be sure the paddle is on the list. (http://ifpickleball.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/IFP_Paddle_Test_Results.pdf) Note: Some paddle manufacturers use factory-applied adhesive labels to indicate the make and model/number. If the label is missing or has been replaced by a homemade label, the paddle is no longer eligible for use in sanctioned play.

- Distinct aftermarket alterations (smoothness/texture other than to the handle or the edge guard). Check the paddle surface by running your open hand across both sides of the paddle face, feeling for illegal surface texture that might allow the player to generate additional spin or ball movement. If the surface is in question, have the head referee or tournament director make the final decision.
- Anything added to the paddle face that extends beyond ½” from the edge or 1.0” above the paddle handle.
- Should a paddle not appear on the list or have prohibited features, the player must switch to an approved, qualified paddle or forfeit the match [Rule 2.F.3.].
- If a player switches paddles at any time during the match, that paddle also must be inspected for compliance.
- Identify first server on each team, and confirm that each is wearing the prescribed first-server band; mark scoresheet accordingly (Figure 2: first servers are circled).
 - Only one player on each team may wear a band of the color prescribed by the tournament director [Rule 5.A.4.].
 - The starting first server may be changed before the start of any game with notice given to the referee [Rule 5.A.3.].
- State player line-calling responsibilities:
 - Matches **without** line judges – referee calls the non-volley-zone line and service foot faults; players call other lines on their side of the court [Rule 13.D.2.].
 - Matches with line judges – referee calls the non-volley-zone line, line judges call their assigned line, players only call the center serve line on their side of the court [Rule 13.D.3.].
- State appeal procedure – players may appeal any line call made by a player or line judge to the referee.
- State basic rules/procedures often misunderstood; for instance:
 - Starting your service motion before the score is called completely results in a fault; no warning issued [Rule 4.A.1.].
 - Players may ask “Am I the correct server?” and “What is the score?” (to determine position) [Rule 4.B.8 and 4.B.9].
- State any unique conditions or procedures that apply to this tournament (e.g., total warm-up time, if less than 10 minutes).
- Have one player choose number 1 or 2 (written on back of scoresheet). If the guess is correct, that player/team chooses side, serve, or receive. If the guess is incorrect, the other player/team chooses side, serve, or receive, and the remaining player/team chooses from what’s left. Once a selection has been made, it cannot be changed [Rules 5.A.1. and 5.A.2.].

Player pre-match warm-up:

- Allow players to warm up for the remainder of the specified time and notify them when 1 minute is left, so they can practice serving.
- Observe players’ serves for potential illegal service motion.
- Allow the serving team to select game ball, using whatever technique works for them, and remove all other balls from the playing surface.
- Begin play within 10 minutes of when match was called or as specified by tournament director. Players may not use time-outs to delay start of match until partner arrives [Rule 10.G.].
- If players have not arrived by half of the allotted time, have them recalled.

- A referee may impose a forfeit when a player fails to report to play 10 minutes after the match has been called to play [Rule 13.H.2.].

Preparing scoresheet at beginning of match (Figure 2):

- Circle the name of players wearing first server identification band.
- Referee may want to note a distinguishing characteristic next to the name of players to help identify (red hat, blue shirt, etc.).
- Place "X" or player's name in the spaces provided on scoresheet indicating which player/team is serving first in each game. Position the scoresheet on clipboard, and make sure the clipboard clip is pointing toward the direction of the serving team. When out-of-ordinary situations occur, having the clipboard clip pointing toward the serving team is an additional means of quickly confirming which team is serving.
- Place *change side* marks at 6 of third game (at 8 for game to 15, at 11 for game to 21) (triangle ▲ beneath 6 in third game). Marking this at the start of the match avoids missing the change of sides later.

FIGURE 2

2016_PLSP
Womens Doubles Age Groups 60-100
Leaf, Irene-Nawara, Sharon
Red Hat
Match: #3 SYSID: 120036
Court: 09 08/18/16 17:17
Referee: Your Name
Format: 2/3 to 11

Server	Score	TimeOuts
1	2	1 2
2	3	1 2
3	4	1 2
4	5	1 2
5	6	1 2
6	7	1 2
7	8	1 2
8	9	1 2
9	10	1 2
10	11	1 2
11	12	1 2
12	13	1 2
13	14	1 2
14	15	1 2
15	16	1 2
16	17	1 2
17		1 2

If above wins match, all scores & initials

Server	Score	TimeOuts
1	2	1 2
2	3	1 2
3	4	1 2
4	5	1 2
5	6	1 2
6	7	1 2
7	8	1 2
8	9	1 2
9	10	1 2
10	11	1 2
11	12	1 2
12	13	1 2
13	14	1 2
14	15	1 2
15	16	1 2
16	17	1 2
17		1 2

If above wins match, all scores & initials

Troester, Virginia-Faber, Ann
Blue Shirt

2016_PLSP
SYSID: 120036

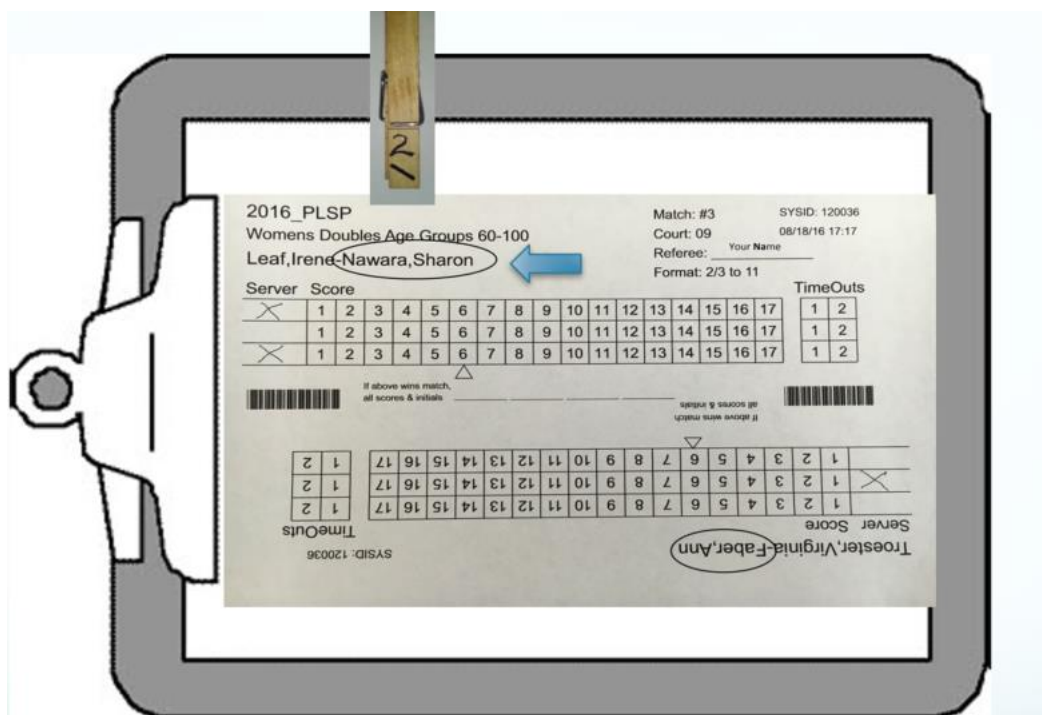
Final preparation of scoresheet clipboard at the beginning of game:

- Place numbered server clip over first server of the game; this person's name will be circled, indicating first server (this team elected to serve first).
- Place numbered server clip with number 2 facing you.
- Make sure clip on clipboard is facing serving team.
- Referee is now ready to announce the score.

FIGURE 3

Serving Team is on this side

Note: Clip on clipboard should always be facing the serving team



Alternating diagonal lines and numbered server clip instructions:

In doubles matches, keeping track of first and second server and which player is the correct server are common stumbling blocks for referees, especially for the inexperienced referee. However, once you master the official *server tracking* technique, it becomes second nature. Using this system, referees will quickly and accurately know if it is first or second server and which partner is the correct server. Only through practice will this system become automatic, allowing you to efficiently track servers and side outs, and accurately keep score without interrupting the flow of the game.

The use of a numbered first-server/second-server clip, along with an alternating diagonal line to mark the score and vertical lines to mark side out, is mandatory for certification.

- **Numbered server clip or clothespin** (Figure 4). Use a clip/clothespin with a “1” marked on one side and a “2” marked on the other. When the first server of a possession is serving, place the numbered server clip over that server’s name with the “1” facing you (at the beginning of a game, place the side marked “2” over the first server’s name). When the second server is serving, place the numbered server clip over that server’s name with the “2” facing you. At side out, rotate the clipboard and place the numbered server clip over the new first server’s name with “1” facing you.

- **Alternating diagonals and vertical lines** (Figure 4). Points scored by the first server are marked with an upper-right-to-lower-left diagonal line (forward slash). Points scored by the second server are marked with a diagonal line drawn in the opposite direction – upper left to lower right (backslash). Side out is indicated by a vertical mark on the right side of the last point scored. At side out, rotate the clipboard, reposition the numbered server clip, and begin with the new serving team.

FIGURE 4

First server points marked with an upper right to lower left slash mark

2016_PLSP
Womens Doubles Age Groups 60-100
Leaf, Irene Nawara, Sharon

Match: #3 SYSID: 120036
Court: 09 08/18/16 17:17
Referee: Your Name
Format: 2/3 to 11

Server	Score	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	TimeOuts				
1	1 2	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	1	2
2	1 2	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	1	2

Barcode: If above wins match, all scores & initials

Barcode: If above wins match, all scores & initials

Server	Score	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	TimeOuts				
1	1 2	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	1	2
2	1 2	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	1	2

Barcode: If above wins match, all scores & initials

Barcode: If above wins match, all scores & initials

Troester, Virginia-Faber, Ann

Clip moved to second server and point marked upper left to lower right. Side out marked with vertical line.

2016_PLSP
Womens Doubles Age Groups 60-100
Leaf, Irene Nawara, Sharon

Match: #3 SYSID: 120036
Court: 09 08/18/16 17:17
Referee: Your Name
Format: 2/3 to 11

Server	Score	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	TimeOuts				
1	1 2	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	1	2
2	1 2	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	1	2

Barcode: If above wins match, all scores & initials

Barcode: If above wins match, all scores & initials

Server	Score	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	TimeOuts				
1	1 2	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	1	2
2	1 2	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	1	2

Barcode: If above wins match, all scores & initials

Barcode: If above wins match, all scores & initials

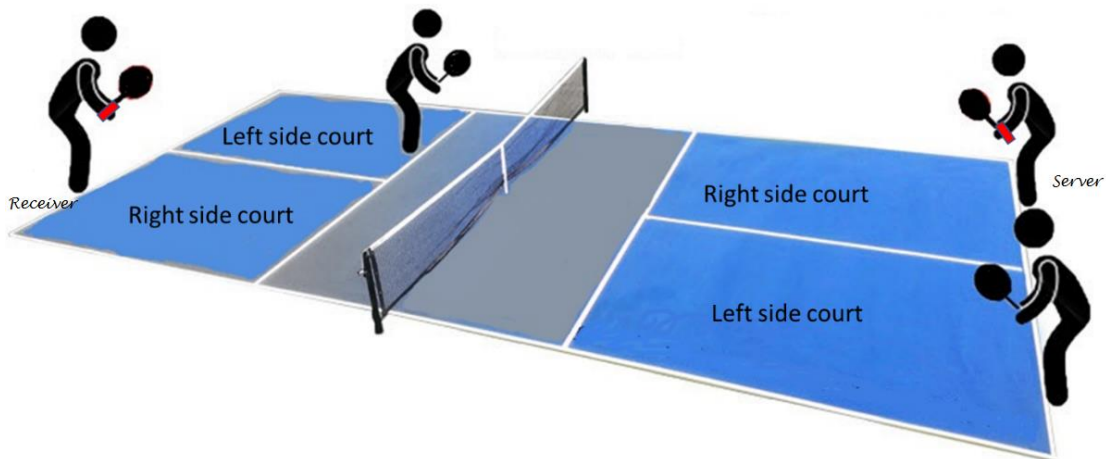
Troester, Virginia-Faber, Ann

Player Positions – Server and Receiver (doubles match play):

- As a referee, you need to understand the importance and relationship of players with the server band, the score, how it relates to court position, and if they are the server or receiver.
- The correct server and receiver and their positions are determined by the score and the players' starting positions in the game.
- The court has a right side (even) and a left side (odd) as a player faces the net.
- At the start of each game, the starting first server begins the serve on the right/even side of the court.
- The server band identifies first servers. **At the start of each game**, both server and receiver will be in the right side (even) positions on the court (score 0-0-2), and both will be wearing a visible first server band.
- The correct score will determine where each player should be positioned on the court.
- When the team's score is even (0, 2, 4...), the team's starting first server's (has server band) correct position is the right/even court. When the team's score is odd (1, 3, 5...), the starting first server's (has server band) correct position is the left/odd court.
- Players can stand anywhere on the court (stacking), but only the correct server or receiver may contact the ball to serve and return serve. After that, either of the teams' players may hit/return ball.

Illustration of players' positions at beginning of game

For illustration purposes, the players in the even courts have a red wristband, indicating they are the server and receiver; score is 0-0-2.



Section IV: Refereeing a Match

1. Beginning of Match/Game:

- First server of game begins as second server. Place numbered server clip over the circled first server name on scoresheet with the number “2” facing you (Sharon in Figure 3).
- To begin the match/game and before each serve, mentally confirm that both server and receiver are in the proper position. This is indicated by score, numbered server clip, and server band.
- At the start of the first game of the match, you may announce the names of the serving team to verify that you have the teams correctly indicated on the scoresheet and the clipboard clip pointing toward the serving team. (Do not identify the server.)
- Maintain a position even with the net, standing 1 to 3 feet back from the post.

2. Calling the Score [Rule 4.J.]:

- The score is called after confirming:
 - The server has the ball in hand and is in position to serve or should be in position to serve.
 - The receiver is in the ready position or should be ready and is not using one of the not-ready signals [Rule 4.C.1.]:
 - raising the paddle above his or her head
 - raising the non-paddle hand above his or her head
 - completely turning his or her back to the server.

Note: These signals are not valid if used by the server’s or receiver’s partner.

- If server and/or receiver take an inordinate amount of time (e.g., strategizing, chatting, deliberately moving slowly, purposely holding up the game, etc.), call the score when you feel they **should** be ready.
- Announce the score as: “zero, zero, two”, avoid “zero, zero, start”, or any other non-standard variation.
- If the server begins the service motion prior to the completion of calling the score, a fault is issued [Rule 4.A.1.]. Service motion is defined as “The service motion begins with the server’s arm movement initiating the swing, backward or forward, to contact the ball.” [Rule 4.A.2.].
- The server has 10 seconds to serve once you have called the score. If he/she fails to do so, a fault is issued [Rule 4.E.1.].

3. During Play:

- Watch the server for service foot faults and illegal serves [Rule 4.A.]. See Appendix B for details about *Recognizing Illegal Service Motion*.
- Watch ball from server’s paddle to see where it lands; make *short* serve calls when applicable.
- When players are anywhere near the non-volley zone (NVZ) or a volley has occurred from anywhere, **your main focus is NVZ foot faults, not watching the ball** to make appealed line calls. Make no call or physical indication (intentional or automatic response) that a ball is “in” or “out” unless appealed by a player. **Ruling on appealed line calls is a low priority.**

- At every fault of any kind, immediately state: “point,” “second server,” or “side out” loudly and clearly.
- Mark every point on the scoresheet as it occurs. Use alternating diagonal lines as marked on the numbered server clip.
- Avoid looking at scoresheet during rallies; concentrate on action on court.
- Track when play goes to second server by moving the numbered server clip over the second server’s name.

4. At Side Out:

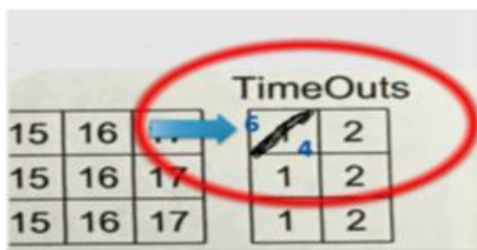
- Indicate on scoresheet the side out by drawing a vertical line on right side of the last point scored. This marking technique documents what the score was at side out and allows you to backtrack later should a player question the correct server (Figure 4).
- Rotate clipboard so board clip is pointing toward serving side.
- Reposition the numbered server clip to the correct server based on even score (name circled) or odd score (name not circled) at that team’s last side out, simultaneously flipping the server clip so the number “1” is facing you.
- At side out, clipboard and server clip movement needs to be highly efficient to avoid delaying the game while you rotate the clipboard and prepare for the next serve.

5. At Time-Outs:

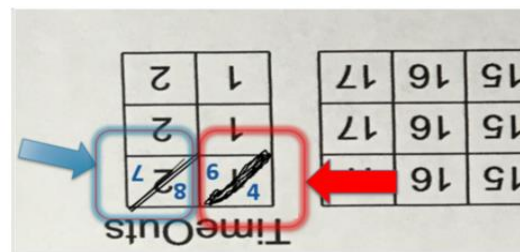
- Announce score loudly (e.g., 6-4-1).
- Advise teams of time-outs remaining.
- Start 1-minute count on stopwatch or timing device.
- Move to the middle of the court to avoid conversation with either player/team.
- On scoresheet, mark scores in appropriate time-out box, separating team scores with the appropriate diagonal line that mirrors the diagonal on the server clip (Figure 5, 6-4-1).
 - When time-out is called by the receiving team, don’t rotate scoresheet to enter time-out score right-side up. Instead, enter it upside down to avoid potential errors.
- Advise players when the time remaining is 15 seconds.
- If a player has left the court with his/her paddle, it should be reinspected.
- At 1 minute, assume referee position and call “time in.” Even if players are not in position, announce the score and start the 10-second count. Failure to serve at the end of the 10 seconds is a fault. [Rule 10.A.6.]
- Game may resume early if players agree and are ready.

FIGURE 5

At a time-out, mark the appropriate time-out box and record the score inside the box.



At a time-out, when the receiving team calls the time-out, the scoresheet is upside down.



5. At End of Game:

- Do not say “possible game point” when serving side would win if they score the next point. Making such a statement can be a psychological distraction for one or both teams.
- At the end of the final point, announce “point, game,” the final score, “2-minute break between games,” start the 2-minute timer, and move to center court.
- Draw a line through all unused points and the time-out box of the previous game.

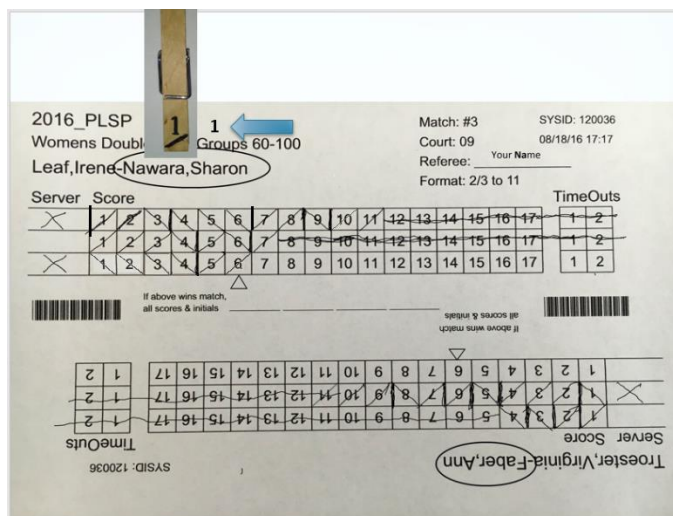
6. Between Games:

- Have players/teams switch ends of court.
- Start stopwatch; 2 minutes are allocated between games.
- Rotate clipboard so board clip is facing serving side, and rotate scoresheet accordingly.
- Notify both players/teams when the time remaining is 15 seconds. Game may begin earlier if players are ready and agree. Otherwise, at 2 minutes, start the game promptly by calling “game#” and “time in.” Even if players are not in position, call the score and start the 10-second count. Failure to serve at the end of the 10 seconds is a fault [Rule 10.A.6.].
- At start of game 3, remind players of upcoming switch at 6.

7. Changing Sides during a Game:

- Side change occurs at 6 points in the third game of 2-out-of-3 matches, 8 in games to 15, and 11 in games to 21, as noted by the *change sides* ▲ marks on the scoresheet.
- Start stopwatch; 1 minute is allowed for players to switch sides [Rule 5.B.6.].
Note: This is not a time-out, so players may not be coached during the side change.
- At side change, prior to removing numbered server clip, place the number of the server (1 or 2) over or next to the name of the person serving. This indicates that at change of sides, Sharon was serving and she was the first server (Figure 6). This notation avoids potential confusion over whether it was first or second server at the switch.
- Rotate the scoresheet and clipboard to correspond with the players’ new positions. Make sure the clipboard clip is facing the serving team.
- Place the numbered server clip with the appropriate number facing you over the name that you noted.
- Notify both players/teams when the time remaining is 15 seconds. Game may resume earlier if players are ready and agree. Otherwise, at 1 minute, start the game promptly by calling “time in.” Even if players are not in position, call the score and start the 10-second count. Failure to serve at the end of the 10 seconds is a fault [Rule 10.A.6.].

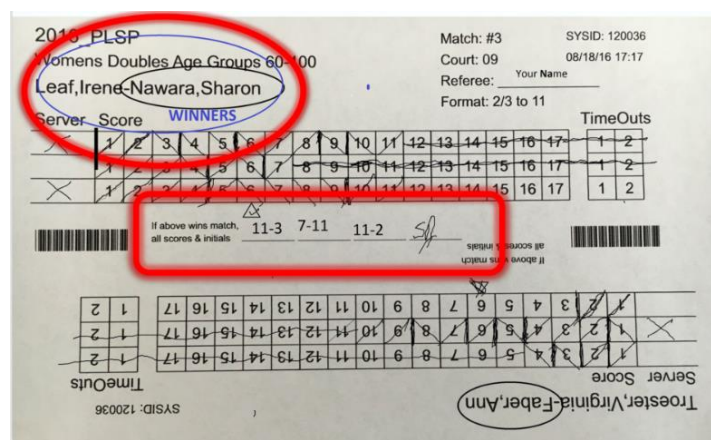
FIGURE 6



8. At Completion of the Match:

- Announce “point, game, match” when the winning point of the match is scored.
- Thank line judges when applicable.
- Orient the clipboard so the names of the winning team are positioned at the top of the clipboard (right-side up).
- Circle the names of the winners, and write “WINNERS” in the circle (Figure 7).
- Record the scores of all games played in the order they occurred, from the perspective of the winning team (e.g., 11-3, 7-11, 11-2). If there are lines or a space in the center of the scoresheet, record the scores there. If not, record the scores at the top of the scoresheet next to the winners’ names.
- Have the winner (one member of a doubles team) confirm the correct winner is circled and the scores are correct, and sign (or initial) next to the scores.
- Without delay, return scoresheet on clipboard to referee/event desk.

FIGURE 7



Important Points to Remember:

During the game, announce scores, mark the scoresheet, move the numbered server clip, etc., promptly – keep the game moving. Communicate with players in a professional tone and avoid unnecessary conversation.

Concentrate on what is happening on your court. Do not allow yourself to be distracted by activities on adjacent courts or spectator areas. Maintain an attentive, confident, relaxed demeanor. You are totally responsible for the conduct of the match, and no two matches are exactly alike. Stay alert and focused; the players are counting on you.

Section V: Common On-Court Situations

Server Out of Position or Wrong Server: After ball has been served, announce “service fault” and state “second server” or “side out.” Explain briefly, as necessary [Rules 4.M.1. and 4.M.2.].

Wrong Receiver: After serve has been returned, announce “receiver fault” and state “point.” Explain briefly, as necessary [Rule 4.N.1.].

Serving Before Score Called: Call “service fault,” followed by “second server” or “side out.” No warning, but be sure to reference this rule in the pre-game briefing [Rule 4.A.1.]. Keep in mind, however, that if you severely deviate from your normal cadence when calling the score, you may have contributed to the server violating the rule. In that case, announce “referee error” and have the player re-serve.

Time-Out Called After Service Motion Has Begun: If a time-out is called after the score has been called and the server has started his/her service motion, a fault will be issued [Rule 4.N.3.].

Stacking: There are several variations of the stacking technique. The serving team may stack; the receiving team may stack; or both may use the technique, but not necessarily all the time. **To avoid confusion, concentrate only on the proper server and receiver based on the score (even or odd) and whom you have indicated on the scoresheet as the first or second server.** Ignore where either partner is positioned [Rule 4.B.7.]:

- Serving team stacking:
 - If team’s score is (was) even at side out, the partner *with* the first server band will serve first from the right-hand court. If the team scores a point, the score will become odd, and the first server will then serve from the left-hand court. As long as the team continues to score, concentrate only on the position of the server *with* the first server band. Ignore where the partner is positioned.
 - If team’s score is (was) odd at side out, the partner *without* the first server band will serve first from the right-hand court. If the team scores a point, the score will become even, and the partner *without* the first server band will serve from the left-hand court. As long as points are being scored, concentrate only on the server *without* the first server band. Ignore where the partner is positioned.

- When the serving team faults, the serve goes to second server; move the numbered server clip and concentrate only on the position of the second server (with or without the first server band). Ignore where the partner is positioned.
- Receiving team stacking:
 - If team's score is (was) even at side out, the receiver *with* the first server band will receive in the right-hand court. Concentrate only on the receiver with the first server band. Ignore where the partner is positioned.
 - If team's score is (was) odd at side out, the receiver *without* the first server band will receive in the right-hand court. Ignore where the partner is positioned.
 - Both receiving team players must receive from their relative positions (based on previous side out score – even or odd) until side out occurs and they regain the serve. Ignore where the partner is positioned when not receiving.

Server Foot Faults: Call “foot fault” immediately upon violation, followed by “second server” or “side out.” Do not elaborate or argue with guilty player. It is your call [Rule 4.L.].

Player Readiness: Players are given an equitable amount of time to be *ready* for their team to receive or initiate the serve. Following a point, fault, transfer of serve, or side out, players are expected to move to their respective positions without delay.

The receiver demonstrates *readiness* by positioning him/herself in or near the receiving court and facing the server. Turning his back or raising the paddle or non-paddle hand above the head are signals indicating *not ready*. Once the score has been called, the receiver may not become not ready unless there is a valid hinder. If the referee determines there is not a valid hinder, a fault will be called on the receiver and a point awarded to the serving team.

The server demonstrates *readiness* by positioning himself behind the baseline of the serving court, typically with ball in hand. By doing this, both have demonstrated complete readiness. If the server and/or receiver do not move to their respective positions without delay following a dead ball, the referee is empowered to call the score when he/she determines that the player(s) *should* be in position [Rule 4.D.].

The score should be called prior to one or both players – server and/or receiver – being in position if:

- Partners huddle and strategize before moving into position.
- Players carry on a conversation while moving slowly toward position.
- Players take an excessive amount of time toweling sweat or grabbing a drink.
- Players, typically those who are stacking, take an excessive amount of time figuring out where they should line up.
- Players purposely, for whatever reason, take excessive time getting into position.

Only the server and receiver need be in position; however, before deciding to call the score prior to them and/or their partners being in position, consider whether one of them had to chase down and retrieve the ball. Any player who retrieves the ball deserves sufficient time to return to position before play continues.

10-Second Violation: The server has 10 seconds to serve the ball once the score has been called. If the server takes longer than 10 seconds, then a fault is called. The 10-Second Rule no longer applies to the receiver [Rule 4.E].

Illegal Serve: The ball must be contacted in an upward motion with paddle below the waist (navel) and the highest point of the paddle head below the wrist break. Unless blatantly obvious, often it is difficult to precisely determine if all three of these “legal serve” components are present. However, the rule must be enforced consistently and uniformly for all matches at all skill levels. If uncertain, between games or during a time-out, ask the tournament director, head referee, or both to observe and provide additional opinions. If a violation exists, do not hesitate to make the call. Failing to recognize an illegal serve, and therefore not calling it, creates an issue when another referee calls it in a later match. For more detail and a video demonstration, see Appendix B: *Recognizing Illegal Service Motion* [Rule 4.A.].

NVZ Violations: The player or anything the player is wearing or carrying touches the NVZ before, during, or following the act of volleying the ball [Rules 9.B. and 9.C.]. IFP Comment: The act of volleying the ball includes the swing, the follow-through, and the momentum from the action. If the paddle touches the non-volley zone during the swing, it is a fault, regardless of whether the touch occurred before or after contacting the ball:

- Make all NVZ violation calls immediate and definite by announcing “fault” or “foot fault,” followed by “point,” “second server,” or “side out.” Do not elaborate or argue with guilty player. Watching for NVZ faults is one of your primary responsibilities; make the call.
- Whenever a ball is volleyed, especially near the NVZ, keep your eye on the volleying player’s feet until he/she has completely regained control of the momentum associated with the volley. A player volleying a ball is subject to an NVZ violation until the momentum associated with the volley no longer exists. Even if a fault or dead ball occurs elsewhere between the time when the volleying player contacts the ball and when he/she regains control, his/her NVZ violation takes precedence, and an NVZ fault is declared.
- If you erroneously call a foot fault on a ball that has bounced, immediately announce “referee error” and replay the point.
- If an NVZ fault occurs and you are sure of the fault, but additional rapid volleys take place before you can voice the call, go ahead and make it; do not ignore the fault. It is better to make a late call than to not make the call at all.

Medical Time-Out: One allowed per player per match of 15 minutes or less [Rule 10.B.1.a.]:

- Play continues to conclusion of rally.
- Advise all players that once the injured player is ready, play will resume. A 15-second notification will be issued.
- Call first-aid personnel for evaluation – If first-aid/medical personnel or the TD determines that there is not a valid medical condition, then the player or team will be issued a technical warning. If a technical warning has previously been issued, then a technical foul would be called.
- If there is any sign of blood on the player or the court, stop play until all blood has been cleaned up [Rule 10.B].

Equipment Time-Out: Players are expected to keep all clothing and equipment in good playable condition and are expected to use regular time-outs and time between games for adjustments and replacement of equipment. If a player or team is out of time-outs and the referee determines that an equipment change or adjustment is necessary for fair and safe continuation of the match, the referee may award an equipment time-out not to exceed 2 minutes [Rule 10.C.]:

- Play continues to conclusion of rally.
- Granted at referee's discretion. May award more than one per player per match if necessary.
- Examples: broken paddle, broken shoestring, shorts ripped, etc.

Questioned Calls: If the issue is not resolved quickly, call players to net and calmly discuss:

- Ignore spectator comments; spectators are not part of the match and should not be permitted to become involved [Rule 13.C.2.a.].
- Consult line judges, if applicable.
- Avoid replays, if possible.
- Summon tournament director or head referee when requested or necessary to resolve disputes or to interpret a rule. If the referee's ruling is correct, the team will lose a time-out and be issued a technical warning. If no time-outs are available, they will be issued a technical foul [Rule 13.I.].
- If all players agree, consider adopting consensus solution when no definitive rule-based call can be made.

Broken Ball: Play continues to completion of rally [Rule 11.E.]

- Referee determines if broken ball affected outcome of rally.
- Replay possible at referee's discretion.
- A fault is declared if a player stops play due to possible broken ball.

Service Lets: When to call a let [Rule 4.O.]:

- Wait until the ball bounces before calling a let.

Hinders: When an object, a person, etc., enters the court, play should be stopped, and the rally replayed [Rule 8.C.].

Referee Mistake:

- Most common reasons for replay:
 - Called wrong score – halt play immediately, announce “referee error,” call correct score, and replay [Rule 4.K.].
 - Called NVZ foot fault on bounced ball – stop play immediately, announce “referee error” and replay.
- When unsure regarding a rule, call for head referee or tournament director.

Appealed Line Call: If you had a good angle and without a doubt clearly saw ball land “in” or “out,” when appealed, give a ruling and that ruling stands [Rule 13.F.]:

- Do not say, “I *think* the ball was...”; preferably say, “I saw the ball...” or “The ball was...”
- If you did not clearly see the ball, say “I did not clearly see it.” Do not overrule a line call unless you are absolutely certain the player's or line judge's call was incorrect.

Technical Warnings and Fouls: Referees are empowered to call technical warnings and fouls [Rule 13.C.5.h.]:

- Depending on the severity of the violation, a *technical warning* typically is issued prior to calling a technical foul. If a second technical warning occurs, a technical foul is called.
- Next to the time-outs box for the appropriate game, write “TF” or “TW.” On back of scoresheet, annotate reason for technical foul or warning.
- A technical foul will result in 1 point being added to the score of the opposing side.
 - Make sure the opposing team understands that a point was added; they must adjust their positions to match the new score *on their own*.
- After a technical foul is called and a point awarded, play should continue without further discussion.
 - If the player(s) continues to argue or be abusive, the referee is empowered to forfeit the match in favor of the opponents.
 - If a player or a team receives two technical fouls in a match, that match is automatically forfeited in favor of the opposing team.
- After assessing a technical warning or a technical foul, the referee will call a 15-second warning for the players to become ready. At the end of 15 seconds, the referee will announce the score to begin the 10-Second Rule, even if the server and receiver are not on the court and/or not ready to play [Rule 13.G.4.e].
- The tournament director has the authority to expel any player or team from the tournament for misconduct [Rule 13.H.4.].
- Actions that should result in a technical warning and/or subsequent technical foul are [Rule 13.G.3]:
 - A player using objectionable or demeaning language directed at another person.
 - Excessive profanity used for any reason shall incur similar action. The referee will determine the severity of any violation.
 - Excessive arguing.
 - Threats of any nature to any person.
 - Purposely breaking the ball or forceful striking of the ball between rallies, or at end of game.
 - Intentionally throwing a paddle will result in a technical foul being assessed against the offender and a point shall be awarded to the opponent.
 - Delay of game; not being in position to begin play at the end of time-outs or before next game, or due to intentional, unnecessary stalling prior to being ready to serve or receive.
 - Coaching. First occurrence warrants a warning to the spectator/coach and a technical warning to the player. Second occurrence, issue a technical foul [Rule 11.N.].
 - Excessive questioning of the referee on the rules, or excessive or unnecessary appeals.
 - Any other actions that are considered unsportsmanlike behavior.

Section VI: Uncommon On-Court Situations

NVZ shots:

- Jumping across NVZ – cannot touch NVZ or post/net [Rules 9.D. and 7.F.].
- Stepping into/through NVZ – both feet must contact playing surface outside NVZ before the ball may be legally struck [Rule 9.D.].
- A player may return a ball around the net post below the height of the net [Rule 11.M.].
- A player, or anything the player is wearing or carrying, cannot break the plane of the net or advance around the post past the extension of the plane of the net, unless it is a follow-through of legally striking the ball. A missed attempt to strike the ball does not qualify as a *legal strike*. The exception is a ball that bounces in court A with sufficient spin to cause it to bounce back over the net into court B without being struck by a player in court A. Court A player may legally break the plane of the net or net extension to strike the ball. However, in doing so, he/she may not contact the court B surface [Rules 11.L.3. and 11.L.4.].
- Watch for foot faults, paddle breaking the net plane before contact with ball, and player touching net or post [Rule 7.K.].
- A foot underneath the net at any time constitutes a fault [Rule 11.L.3.].

Pushing Off from the NVZ:

The rule [9.D.] reads that after being in the NVZ (touching the lines included), a player cannot legally volley a ball until both feet have contacted the playing surface outside the NVZ. This means that if one or both of a player's feet are touching the NVZ as he/she pushes off backward to hit an overhead on a short lob, a NVZ fault will be called if he/she strikes the ball before both feet have contacted the playing surface completely outside the NVZ.

Distractions:

The referee may declare a fault if, in his or her opinion, a player has deliberately created a distraction (e.g., waving the paddle or arms, making loud noises, or yelling, etc.) when an opponent is about to strike the ball [Rule 11.J.].

Match Forfeits:

The referee may declare the match forfeited:

- If a player does not arrive at the assigned court and be ready to play within 10 minutes of when the match was announced [Rule 13.H.2.].
- After a player or team receives two technical fouls in a match, the match is automatically forfeited [Rule 13.H.3.].
- Only the tournament director can expel a player from the tournament [Rule 13.H.4.].
- If a player refuses to wear the designated first server identification band or follow the rules of the tournament venue [Rule 13.A.2.].

Dealing with Unruly Players:

There will be rare occasions when a player becomes angry during a match. It may be triggered by an action of the opponent or the referee. Regardless of the cause, such situations must be dealt with in a professional manner:

- Most importantly, remain calm and maintain a benign demeanor and open mind.
- Meet the player(s) mid-court, away from spectators, and calmly discuss the source of irritation.
- Take time to understand the complaint; it may be a simple misunderstanding.
- Avoid argument. If the player becomes verbally abusive, issue a technical warning; if it continues or intensifies, issue a technical foul. Advise the player(s) that a second technical foul results in automatic forfeiture of the match; this usually restores calm.
- If it's a rule or rule interpretation issue, don't hesitate to summon the head referee or tournament director for clarification.
- Players have the right to request a ruling from the tournament director; honor such a request.
- If the player makes threats to you or a player, issue a technical foul without a warning.
- When play is resumed after an altercation, if the player continues to create problems, issue a technical foul.

Remember, it is your job to control the match and keep peace on the court. You are not a dictator, but you do have the authority and responsibility to apply the rules in a fair and professional manner.

Accommodating Hearing-Impaired Players:

Often, such players remove their hearing aids before a match, and the acoustics at many venues are not conducive to clear communications. Therefore, it is not uncommon for a player to ask you to announce the score extra loudly. It is important that you be sensitive to those types of requests and tolerant of the player asking you to repeat the score more often than normal. When announcing the score, look directly at the hearing-impaired person and enunciate clearly – many people read lips, even though they may not be aware of it. In acute cases, it may be necessary to supplement announcing the score verbally with hand signals; use a form of extended finger(s) for score and first or second server.

Keeping Both Sides Equally Informed:

If a player from one team approaches you for a rule clarification, move to center court and invite a player from the opposing team to join you to hear the clarification. This demonstrates *fairness* and avoids one team perceiving that their opponent is gaining an advantage. The question must pertain to rules/procedures, not judgment calls (e.g., line calls). If an intense discussion begins to develop, cut it off, send all parties to their neutral corners and resume play.

Coaching and Spectator Comments:

Control the crowd politely, yet firmly. Coaching is not permitted, except during time-outs and between games; the penalty is a technical warning/foul called on the team involved. Do not allow spectators to coach, make line calls, or interfere with the match in any way [Rule 11.N.].

Section VII: Working with Line Judges

Line judging is an important part of pickleball officiating. It is more than simply staying awake, staring at the assigned line, and calling balls “out.” Although calling the assigned line is the primary responsibility of the line judge, he/she is part of the officiating team and may be asked for his/her opinion regarding other actions that occur during the match.

Line Judge Positioning Options:

- A line judge for each baseline and each full sideline (four line judges).
- A separate line judge for each half of each sideline, plus baseline judges (six line judges).
- The referee with a supporting referee may each call their respective sideline, while two line judges call the respective baselines (two baseline judges and two referees = the least accurate technique).

Referee Responsibilities:

Accurate line calls are important. The referee is responsible for the line judges.

- Prior to the match, if possible, gather line judges for instruction.
- Review with the line judges their responsibilities and reiterate the line-calling procedures to be used.
- Line judges should be reminded that players often continue to make their own “out” calls and not to be influenced by that or spectators making line calls.
- Make sure line judges are ready before starting the match, after time-outs, between games, or any situation that delays the game.
- If line judges do not make their calls loud, clear, and immediate, and both verbally and visually, the referee should call time and restate the agreed upon procedures.
- If a line judge does not perform to standards, he/she should be replaced. The referee has that authority and responsibility.
- Inform players that they are still responsible for calling the centerline.

Line Judge Placement:

The line judge should sit or stand directly in line with his/her assigned boundary line and look over a fence rather than through it, if possible. Secondary to focusing on the line, he/she should visually follow the ball, and be alert and aware of the action on the court. Depending on the line he/she is assigned, the line judge would also watch for the following:

Service Foot Faults:

- Baseline judges call service foot faults – stepping on the baseline or court before striking the ball [Rule 4.L.3.].
- Sideline judges call service foot faults – serving from outside the imaginary extension of the sideline [Rule 4.L.1.].

Line Judge Code of Conduct:

- Never solicit, be influenced by, or acknowledge the opinions of players or spectators.
- Do not be intimidated by spectators or players who might call the ball out. Players are not responsible for making line calls.

Blocked from a Line Call: If he/she does not clearly see the ball contact the playing surface:

- He/she should not make a call.
- He/she should signal the referee by placing hands over eyes, indicating that the ball was blocked from his/her view.
- If neither the line judge nor the referee is able to make a line call, unless all four players agree to replay the point, the ball will be considered “in.” [Rule 13.D.3.c].

Sideline NVZ Faults:

Sideline judges should be the referee’s second set of eyes, watching for NVZ sideline violations when a player goes around or through the NVZ to volley a ball [Rule 9.D.]:

- Jumping across NVZ – cannot touch NVZ or post/net – line judges watch sideline for NVZ foot faults.
- Stepping through NVZ – both feet must contact outside NVZ before ball can be legally contacted – line judges watch sidelines for NVZ foot faults.
- Referee has responsibility for the call but may seek the opinion of a line judge.

Around the Post Shots:

When a player returns a ball around the net post, the line judge on the destination side should rule on whether the ball is in or out, just like any over-the-net shot [Rule 11.M.].

Communicating the Call:

Line judges may call only balls that are “out” by signaling both verbally and physically.

- He/she should call every ball that is out for his/her assigned line, regardless of whether he/she feels it was obvious; you may be concentrating on the striking players’ feet at the NVZ and not see the ball land.
- Remind him/her to loudly and clearly say “OUT” and issue a signal.
 - He/she should signal with a raised arm outstretched in the out-of-bounds direction.
 - Arm signals are important to confirm that the “out” call came from the line judge and not a spectator or player.
- He/she should make calls immediately and confidently.
- He/she should not signal a ball “in” unless it was close or unless he/she is asked for confirmation (may just be a glance in the direction of the line judge). The signal for a ball that is “in” is both arms outstretched forward and downward with palms facing down.

Overruling:

You have the authority to overrule a call made by a line judge.

- This rarely occurs.
- If the referee has a good angle and clearly sees a ball differently from the line judge, the call may be overruled, if appealed.
- A player can ask the referee to rule on a line call made by a line judge. If the referee overrules the line judge call, the referee’s decision will either result in a point awarded, a service loss, or a replay [Rule 13.C.2.].

Readiness:

As soon as the referee announces 15 seconds until time in, line judges should immediately become ready to start.

Section VIII: Summary

The best referees have their own styles while following the best practices set forth in this handbook. They demonstrate professionalism by not drawing attention to themselves rather than the game. To be a competent referee, you must:

- Know the rules. Take the *Referee Test, Line Judge Knowledge Review, and Player Rules Quiz* before each tournament you officiate.
- Be relaxed but confident.
- Maintain a *ready* position at the net post; do not sit or hang on the fence.
- Keep your voice clear and loud, using a conversational tone and steady pace.
- Check the receiver for readiness before calling the score.
- Track the ball during play, but concentrate on foot faults following a volley, especially when players are near the NVZ line.
- Do not volunteer line calls unless asked and if you clearly saw the ball land and are certain that it was either “in” or “out.”
- Be aware of everything on and around the court. Practice “court awareness.” It is the hallmark of a competent official.
- Train yourself to look at the scoresheet as little as possible. Mark points, side out, etc., quickly and efficiently. Keep your eyes and attention on the court and the players.
- Study and practice your referee skills = never stop learning.
- You will make occasional mistakes. Observe what you did wrong, correct it if possible, then put it aside and move on. Pondering mistakes during a match is distracting and may lead to additional mistakes. After a match, review the procedures in this handbook, and learn from your errors.
- Strive for perfection, yet enjoy yourself. Officiating the perfect match is challenging but easily within every referee’s reach. Study, practice, and prepare yourself and your day will come.

Once you have passed the USAPA online *Referee Test, Line Judge Knowledge Review, and Player Rules Quiz*; successfully completed a USAPA referee training session with a registered trainer, and refereed a number of practice matches, have your trainer observe you refereeing and provide feedback. A way to develop your own style is to observe a certified referee at work; pay close attention to the referee, not the match. Effective and efficient refereeing is a constant challenge; even certified referees learn from every match they officiate. When observing a certified referee, notice where the referee stands and looks, observe his or her technique, and listen to the pacing of the score. Note the procedures that are automatic. With the proper training, practice, and sufficient experience, you may soon qualify to apply for USAPA Referee Certification.

Becoming a USAPA Certified Referee, however, is not easy. See Appendix E for the steps to becoming a Certified Referee and Appendix D for the Benefits. Candidates are required to demonstrate to a USAPA referee evaluator their mastery of the best practices set forth in this handbook. To help you prepare, Appendix F - *Preparing for On-Court Evaluation* – contains a condensed list of the items that will be evaluated. As you practice, use it to gauge your progress.

Appendix A

Pre-Match Briefing

1. Introduce yourself and the players.
2. Confirm with players the format of match (winner's bracket 2 of 3 to 11, loser bracket 1 to 15, etc.).
3. Inspect each player's paddle(s) for irregularities and noncompliance (paddle must contain manufacturer name and model or have the USAPA-approved seal).
4. Ask players if they have any questions regarding the rules (recent changes can be found under *Rulebook Changes* at usapa.org/rules & referees).
5. Point out court hindrances and explain any procedures or unique conditions that apply to this venue or event.
6. Instruct players on line-calling responsibilities of referee/players/line judges.
7. Players still call the center line when line judges are used.
8. Identify, confirm, and record on scoresheet first server for each team (doubles).
9. Explain line call appeal process.
10. Explain number of time-outs and time-out procedures.
11. Have player/team who guesses the correct number (1 or 2) choose "side," "serve," or "receive."
12. Tell players how much time they have left to warm up.

Appendix B

Recognizing Illegal Service Motion

Rules 4.A.5., 4.A.6., and 4.A.7. state that the serve must be made with an underhand stroke so that contact with the ball is made below waist level (waist is defined as the navel level) and the paddle head must be below the server's wrist when it strikes the ball. Rule 3.A.35 Underhand Defined. The player's arm must be moving in a forward and upward arc with the palm turned upward or downward.

Plainly stated, a legal serve has three components. When the paddle contacts the ball, the paddle must be: 1) moving in an upward motion; 2) below the waist; and 3) the highest point of the paddle head cannot be above the wrist joint.

The serves of the vast majority of players, both purely recreational and competitive, contain all three components 100 percent of the time. The serves of a small percentage of players occasionally violate one or more of the components, especially when attempting to serve more aggressively. A mere handful of players unfortunately choose to push the envelope on nearly every serve. Allowing this practice to continue threatens the original intent of the game.

Typically, very few referees would challenge a player on the legality of his/her serve. However, with a clearer definition and demonstration, and better training, any referee should have the knowledge and ability to recognize – and the confidence to call – an illegal serve (service fault) when any of the three components of a legal service motion are missing. A well-defined tutorial on identifying the components of a legal serve can be viewed in a short video segment found at [Pickleball 411-Legal Serves](#). Take a look at the video, and then *make the call* with confidence.

Appendix C

Sample Scoresheets

Pickleballtournaments.com computer-generated scoresheet for a best 2-out-of-3 game match.

Test Tournament		Match: #1		*999999*	
Test Event		Court: test		06/03/14 18:48	
Team 1		Referee: referee			
		Format: 2/3 to 11			

Server Score																	TimeOuts		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	1	2
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	1	2
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	1	2

If above wins match, all scores & initials

If above wins match, all scores & initials

Team 2		Server Score																	TimeOuts	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	1	2	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	1	2	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	1	2	

999999

Pickleballtournaments.com computer-generated scoresheet for a 1-game-to-15 match.

Test Tournament		Match: #1		*666666*	
Test Event		Court: test		06/03/14 18:48	
Team 1		Referee: referee			
		Format: 1 to 15			

Server Score																	TimeOuts		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	1	2

If above wins match, all scores & initials

If above wins match, all scores & initials

Team 2		Server Score																	TimeOuts	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	1	2	

999999

Appendix D

Benefits of Certification (subject to change)

1. Personal pride of being acknowledged as a competent referee who has met USAPA certification requirements.
2. Confidence that you know the USAPA/IFP referee best practices and have successfully demonstrated your mastery of them to the USAPA Referee Certification Evaluation Committee.
3. USAPA Certified Referee credentials: certified referee shirts, photo name badge, lanyard.
4. Listing in your profile in the USAPA member database. Certified lists may be made available for search and sort by Regional Directors, USAPA Staff, and Board.
5. USAPA-provided liability insurance.
6. One-time certification acknowledgement in the USAPA newsletter/*Pickleball Magazine*.
7. First choice to referee at USAPA-managed events (national and regional tournaments).
8. First choice to referee at other prestigious tournaments: TOC, Huntsman, etc.*
9. First choice to referee medal matches.*
10. Financial benefits: First choice for referee assignments at tournaments in which referees are compensated.*
11. First choice to referee at any tournament.*

* Tournament director's decision

Appendix E

15 Steps to Becoming a Certified Referee

- Step 1: Play pickleball and be a member in good standing of USAPA.
- Step 2: Study USAPA/IFP Official Tournament Rulebook (<http://www.usapa.org/ifp-official-rules/>).
- Step 3: Download and study the USAPA/IFP Referee Handbook; available on <http://www.usapa.org> under Rules & Referees.
- Step 4: Participate in a referee training session conducted by a USAPA registered trainer using the Referee Trainer Guide and Referee Handbook. If there are no classes offered in your area, you may self-train.
- Step 5: Practice applying the USAPA Officiating Best Practices by shadowing certified referees and refereeing a minimum of 30 matches in tournaments that adhere to USAPA/IFP rules.
- Step 6: Within 14 days prior to applying for USAPA Referee Certification pass the online Referee Test and Line Judge Knowledge Review. Both tests are continually enhanced with rotating and new questions.
- Step 7: Obtain concurrence from your trainer that you are ready (unless self-trained) and apply for USAPA Referee Certification online (<http://usapa.org> - Rules & Referees/Referee Materials).
- Step 8: If all prerequisites listed on the application have been fulfilled, you will receive an e-mail requiring confirmation that you have mastered all the evaluation criteria as specified in the attached On-Court Evaluation Process document.
- Step 9: Upon acceptance into the program, you will be sent an e-mail with a USAPA Store link to pay the \$95 application fee online.

- Step 10: When payment is confirmed you will be sent a list of currently scheduled on-court evaluation opportunities. From that list select your first and second choices of where and when you prefer to be evaluated by a USAPA Referee Certification Evaluator.
- Step 11: Once your evaluation venue has been confirmed and evaluator assigned, you will be contacted by the evaluator to agree on a specific date and to provide details.
- Step 12: Sign up ASAP with the tournament director or referee coordinator to referee the entire day of doubles play for which your evaluation is scheduled. You will not be expected to referee all day, but must be available for the required match formats.
- Step 13: Show up as confirmed, prepared to be evaluated refereeing three matches, at least one in which the players are stacking and one a medal match with line judges.
- Step 14: Pass or fail is based on the evaluator's observations of your ability to consistently apply the USAPA rules and officiate in accordance with the USAPA Officiating Best Practices contained in the Referee Handbook, as well as your on-court demeanor and ability to officiate in a professional manner.
- Step 15: Once you pass, your ID photo will be taken and official USAPA Certified Referee credentials package.

Appendix F

Preparing for On-Court Evaluation

Referees who apply for USAPA Referee Certification are required to undergo on-court evaluation by one or more members of the USAPA Referee Certification Committee. The candidate's performance will be evaluated while refereeing a minimum of three doubles matches in a tournament setting. The three matches will include one stacking match and one medal match using line judges in a 2-out-of-3 match. The evaluators are well trained and dedicated to maintaining quality by passing only candidates who demonstrate the referee skills and qualities set forth in this handbook. To successfully meet these stringent certification requirements, a candidate must know and apply the best practices.

To help candidates better prepare, below is a condensed list of the items that will be evaluated.

Pre-Match

Did the referee:

1. Arrive at the court on time armed with the proper tools?
2. Perform a court safety check?
3. Follow pre-match briefing best practices?
4. Provide a proper briefing based on circumstances – too brief/too long?
5. Maintain a professional demeanor – not overly familiar with one team or the other, not dictatorial?
6. Begin the match on time (x minutes after match was announced – no more than 10)?
7. Draw attention to himself/herself or address the task at hand?

During the Game

Did the referee:

1. Consistently announce score loudly, clearly, and with uniform cadence?
2. Maintain the flow of the game? Example: players not having to wait for referee to call score.
3. Announce the correct score every time (i.e., number of times he/she announces incorrect score/server)?
4. Record each point as it occurs using best practices technique (i.e., appropriate use of alternating diagonals)?
5. Use best practices server tracking techniques. Example: appropriate use of the numbered server clip, alternating diagonals for marking points, and side out marking.
6. Quickly respond to “correct server?” with documented facts?
7. Accurately identify wrong server/receiver and handle correctly?
8. Confidently and correctly handle *stacking* situations?
9. Consistently and correctly handle 10-Second Rule violations?
10. Call faults loudly, immediately, and with confidence?
11. Respond to every fault in a timely manner with applicable “point,” “second server,” or “side out”?
12. Move the numbered server clip from server to server consistently?
13. Efficiently mark side out on scoresheet and rotate clipboard?
14. Consistently concentrate on NVZ faults when potential violations exist?
15. Pay attention to the NVZ rather than the ball?
16. Dependably identify and call service foot faults and illegal serves?
17. Consistently handle time-outs according to best practices?
18. Consistently handle line call appeals according to best practices?
19. Correctly handle occurrences of unsportsmanlike conduct (i.e., issue warnings or technical fouls, etc.)?
20. Watch for and handle coaching from spectators?
21. Maintain an impartial, professional demeanor – show no emotion for either team?
22. Consistently and accurately quote and apply rules when questioned?
23. Announce ending score and advise players of 2-minute break?

Between Games

Did the referee:

1. Maintain impartiality with players?
2. Move to mid-court?
3. Minimize conversation?
4. Monitor time accurately?
5. Give 15-second warning, when applicable?
6. At end of 2-minute break period, announce "game number," "time in," and call score?

At End of Match

Did the referee:

1. Accurately mark winning team and game scores on scoresheet according to best practices?
2. Have winning player initial scoresheet as correct?
3. Expeditiously return completed scoresheet to event desk?

General Observations

Was the referee's:

1. Overall demeanor too meek, too assertive, dictatorial, just right?
2. Confidence level adequate, insecure, overconfident?
3. Command of USAPA/IFP rules clearly demonstrated?
4. Command of and demonstrated ability to follow best practices apparent?

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