

OFFICIATING RACQUETBALL

A Guidebook on Rules and Refereeing

by

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and

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EKTELON 

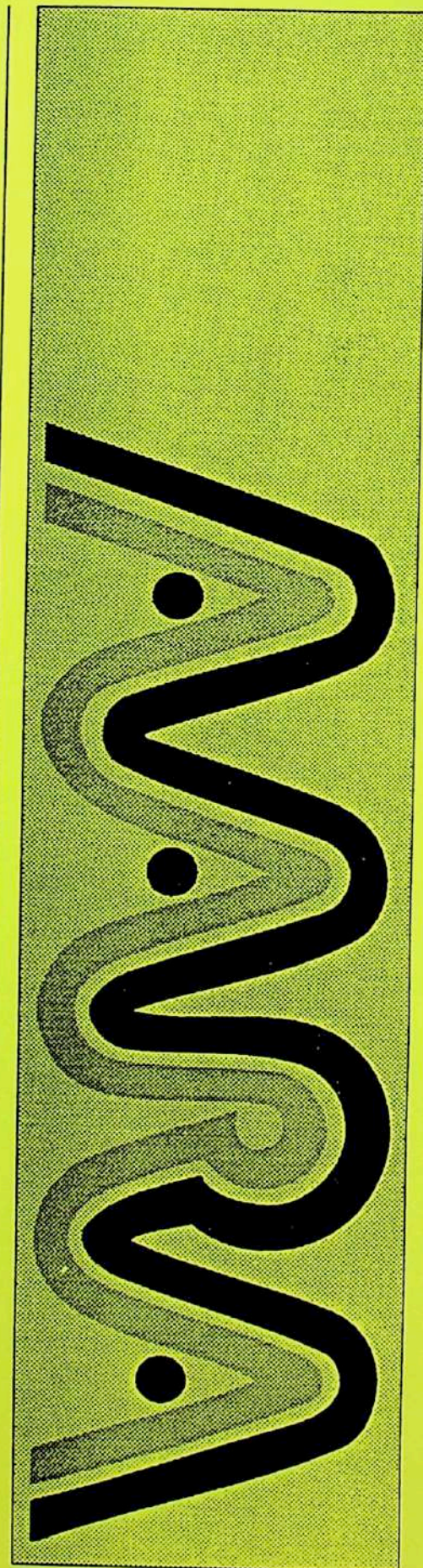
The Most Recommended Name in Racquetball

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OPERATING PROCEDURES

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OFFICIATING RACQUETBALL

Chapter 1 - Overview

In a sport as fast and intense as racquetball, certain issues inevitably arise about which the players may not agree, such as did the ball skip or not? When such disagreements arise in day-to-day play, they are usually resolved through some form of compromise, such as simply replaying the rally. In nearly all tournament play, however, an independent third party--the referee--has been used to rule on such matters, as well as generally administer the entire match.

As long as there are racquetball tournaments, there will remain a need for qualified referees. Because of the large number of matches played in a racquetball tournament and the desire to keep the expenses of running a tournament to a minimum, the sport has relied primarily on the players themselves as the primary source of referees. While this has proven to be a fairly reliable way of identifying someone to referee, it does little to ensure that the persons are actually qualified.

Many players are hesitant to referee--from the person playing in her first tournament who may know very little about the rules and nothing at all about refereeing, to the seasoned tournament player who considers refereeing a punishment rather than an opportunity to ensure fair competition for their fellow participants.

Most observers agree that the best referee is one who carries out the duties so well that the players may not even notice that there is a referee. However, an incompetent referee usually stands out like a sore thumb. It is unfortunate that so many racquetball players and spectators can recall a story about a racquetball match that was lost as a result of a missed or incorrect call, or about some player who put on an exhibition of swearing, yelling, or other immature behavior without being properly disciplined by the officials.

If a racquetball tournament is to be conducted in a safe and fair manner, competent refereeing is essential. While becoming a competent referee certainly involves some degree of natural talent, it is apparent that refereeing skills, like playing skills, can be improved through study and practice. This book was written with the intention of increasing the skills of referees. However, other tournament officials, especially tournament directors, will find that this book can also be used as an authoritative reference to answer questions that always seem to arise which sometimes are not addressed by the rulebook. In addition to rules and refereeing techniques, there is advice on obtaining and assigning referees and guidance on resolving disputes.

The American Amateur Racquetball Association (AARA) is recognized by the United States Olympic Committee as the national governing body of the sport in the country. Accordingly, this book was based principally upon the rules and concepts set forth in

the AARA's 1990-1991 Official Rulebook. The authors assume that the reader has not only read the rulebook, but also has a copy close at hand because there are frequent references to it. This book will focus primarily on those rules and concepts that are not easily understood as well as those that are often applied improperly. While all of the rules discussed in this book were current at the time this book was written, it must be noted that racquetball is still a relatively young sport and its rules are still evolving. Therefore, if any direct conflict should exist between the current AARA Official Rulebook and this book, the rulebook should always take precedence as the governing authority. As rules are modified by the AARA, the authors will revise this book as necessary and make revised editions available.

OFFICIATING RACQUETBALL

Chapter 2 - Before the Match Begins

After accepting the responsibility for refereeing a match, you should immediately begin preparing for the task at hand. First check with the tournament desk to be sure that both players are aware of their assigned court and if they have been notified of their match. This will save you from walking all the way back to the tournament desk to have the players paged after waiting at the court for players and finding out that the players haven't been notified that the court is available. If the players haven't been called, ask that they be called to the court immediately.

Do you know what rule modifications, if any, are in effect for the tournament? For example, what score is needed to win a game and how many games to win the match? If you're not sure, then you better ask BEFORE you leave the tournament desk!

Are you ready to go to the court yet? Well, you probably are provided that you have the scorecard, a pencil, a ball (unless it was already given to one of the players), and possibly a towel. Better referees also take some other materials with them--specifically, (i) a coin to toss (having the players choose a number is rather unprofessional), (ii) a watch to keep track of rest periods, and (iii) a copy of the rulebook so they can immediately accommodate any player who exercises his right to be shown the rule in the rulebook.

Having done the above, the referee should then proceed directly to the assigned court. Once at the court, there are several more duties for the referee to accomplish before the match starts. For the sake of discussion, these duties are broken into three categories--what to do (i) before entering the court, (ii) while on the court, and (iii) after leaving the court, but prior to calling the score to start the match.

BEFORE ENTERING THE COURT

As soon as you arrive at the court, note what time it is. If both players have been called, and the court is open, a fair policy is to give the players about 10 minutes of warm-up time. When you see the players, advise them both of the amount of time you have allotted for warm-up and how much of that remains at the time you advise them. Also, let them know when only a few minutes of warm-up time is left. This extra reminder will go a long way in helping to ensure that matches begin on time.

The warm-up time begins at the time the players are called to the court. While you should try to be somewhat lenient, don't let one player use a stalling technique to gain an unfair advantage. Sometimes a player will wait until the other player has warmed up and cooled down before appearing at the court. If the court is open 10 minutes or more prior to the assigned time and both players have been called, then they are expected to be ready to begin at the assigned time. Remember, there is a 10-minute forfeit rule and if a player is not ready to play 10 minutes after the assigned time, the match may be forfeited. In many tournaments, the referee's failure to exercise his authority to begin the match within a reasonable time is a primary reason why the matches at some tournaments fall behind schedule. Chapter 10 discusses forfeitures in greater depth.

Are you going to use line judges? If so, who are they going to be? Now--before you enter the court--is the proper time to round them up. The use of line judges is recommended whenever possible and especially when it is apparent that several people are going to watch the match anyway. Your only concern is whether they can be independent in their judgments, that is don't select a player's relative or best friend to be a line judge. After selecting the line judges, brief them about their duties. Additional information about using line judges, including what to cover in the line judge briefing, is presented in Chapter 9.

While the players are warming-up, check on the general condition of the court to make sure it is both clean and dry. If some corrective action is needed, such as a dry mopping, get the club staff working on it right away before the players complete their warm-up. Additionally, if your vantage point permits it, look over the various surfaces of the court to see if there are any obviously irregular surfaces that could cause a court hinder during play.

Take some time to determine "who is who" before going onto the court. If you don't know the players, ask one of the spectators. There is usually a relative, friend, or fan standing nearby who can assist you with player identification. Of course, if it is a singles match, you can use the process of elimination--find out the name of one player and then the name of the other person becomes evident. In addition, if you don't know the players or have a great memory, you better make some sort of notation of a distinguishing feature beside their names on the scorecard. This characteristic should be something that cannot be easily changed between games such as hair color, body build, or type of shoes. This will allow you to identify the competitors during the match.

If time permits, watch the players as they warm-up. This will give you some idea of their relative skills--not only shot making ability, but also their speed and quickness. Such an assessment could prove useful in making decisions about hinders later in the match. By the way, your assessment of these abilities should not stop when the warm-up period does, but rather continue throughout the match.

As the referee, you are responsible for ensuring that the players use approved equipment. You can usually check this before you enter the court. Key points to look for are:

- Eyeguards. To be legal, they must be lensed, unaltered, and ones that were manufactured for racquet sports.

- Racquets. Although Rule 2.4 states that the maximum legal length is 21 inches, a waiver was granted (until June 1, 1991) that permits the use of racquets longer than 21 inches, but not longer than 21.5 inches, in any AARA-sanctioned tournament other than AARA Regional and National events.

- Clothing. While self-expression is great, bad-taste is not! The referee has the right to ask a player to change any clothing that is wearing extremely loose fitting, distracting, or not in good taste.

WHILE ON THE COURT

Now you're ready to meet the players face-to-face. Always take some time to actually go onto the court to meet with the players. Don't attempt to brief them from your refereeing position. Many players consider it annoying to have the referee suddenly pop-up at his referee position and say something like, "Okay, are you ready?" This kind of impersonal approach by the referee can lead to problems during the match. Neither player knows what to expect with regard to judgmental issues such as screen serves and hinders, and, therefore, is forced to hope for the best should such situations arise during the match.

Upon entering the court, get the immediate attention of all the players. If they are still hitting the ball, politely ask them to stop for a few minutes and, assuming that time permits, tell them that you will let them have a few more minutes to finish warming up AFTER you've finished the briefing. It is important that you have the full attention of all players when presenting your pre-match briefing.

Introduce yourself to the players, such as "Hello, Mr. Ace, my name is Mr. Right and I'll be your referee for this match." Be careful to refer to all players in the same manner. Don't call one player by his first name while either forgetting the other player's name or calling him by only his last name. If you know one player, but not the other, and address them in a different manner, it could raise a question about your independence. You might even consider introducing yourself to the player who already knows you so that there is no doubt in either player's mind that you are here in an official capacity as the referee, not as one player's friend. After meeting both of the players you should ask them if they have met each other. If they haven't, then introduce them. Players often warm-up on a court at the same time, but sometimes

don't take time to greet each other. You should make sure that they at least acknowledge the other's presence on the court.

It is important that you conduct this briefing in a confident, knowledgeable manner. Remember, first impressions are usually lasting ones, so you should use this opportunity to establish that you are capable of performing your duties and are here so they can more fully concentrate on playing their best. During the briefing you should make it clear how you intend to officiate the match. Don't overdo the briefing, but try to cover those key issues that are often misunderstood or are subject to interpretation. These issues include screen serves, receiving line violations, hinders, and appeal procedures--assuming that line judges are being used. Not all briefings are exactly the same, but let's look at what might be said during a typical pre-match briefing.

"Hello. May I please have your attention while I go over some pre-game information. Thank You. **(Remember, it's a good idea to find out "who-is-who" before walking onto the court, but if you don't know the players, it will be necessary to ask.)** Which of you is Mr. Ace? Hello Mr. Ace, my name is Mr. Errorless. Then you must be Mr. Overhead. My name is Mr. Errorless and I'll be referring your match with Mr. Ace. First, let's discuss the screen serve. As stated in the rule itself, a serve is a screen only if the ball passes close to the server AND the receiver is impaired because it passed so close. To me, close is about 2 feet. If the ball passes close to the server, but the receiver is NOT impaired, then the ball is in play and no screen will be called. The AARA's receiving line rule is in effect. This means that you must remain behind the 5-foot receiving line until the ball either touches the floor or breaks the plane of the 5-foot line before you can cross the receiving line. This means that your follow-through may cross the receiving line as long as you contacted the ball behind the receiving line. This will be my call and is rather difficult to call from the referee's position, but of course this is an appealable call. Should you think that I have missed a hinder call, I want you to raise your hand immediately, but continue playing, and I will consider your request. However, raise your hand quickly, not after looking at your shot. Remember, too, that the ultimate decision is mine--not yours! With regard to court hinders, I have decided that any ball which hits that wooden rail by the gallery will be dead immediately. It will be the only designated court hinder. However, there are a few other surfaces that may produce court hinders, such as the lights. If I see a ball take an erratic bounce off the lights, I will immediately call a hinder. But don't stop play until you hear my call. I will watch carefully and make the call immediately, but remember I will make the call, so don't stop play even if you think it is an obvious court hinder. The doors appear to be flush, but once again if the ball takes an irregular bounce off the door I will call the hinder immediately. I realize that it's hard to hold up your shot, but the quicker you signal that a court hinder has occurred, the more likely I am to agree with you. Don't forget the rules now permit you to appeal the call or non-call of a court hinder. I also expect you will help me on double bounce pick-ups and skip balls. Mr. Eagle-Eye and Ms. Thumbs **(point to them)** will

be the line judges, but remember all appeals must be made directly to me. The games are best 2 out of 3 to 15 with an 11 point tiebreaker. During each 15 point game, you each will be allowed three 30-second timeouts, but only two 30-second timeouts are allowed in the tiebreaker. There will be a 2-minute rest period between games one and two and 5 minutes before the tiebreaker. Please try to limit your rest periods to these designated times. I will give a 10-second warning prior to the expiration of all timeouts. I will call either the score or "Second Serve" prior to every serve. This will indicate the beginning of the 10 second rule, so please wait for my call and respect your opponent's right to use some or all of those 10 seconds by checking the receiver's readiness after I've called the score or "Second Serve." Gentlemen, I sometimes give technical warnings, but most cases of unsportsmanlike conduct, like hard striking of your racquet on a court surface or the use of offensive profanity, will cause me to immediately assess a technical and deduct a point from the offender's score. Are there any questions? No? OK, Mr. Ace would you please call either heads or tails while the coin is in the air. **(The coin is flipped, Mr. Ace calls "Heads," and the coin lands with "heads" showing.)** It is heads, so Mr. Ace you will have the choice of serving or receiving in the first game. **(Mr. Ace chooses to serve first.)** Since Mr. Ace elected to serve first in the first game, Mr. Overhead will serve first in the second game. **(Mark the scorecard right now!)** I wish you both the best of luck!"

AFTER LEAVING THE COURT

If you haven't already marked the scorecard to show who will be serving first in both the first and second games, do it as you leave the court. It can be very embarrassing to return from the break between the first and second games and be faced with the realization that no one--not even you--knows who gets to serve first in the second game.

Don't start the game until you confirm that your line judges are ready and in position. Sometimes a line judge will assume that he has time to get a drink before the match starts and hasn't returned when you are ready to start the match.

If there is a large gallery and circumstances permit, you should make a brief announcement to the gallery about the match. This announcement does not need be very elaborate. It should include some information about the significance of the match as well as some personal data about the players, such as their seeding, previous victories, and club affiliation or hometown. This gives the spectators some insight into the players and is an excellent way of recognizing players for past accomplishments. For example, the referee might say something like:

"Ladies and gentlemen, this is the semi-finals of the Men's Open division. Serving first will be Jim Smith from St. Louis, Missouri. Jim is the defending champion

in this event and is seeded number 1. Receiving first will be Joe Brown from Springfield, Illinois. Joe was seeded 4th in this tournament."

If you intend to make an announcement that is as informative as the preceding one, some advance planning will be needed. But even if you don't have any detailed information about their hometowns or seeding, it is still a good idea to make an abbreviated introduction that at least includes the match level and the players' names.

Well, it's about time to get this match going. Tell the players it's time to play ball and let's get started!

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Chapter 3 - Controlling the Match

Even in the best officiated racquetball matches, the total time spent "not playing" is greater than the total amount of time actually spent playing. By properly controlling the time spent "not playing", a referee makes an important contribution to keeping the tournament on schedule. In this chapter, various techniques essential to properly controlling a match will be discussed.

WARM-UP TIME

The referee's responsibility for controlling the pace of a racquetball match begins as soon as he has been assigned to the match. Chapter 2 provides advice on controlling the length of the warm-up. In general, it is suggested that it be limited to about 10 minutes of on-court time. Be sure to closely monitor the warm-up to ensure that it doesn't take too long and that the actual match starts as close as possible to "on-time."

WHEN TO CALL THE SCORE

According to the rulebook, the score should be called as the players "prepare to return to their respective positions, shortly after the previous rally has ended." This concept has several implications. First, the referee must declare that the previous rally has ended by making a call of some type, such as "skip" or "hinder." The next thing for the referee to do is to determine if either a "point" or a "side-out" should be declared and then announce it loud enough for both players to hear him as he either marks the card or turns it over. Almost immediately after marking the scorecard, the referee should call the score to start the next rally.

You DO NOT have to wait for the players to get ready before calling the score!

This concept is so frequently misapplied, that it bears repeating.

You DO NOT have to wait for the players to get ready before calling the score!

If you wait for the players to get ready, then they are the ones dictating the length of time between rallies--time that really should be in the hands of the referee.

DELAYS IN GETTING READY

Not waiting for the players to get ready doesn't mean a referee should be intolerant of a reasonable delay. For example, if the previous rally ended with one player on the floor in the front of the court, you should hold off calling the score until he gets up and starts moving toward his proper position for the start of the next rally.

But be prepared to handle those players who try to stretch out an otherwise reasonable delay between points by taking longer than necessary to get ready. If you detect this going on, tell the offending player that he is taking too much time, that you intend to call the score in a few seconds, and that after you have called the score, he will have only 10 seconds (a topic discussed more fully later in this chapter) to get ready. A few seconds after making such a statement, **CALL THE SCORE!**

A player who wants more time between points than you are allowing should be advised to consider taking his 10 seconds or else call a timeout.

CALLING THE SCORE OR "SECOND SERVE"

The call of the score by the referee is very important because:

- It signals that the referee is ready to observe the play.
- It clearly establishes that the referee has ruled that the first serve was a fault serve.
- It starts the clock ticking for the 10-second readiness rule.

Always call the server's score first score, using a simple statement such as "12 serving 8." As time permits, you might try to amplify your calls by sometimes adding the server's name to the call ("Mr. Jones is serving. The score is 12 serving 8.") or some information about the status of the match ("This is the first game. The score is 12 serving 8.") But these added details are only for the benefit of the crowd, so you only want to add such embellishments when time permits and, of course, when there is a crowd present. But don't make the players wait for you to make an embellished call of score. If they are ready to go, just call the score and get the game going again. After a short while, your call of score should develop into a definite rhythm which you should try to maintain as much as possible throughout the match.

Equally as important as calling the score is the calling of "second serve" following a fault serve. You have probably heard a referee say something like "I won't call 'second serve', so just go ahead and serve whenever you are ready." **THIS IS IMPROPER!** The referee must call "second serve" for the same reasons he must call the score:

- It signals that the referee is ready to observe the play.
- It clearly establishes that the referee has ruled that the first serve was a fault serve.
- It starts the clock ticking for the 10-second readiness rule.

One last point about calling the score or "second serve". Be sure to maintain the rhythm of your call at game or match point. Don't change your verbal rhythm by calling something like "14--possible game point--serving 9." Instead, call this point just like you did all the rest of the points, such as "14 serving 9." The habit of adding "possible game point" to the call most likely had its origin from watching tennis on television where viewers often hear the on-air announcers say something like "McEnroe has two match points." However, the on-court umpire in tennis NEVER acknowledges that it is game, set, or match point! Although it may be match point, the tennis umpire calls only the score, such as "40-15". There are several reasons for not adding words like "possible match point" to the call of the score. First, most, if not all, players know the importance of the point without the referee reminding them. Second, it tends to irritate the player who is on the brink of losing by pointing out his plight to both his opponent and the audience. Finally--and most importantly--the addition of these words throws off the rhythm at one of the most critical points of a match. Those added words take just a little longer to say, but that may be just long enough to throw off the rhythm of the server.

READINESS (ALIAS "THE 10-SECOND RULE")

One of the more misunderstood rules in racquetball is the readiness rule which is more commonly known as the 10-second rule. The referee's calling of the score or "second serve" signals the start of a 10-second period during which the server and the receiver must get ready. In effect, when the score or "second serve" is called the referee turns the control of the match over to the players, but they only have 10 seconds to resume playing.

This 10-second period runs concurrently (at the same time) for both the server and the receiver. Because the server is the one who will initiate the next rally by serving, he is responsible for checking the readiness of the receiver prior to serving. The receiver also has some responsibility during this period. Specifically, if he wants to take some or all of the allotted 10 seconds, he must clearly signal this by giving one of two signals--either raising his racquet above his head or else standing with his back facing the server. The server is required to check the receiver after the score or "second serve" has been called and if the receiver is giving either of these two signals, the server must wait to serve until the signal stops. Once the signal stops or if the receiver isn't giving a signal when the server checks the receiver's readiness, then the receiver has transferred control totally to the server and, therefore, the server may

serve at any time. While this seems like a relatively simple process, as you are about to see, there are some quite complicated situations that can develop.

The basic penalty for not being ready is loss of rally. So, if the receiver is not ready within the 10 seconds, he automatically loses the rally and the server gets a point without even serving the ball. Conversely, if the receiver is ready, but the server fails to serve within the 10 seconds, then the receiver automatically wins the rally and the receiver becomes the server.

You don't really need to use a stopwatch to check compliance with the readiness rule. If you suspect that too much time is being taken, count the seconds off to yourself using the old "one one-thousand, two one-thousand, three one-thousand, etc." technique to estimate the amount of time being taken.

Don't be too quick to assess a penalty for taking too much time between points. If you detect either player taking too much time, but it's only a few seconds too long and happens only rarely, then you probably should ignore it. But if the delay is excessive or becomes more regular, then it is best to first caution the offending player. This usually corrects the problem and thus reduces the time spent between rallies. However, a technical foul for "delay of game" may be assessed if the problem is not corrected.

Here's where some complications can enter the picture.

- What if the server serves the ball without checking the receiver? There is no problem or penalty provided that the receiver was not signalling that he was not ready when the service motion began. The serve counts and the referee should say nothing.
- What if the server serves the ball without checking the receiver while the receiver is signalling that he is not ready? The serve DOESN'T count. In such situations, the referee should immediately call "NO SERVE" and have the serve replayed (that is, if it was "second serve" it is still "second serve." Before replaying the serve, however, the referee should caution the server about his responsibility to check the receiver and tell the server that the rulebook empowers the referee to assess a technical foul (deduct a point) if the server continues to "delay the game" by continuing to serve when the receiver is signalling that he is "not ready." Although it is not specified in the rulebook, the authors believe that an appropriate sequence of penalties to assess for multiple violations of this rule would be to (i) caution the server the first time he serves while the receiver is not ready, (ii) issue a technical warning (with no point deduction) the second time it occurs, and (iii) assess a technical foul (deduct a point for the offender's score) on the third and all subsequent occurrences during

the match. Also, a player's record isn't "wiped clean" at the start of the next game. While it may be the first occurrence of the second game, a technical foul should be called if it is the fourth occurrence of the match.

- What if the server checks the receiver and sees that he is not giving one of the prescribed signals for "not ready", but before the server can begin his service motion, the receiver raises his racquet over his head? Since the rule only requires the server is required to check the receiver once, the serve counts. So if the receiver continues to stand with his racquet over his head, chances are that the serve will be an "ace" (unless it's a fault or the receiver reacts in time to return it.) If the receiver complains about this call, remember that the reason you allowed the serve to stand is that the readiness rule only requires the server to check the receiver once after the serve or "second serve" has been called!

Because there is a penalty associated with violation of the readiness rule, the referee should not try to prevent a violation by telling the server to "hold up" if he hasn't checked the receiver, but is about to serve. It is the server's responsibility to check the receiver and not the referee's duty to remind the server. So, if you notice the receiver's racquet is in the air and the server is beginning his motion without having checked the receiver, do not say anything until the ball has been contacted by the server. Then immediately call "No Serve" and follow the preceding steps as appropriate.

While most referees probably don't realize it, the calling of the score is a very powerful and effective tool for keeping discussions with the players to a minimum. Because the calling of the score starts a clock ticking that 10 seconds later will result in the awarding of the rally to one of the players, any arguing that may be going on will usually stop immediately after the score has been called. If you think that your discussion with a player has passed the point of being productive, tell the offending player that you have listened long enough, that you intend to call the score in a few seconds, and that after you have called the score, he will have only 10 seconds to either serve or be ready to receive. A few seconds after making such a statement, **CALL THE SCORE!** Most players will "shut up" right away and get ready.

VERBAL INFLECTION

Make your calls loud enough that you are sure that BOTH players can hear them. The court is comparatively quiet as the players return to their respective positions for the next rally. As a result of the quiet, there usually is no need to yell the call. But, again, be sure that both players hear your call.

But when you detect an infraction of the rules while the rally is going on, you must "turn up the volume" on your voice--especially if the infraction isn't obvious to both players and one or more of the players just keeps on playing. Examples would be a serve that is very close to being short or a receiving line violation. The noise level inside a racquetball court is very high and players are usually concentrating intently on the rally. If your first call doesn't stop the playing, then quickly make your call again, but much louder this time! You might even try just yelling the word "STOP" and then, once they have stopped, tell them what your call is. Players get very frustrated with a referee who lets them hustle after additional shots that don't count because the referee had called something they hadn't heard several shots before.

If, however, the call is obvious and BOTH players immediately acknowledge it by stopping play, there is no need to yell out your call. Nevertheless, you always make a call--even if all you do is mumble to yourself. It is better to error on the side of making too many obvious calls. It is a very uncomfortable situation when both players think that they won the last rally, have them both walk into the service zone, look up at you, and find you still thinking about what to call. As the closeness of the call increases, so should the quickness and volume of your call. Players are far less likely to question calls that are made in quick, decisive manner. Players are more apt to forgive a referee who makes a few mistakes than they are a referee who hesitates or is unsure of the calls he makes.

ALWAYS MAKE A CALL!

The referee **MUST** make a call at the end of every rally. Nearly all rallies end as a result of one of the following:

- Skip Ball
- Two Bounces
- Hinder (sometimes followed by the word "Avoidable")

When one of the preceding occurs, call it!

Although "two bounces" is the technically-correct call to make when one player hits a winner (because the other player has failed to return the ball), the preferred thing to say is something like "That shot was good." In saying this, the referee is not congratulating the player on the quality of his shot, but rather using the term "good" as the opposite of "bad."

Keep your calls simple and with little, if any, explanation. Of course, if the players request a rules interpretation, they are entitled to one and you should give it. It's

times like this that you will be glad that you re-read the rulebook the day before the tournament started.

The call of "hinder" should be made loudly and quickly--especially when it might help prevent an injury. Rule 4.15(a)(6) which is commonly called the "safety holdup" allows a player to holdup his shot if he believes that he might hit his opponent with either the ball or the racquet. This rule surely has prevented more injuries than referees' calls of "hinder." Racquetball action is usually so fast that in most instances when a player does get hit, there is nothing that the referee could have done--including calling "hinder"--to have prevented the contact.

ALWAYS LET THE PLAYERS KNOW HOW YOU SCORED THE PRECEDING RALLY

After declaring the reason for stopping the rally (such as calling a skip ball or two bounces), the referee should determine which player won the rally and refer to the scorecard. The referee should then advise the players that he is properly scoring the rally by either:

Marking the scorecard and saying (again loud enough to ensure that both players hear you) the word "point" if the server won the rally,

OR ELSE

Turning the scorecard around and saying "side out" if the receiver won the rally.

Unless the hinder was "avoidable", there is no special scoring terminology associated with the call of "hinder" because a hinder during the rally is replayed without a change in either the score or the server.

Experienced players will listen for this call from the referee almost as intently as they listen for the score to be called. By making this call you will be providing the players with some assurance that you have properly recorded the results of the last rally on the scorecard.

CONTROLLING WET COURT CONDITIONS

If the floor is wet because a player dove on the floor during the preceding rally, then allow that player (don't ask his opponent to do it) some time to wipe up the wet spot. While you should have a towel handy, don't throw a towel on the court just because a player "goes down." Perhaps he isn't sweating yet or can rub out the spot with his shoe. In all but the most obvious situations you should make the players ask for the towel and give it to them only when you are reasonably certain that the floor actually

needs to be wiped dry. Giving the players a towel at every opportunity usually causes a match to last longer than it should.

It's okay to let the players take a few additional seconds to use the towel to wipe the sweat from their eyeguards or their body, but only after they have wiped up the floor. Wiping sweat from court surfaces must have been the primary reason why you gave them the towel. Players are required to use their regular timeouts for wiping sweat off their eyeguards or body.

If you detect that play is being stopped too frequently to wipe up the court, you should give some thought to attacking the cause. Probably one or more players on the court needs to change into a dry shirt. As the referee, you have the right to stop play and have the offending player change his shirt. Unless it's apparent which player is causing the wet court problem, you should probably direct BOTH players to change their shirts at the same time. Because the match will not be stopped so much to dry the court, it will be far more interesting to watch and will be completed in less overall time.

As necessary, alert the club's maintenance staff to stand by and be prepared to dry mop the court floor between games.

TIMEOUTS

A player may call a timeout at any time from the time a rally ends until the service motion begins for the ensuing serve. Therefore, a timeout may be called:

- after the referee has called the score.
- between the first and second serve.
- immediately following another timeout.

As long as the server has not begun his service motion, the timeout should be recognized. This assumes, of course, that the player has at least one timeout left.

The player who calls timeout when none remain has a problem. Rule 4.18(a)(6) calls for a technical foul to be assessed when this occurs. The referee can help prevent this problem by telling the players what their timeout status is each time they call one. For example, the referee might acknowledge a timeout by announcing something like, "Mr. Smith has called timeout. This is his second timeout and he has one remaining." Very often players avoid this problem by asking "How many timeouts do I have left?" The referee should readily provide such information.

Be sure to mark the scorecard as timeouts are taken. In the tiebreaker, only two timeouts are allowed instead of the three timeouts allowed in the other two games. Most scorecards have room for recording more than two timeouts in the third game. You may find it helpful to mark the scorecard BEFORE the match begins to indicate that only two timeouts remain in the third game.

Another important thing the referee needs to keep track of and in certain instance record, when one fault serve has already been served. Picture this scene--a player's serve is called short. The player disagrees and does so by appealing. The appeal results in the referee's call being upheld. Thinking that the referee might not fully understand the appeal rule, he asks for a rules interpretation. Because the referee doesn't have a rulebook handy (a mistake), he has to go to the tournament desk to get one. After resolving the question about the appeal process, the server asks for a towel to dry the floor in the service zone. That being done, the server asks you what the score is. As soon as you tell him that the score is "5 serving 5", he calls timeout. Of course, he is entitled to the timeout. Upon returning to the court, the server again asks what the score is, and as soon as you tell him, he begins his service motion. WHOOPS! Did you call "Second Serve" before he hit the serve. Did you remember that he had already served a fault serve? Did anyone--player, line judges, the crowd--remember? See how confusing a player can make a situation (legitimately) and, by so doing, possibly get an extra fault? The referee must be very sharp to foil such tricks.

EQUIPMENT TIMEOUTS

Players are required to use their regular timeouts to take care of any equipment problems that may occur. This rule was based on the idea that a player should not enter a match with defective equipment. If no regular timeouts remain, but the player has an equipment problem that affects the game, then the referee may declare an equipment timeout to correct the problem. Note that this rule was meant to cover problems like broken strings, torn shorts, or broken eyeguards. Wet gloves and shirts are NOT problems that affect the game in this context, nor is the player's desire to change to a different racquet because he doesn't like the one he's been using. When the referee grants an equipment timeout, the player is expected to take no more than 2 minutes. However, in some instances, such as when the locker rooms are far from the courts, the referee may permit extra time.

INJURY TIMEOUTS

A player is entitled to a total of 15 minutes per match to recover from an injury caused by some type of contact (for example, being hit by the ball or racquet and running into the wall or the other player) which occurs during a match. Therefore, certain types of muscle conditions, such as cramps, do not qualify as an injury. Neither do

pre-existing conditions, such as a sprained ankle which occurred during the player's last match.

Once the referee has confirmed that the player has sustained a qualifying injury, the principal thing to be concerned with is the time. A player may call more than one injury timeout for the same injury or for additional injuries occurring in the match, but under no circumstances may the total time taken exceed 15 minutes. As a referee you should keep track of the time taken and once the player is ready to resume play, inform the players how much time was used and how much remains for the match.

TIME BETWEEN GAMES

The rest periods between games are:

- 2 minutes between the first and second games.
- 5 minutes between the second game and the tiebreaker.

Keep a close eye on the amount of time being taken (using a stopwatch, if possible) and do your best to ensure that the players return on time. Here are some things a referee can do to keep the players from taking too long between games.

- As the players leave the court after the game, remind them of the amount of time they have until the next game starts.

- About 30 seconds before the allotted time between games is up, tell the players that it is time to resume play. This will give them time to retrieve their racquets, eyeguards, etc. and (hopefully) be ready to play as soon as the allotted time is up.

- If necessary, advise the players that a technical foul (loss of a point) can be called for delay of game when a player takes more than the allotted time between games. However, unless the delay is substantial (several minutes or more) and the other player is ready to play (no reason to call a technical on both players), a technical warning will usually suffice to correct the behavior.

By the way, make sure that YOU aren't late either! Keep an eye on the clock. Not properly controlling the time between games may be the one most common reason why matches take longer than they should. Do your best to see that the allotted times are not exceeded.

OFFICIATING RACQUETBALL

Chapter 4 - The Serve

Between the time the referee calls the score and the serve is successfully returned to the front wall by the receiver there are a multitude of things happening--far more than at any other point during a racquetball match. Think for think for a moment--if there were some magical way of doing it, every line on the court could just disappear after a successful return of serve because they are not needed during a rally. In addition to those rules involving the lines, there are many other rules unique to the serve. This chapter will cover most of the things that the referee should watch for on the serve and suggest some better ways to carry out this function.

READINESS

This topic was fully addressed in Chapter 3. As soon as all of the requirements of the readiness rule (Rule 4.4) have been met, the server may begin his service motion.

THE SERVICE MOTION

According to Rule 4.2, the server must begin the service motion from a set position. The motion itself is defined as any continuous motion (following the assumption of a set position) which results in the serve being made. This definition is critical to many aspects of the serve. As discussed in Chapter 3, after the service motion has begun, the opponent may not call timeout.

The position of the server's feet at the start of the service motion should be noted by the referee because if any part of the server's foot is beyond (not merely on) either line of the service zone at the start of the service motion, then the serve should be declared a fault. There are times that this call has negated an otherwise perfect "ace serve", as well as many times when the call should have been made, but wasn't.

The reason why the server may stand ON, but not OVER, the lines of the service zone is that the "paint" (which makes up the lines themselves) is actually within the service zone. That's why a serve that hits any part of the paint is called "short". Since the lines are considered IN the service zone, the server may step on and still be considered to be within the confines of the service zone.

If a player assumes a set position, takes about 7 steps, and then--without stopping again--serves the ball, all of the steps taken were part of the service motion and, therefore, must have taken place within the confines of the service zone. The server MAY NOT start outside the zone, take a few steps into the zone, and then serve the

ball without stopping. If he does, it would be a fault serve even if he was totally inside the zone when he actually struck the ball for the serve.

The server may stop his service motion and start over again. But if the server elects to stop and start again he must be sure to adhere to certain rules. For instance, stopping and starting again takes time. As was discussed in Chapter 3, he must serve within 10 seconds of the score being called or else he will lose the serve. In fact, the server doesn't reach the "point of no return" in his service motion until he starts moving the racquet toward the ball for the purpose of hitting it. If he stops while he is moving the racquet toward the ball, he has committed a fake or balk serve which will result in the loss of serve. Note that Rule 4.11(e) allows the referee to declare that a fake or balk serve as "no serve" (rather than an out serve) if he believes that no deceit was involved in the server's decision to stop the service motion. This, however, is a judgment call by the referee. If there is any doubt, an out serve should be declared.

With only one exception which is discussed in the next paragraph, every bit of the service motion (the start, the finish, and everything in between) must take place within the confines of the service zone. Moreover, the server must also remain within the confines of the zone until the served ball crosses the short line.

The only exception to the requirement that the server remain within the confines of the service zone is the new foot fault rule (Rule 4.2) that went into effect in September 1990. This new rule allows the server to step across the service line at the completion of the serve so long as some part of the foot remains in contact with the line. Therefore, not until the server's foot is completely beyond the service line (no part of the foot touching the line) does a foot fault occur.

If the server steps (actually touches the floor) even the slightest bit beyond the short line before the ball crosses the line, the penalty assessed to the server is the loss of serve and not merely a foot fault. The reason why the penalty for crossing this line is more severe than a fault is that the server has entered the 5-foot safety zone too soon and must suffer that same penalty assessed to the receiver who enters the zone too soon--immediate loss of rally.

DRIVE SERVE LINES

The drive serve lines located 3 feet from each side wall should be looked at one-at-a-time as each dividing the 20-foot wide service zone into a 3-foot and a 17-foot section. The basic rule (Rule 4.6) states that if the server elects to hit a drive serve to the same side of the court he is standing on, the entire service motion must take place within the 17-foot section. Several of the implications of this rule are discussed in the following paragraphs.

The drive serve rule only applies to drive serves. If the server is not hitting a drive serve, you can forget about the lines. Exactly what is a drive serve? Well, that's not a very easy question. Generally, it is considered to be a serve that is hit with sufficient force with the purpose of making it more difficult to retrieve and which passes through the service zone at head height or lower.

The drive serve line must also be viewed as the base of an invisible vertical plane which extends from the floor to the ceiling. Not stated in the rule, but defined by one of the approved rulings by the AARA National Rules Commissioner, is that the only things that are not allowed to break this plane on a drive serve are (i) the ball, (ii) the racquet, and (iii) the server's feet. Do you still recall the earlier example of a server who took seven steps and then served the ball? Well, if the server started those steps while standing in the 3-foot section on the left side of the court, but takes so many steps that he actually serves from the center of the court, he is prohibited from drive serving to the left side of the court regardless of how far he is away from the left side wall and the drive serve zone when he actually serves the ball. Additionally, if he walks so far that he is breaking the plane of the drive serve zone on the right side of the court, then he is prohibited from drive serving to EITHER side of the court.

The drive serve lines were introduced into the game in an attempt to prevent the server from standing very close to the side wall and then serving the ball between himself and the side wall so as to gain an advantage by almost "screening" the ball. For this reason, if the server is in the drive serve zone, but serves the ball to the "open" side of the court, the drive serve rule has NOT been violated. Of course, depending on the closeness of the serve, the referee may still declare the serve to have been a screen serve.

One last comment on the drive serve lines. There are some persons who think that if they have fully complied with the drive serve rule, then they couldn't possibly be called for a "screen serve." Not true! This misconception is probably based on the mistaken belief that violation of the drive serve rule is called a "screen serve." As will be described later in this chapter, a screen serve can occur regardless of the server's location on the court.

FOLLOW THE BOUNCING BALL

Having covered nearly all of the aspects of the rules covering the position of the player's body during the serve, let's take a look at what the server must do with the ball.

The ball must be dropped or thrown to the floor and struck by the server on the first bounce. The ball must travel directly from the server's hand to the floor and then be struck by the racquet--both in that order and without touching any other object or surface. Some persons think that they are allowed to toss the ball in such a manner

that it hits the side wall before they hit it with their racquet. **WRONG!** If they do this, it's a fault serve. But you won't find this in the rulebook. It's another one of those rulings by the AARA National Rules Commissioner.

Furthermore, if the server lets the ball bounce twice (or more) before hitting it, the proper call is "out serve" and not merely a "fault serve." Similarly, if the server swings at, but misses, ball, he loses the serve automatically. No second tries allowed!

After being struck during the serve, the ball must travel directly to the front wall without touching any other surface. After touching the front wall, the ball must touch the floor beyond the short line. Remember, the "paint" is considered to be **IN** the service zone, so the served ball must go totally beyond (with no part touching) the "paint" to be good. In traveling from the front wall to the floor beyond the short line, the ball may touch either side wall—not both. Of course, the receiver may elect to return the ball **BEFORE** it touches the floor and if he does, the serve is still good.

TYPES OF DEFECTIVE SERVES

Rule 4.8 which describes the three types of defective serves (i) dead-ball serves, (ii) fault serves, and (iii) out serves. Because the rulebook explains these defective serves fairly well, this section will highlight only those things that may not be too clear.

DEAD-BALL SERVES

Dead-ball serves are covered in Rule 4.9. Note that whenever a dead-ball serve occurs, such as when the ball breaks or hits a court hinder on the serve, that serve is repeated, but a previous fault serve is **NOT** canceled. For instance, if the first serve was short (fault serve) and the ball broke as it was being served for the second serve, a new ball would be put into play, but it would still be second serve.

CASE STUDY #4A: Mr. Flash serves a short serve. The second serve lands in play. The receiver hits the ball, but it breaks into several pieces before the ball reaches the front wall. The referee announces "Broken ball, two serves." The receiver objects, arguing that it should be "second serve" since the ball broke on the second serve. The referee responds by saying "NO! The rally began as soon as Mr. Flash's serve landed in play and, thus, the entire rally must be replayed, with two serves." Who was correct? Answer on page A-1.

Knowing which blow actually broke the ball is important fact for the referee to recall. Why? Because if the ball breaks following a second serve, it will always be "second serve" when the new ball is put into play unless the ball broke **AFTER** it was successfully returned to the front wall by the receiver. According to Rule 4.14, the rally starts **AFTER** the successful return of serve. Once the rally begins, Rule 4.14(g) takes

over the broken ball situation. It states that if the ball breaks during a rally, the server automatically gets two serves.

FAULT SERVES

Look over Rule 4.10 which describes fault serves. Because many of these fault serve situations were discussed earlier in this chapter, they will not be discussed here.

CASE STUDY #4B: The referee calls a short serve and Mr. Tricky, the server, appeals the call. After some discussion, the referee's decision is upheld. Mr. Tricky argues a bit more. Having heard enough argument, the referee calls the score to re-start the game. Mr. Tricky responds by calling a timeout. After the players return to the court, the referee calls the score again. Mr. Tricky serves a short serve. As the referee calls "second serve", Mr. Tricky's opponent protests that it should be side out because Mr. Tricky has served two fault serves. What's the proper call? Answer on page A-1.

Of the nine categories of fault serves, the screen serve--defined in Rule 4.10(i)--is the one most discussed and maybe the most misunderstood. Let's examine it in some depth.

For a serve to be declared a screen serve requires the referee to determine that two conditions have been met--specifically (i) the ball passing close to the server AND (ii) impairment of the receiver because the ball passed so close to the server. Just what does the rule envision by "so close to the server"? Another tough question to answer.

Several years ago, the rules contained a so-called "18-inch rule" which declared that any serve which passed within 18 inches of the server was automatically a screen serve. But alas, there are certain serves (for instance, a hard "Z" drive serve) that might pass even closer to the server than 18 inches, without impairing the receiver at all. So, the "18-inch rule" was dropped almost as soon as it was adopted!

Unfortunately, this leaves us precisely where we are today--with a rule that is vague enough that it requires every referee to judge for himself just how close "so close" is. As a general rule of thumb, we recommend that you define "so close" as 2 feet or less. In view of the vagueness of the rule, it is a good idea for the referee to advise the players just how he plans to decide whether or not a serve is a screen before the match begins! This will remove any doubt about which serves are POTENTIAL screen serves.

The word POTENTIAL, as used in the preceding sentence, is very important because to be called a screen serve, the ball must not only pass close to the server, but also

the receiver must have been impaired because of the closeness of the ball to the server. So, just what does "impairment" mean?

Basically, impairment means that the server has been hindered. He was denied the right of setting up and making a reasonable return of serve. He didn't have time to react in the same way he would have if he had seen the ball sooner. He also might have hit a better return. In summary, a serve isn't a screen serve just because it passes close. The closeness must also have affected the receiver's return of serve in some manner. So, if the serve is close, but you see the receiver setting up to roll out a winner, don't take away his offensive opportunity by yelling "screen serve."

The position that most referees are asked observe the match from gives them a pretty good place from which to view the serve. However, the referee must also visualize himself in the receiver's shoes and imagine the somewhat different view that the server might have of the serve. This is even more important if the referee is forced to referee from a position that is not at the center of the court.

Some other points you should keep in mind about calling the screen serve are:

- If there is any doubt, call the screen. Give the benefit of the doubt to the receiver.
- If the receiver "guesses wrong" and moves in the wrong direction, don't be tricked into calling a screen. The impairment must have been the result of the closeness, not the server's wrong guess.
- If you call "screen serve" just as the ball passes close to the server, you probably have called it too soon since you didn't allow sufficient time to determine whether or not the receiver was impaired.
- If the receiver places himself in poor receiving position (not near the center of the court), he generally is not entitled to claim a screen serve.
- Although the screen serve is a fault serve, it is the only one that cannot be appealed. It is a judgment call by the referee.

CASE STUDY #4C: Mr. Speedy is receiving and Mr. Cool is serving with the score at "5 serving 5" in the tie-breaker. Mr. Cool hits a drive serve to the forehand side of the court. Mr. Speedy, believing that the serve passed too close to the server and feeling that a screen serve should have been called, yells out "Screen Serve!" Mr. Cool, thinking that it was the referee who had called the screen, also stopped playing. What should the referee do in this situation? Answer on Page A-1.

OUT SERVES

Out serves are covered in Rule 4.11. Each of the following serves (regardless of whether it occurs on the first or second serve) results in an immediate loss of serve:

- a. Not serving within 10 seconds of the score or "second serve" being called by the referee. See the detailed discussion of "readiness" in Chapter 3.
- b. Swinging at, but missing, the ball during the service motion.
- c. Not hitting the front wall first--a non-front serve. This includes any served ball that hits the crotch formed by the front wall and any other surface such as a side wall, the ceiling, or the floor.
- d. The served ball rebounding from the front wall and touching the server before it hits the floor.
- e. The served ball being struck by something other than the head of the racquet, such as the handle or hand.
- f. The server making a non-continuous motion of the racquet toward the ball (fake or balk serve).
- g. The served ball hitting the server's doubles partner while he is outside of the service box. See Chapter 12 for details concerning the special rules for doubles.
- h. A second fault serve. (Question: When is a "fault serve" not a "fault serve?" Answer: When it's your second "fault serve" because then it's an "out serve!")
- i. An out-of-order serve in doubles.
- j. Either the server or his partner stepping into the 5-foot receiving zone before the served ball has crossed the short line.

The only type of out serve that warrants further explanation is the non-front serve--item "c" above. This violation is fairly easy to detect when the ball hits the "other surface" a foot or more away from that surface's juncture. But when the ball hits near or at the crotch, the call becomes more difficult. Here are some things to consider:

- If the served ball hits so close to a front wall crotch that you can't tell which surface it hit first, then the ball probably DID NOT hit the front wall first and you should call it an out (non-front) serve.

- If the served ball sort of "flops" out of the front wall-side wall crotch, then the serve DID NOT hit the front wall first.
- If the served ball "pops up" out of the front wall-floor crotch, then the serve DID NOT hit the front wall first.
- If the served ball comes out of the front wall-floor crotch with backspin (instead of topspin), then the serve DID NOT hit the front wall first.
- If the ball is served cross-court to the front wall-side wall crotch, but instead of coming out in the same direction it was hit from, the ball slides down the side wall, then the serve DID hit the front wall first.
- If the served ball "rolls out" from the front wall-floor crotch, then the serve DID hit the front wall first. Of course, such a serve is obviously short, but the server would much rather have his serve declared a fault than an out!
- If the angle formed by the front wall and path the ball takes as it leaves the front wall is 45 degrees or less, then the serve DID NOT hit the front wall first.

The conditions described in preceding list are merely indicators that can help the referee to decide whether a serve was proper. The ultimate decision, however, is the referee's and he must make the call right away. If you are unsure of such calls, get some line judges since the call/non-call of non-front serves is appealable.

ACE SERVES

A serve is technically an "ace" only if the receiver does not touch the served ball with his racquet before the ball bounces twice. Merely mishitting the return does not make the serve an ace. But there are a few "ace" situations that warrant some discussion.

CASE STUDY #4D: Mr. Ace unleashes his "photon" serve and Mr. Lob is receiving. The referee calls the serve "short" and Mr. Lob fails to move or even make contact with the ball. Mr. Ace appeals and the referee's call is overturned. Instead of calling for the serve to be taken again, the referee declares the serve an "Ace." Mr. Lob objects saying that as soon as the short call was made, he stopped and thus did not retrieve the ball. Was the referee correct? Answer on Page A-1.

Occasionally, a referee might call a serve "short" which the receiver fails to return that is later declared to have been "good" as determined either by the appeal process or by player agreement to overrule the referee. This occurrence creates an immediate dilemma that the referee must be ready for.

Rule 3.8(b) states that the referee may declare such a serve (an overturned call of fault serve) to have been an "ace" if he thinks that the serve was unretrievable. Here are some things that should be taken into account in such situations:

- Did the receiver actually return the ball even though you called the serve "short"? If he did, then an "ace" should NOT be declared.
- Did your call of "short" adversely affect the efforts of the receiver to return the serve? That is, did he give up trying based on your call? If so and you think that he might have been able to get to the ball had you not said anything, then an "ace" should not be declared. If the referee declares an "ace" in such a situation, the odds are that the receiver will claim that your call caused him to stop. Be ready to address this issue. If you are unsure, it is better to NOT declare an "ace"!
- Another point to consider is that the real reason the receiver might have stopped was because he, too, thought the serve was a fault. If you are certain that he stopped on his own (for example, he obviously gave up BEFORE you made your call), then call the serve an "ace."

Even experienced referees can have problems with this call for a couple of reasons. First, it doesn't occur very frequently and secondly, in nearly every other situation, the referee's call automatically negates everything that occurs afterward. As a result, most referees stop closely observing and evaluating the play that occurs right after they make a call for the purpose of stopping play. The bottom line is that if referee is not sure whether an "ace" should be declared, it is best to NOT declare one!

OFFICIATING RACQUETBALL

Chapter 5 - The Return of Serve

The rules governing the return of serve are far fewer and less complicated than those concerning the serve. Let's take a look at them.

READINESS

The readiness rule is fully covered in Chapter 3, but to briefly review: if the receiver wants to take some or all of the 10 seconds he is allowed after the score is called, then he should do one of two things--have his racquet over his head or have his back to the server. If he isn't doing either of these things when the server checks him, then the serve may serve at any time and the serve will count.

THE RECEIVING LINE

Located five feet behind the short line is the receiving line, which is sometimes called the 5-foot line. The area between the short line and the receiving line is known as the receiving zone. This zone, like the service zone, is used ONLY during the serve and return of serve. Just like the drive serve line, the receiving line must be viewed as the base of an invisible vertical plane which extends from the floor to the ceiling.

Simply stated, the receiver must remain behind this line (and also not penetrate the invisible plane) from the moment the service motion begins until the ball has done one of two things--either touched the floor or else broken the invisible plane of the receiving line. Only after either of these things has happened is the receiver allowed to cross the line. Violation of the rule results in an automatic point for the server.

The most frequently asked question about this rule is "Can my follow-through break the plane?" The answer is "Yes--as long as one of the two things mentioned in the preceding paragraph has occurred first--the ball either touched the floor or else broke the plane of the receiving line."

Some referees incorrectly use the receiver's feet as their only key to calling receiver encroachment. Sometimes the receiver's feet may be behind the receiving line, even though his arm and racquet are across the plane of the 5-foot line. In this case, encroachment should be called. Remember, no part of the receiver's body or racquet may break the plane before the ball does (or else bounces on the floor.)

Detecting this violation is made more difficult by the distance between the referee and the line. However, this difficulty doesn't excuse the referee from making the call. The referee should attempt to visualize the plane as the served ball approaches it. Then decide (to yourself) whether the ball or the person broke it first. If it was the ball, don't say anything; but if it was the receiver, then call encroachment.

This call or non-call is appealable, so if you are unsure about making this call or a player is complaining about your ability to call it, relieve the pressure by getting some line judges to help you.

One final observation about watching the serve. Once the service motion begins, the referee should assign his observation priorities as follows:

If the serve is going to be a hard drive serve, your primary attention should be placed on:

Watching for a front line foot fault.

Watching for a short serve.

If, however, the serve is obviously going to be a soft one, such as a lob, you should place more emphasis on:

Watching for the server leaving the service zone too soon.

Watching for the receiver entering the receiving zone too soon.

THE SERVICE ZONE

In returning the serve, the receiver may not break the plane of the short line unless the ball has first hit the back wall. This rule, along with the receiving line rule, is intended to provide a margin of safety for the server. Once the ball has gone all the way to the back wall and come off, safety should no longer be a factor. In such instances, the server will have had sufficient time to get out of the way.

AVOIDABLE HINDERS ON THE RETURN OF SERVE

The same rules that govern avoidable hinders during the rally, are also in effect on the return of serve. The server must move to allow the receiver a shot directly to the front wall as well as a cross-court pass. A referee should not be reluctant to call an avoidable hinder on the return of serve. However, some recognition must be given to the fact that the server's movement is somewhat restricted until the ball has crossed the short line.

CRACK SERVES

If a serve hits the crack formed by the side wall and the floor or the back wall and the floor, the serve is good.

Sometimes the server may chose to stand near one of the side walls and attempt to hit the crack on that nearby side wall with his drive serve. In such instances, the server is gambling. If the service hits the crack, of course it is an ace. But if the serve does not crack out and, instead, the ball "pops up" for a set up, the receiver must be allowed the offensive shot. If the receiver is forced to hold up his swing because of the server's position, he may be entitled to an avoidable hinder under the same conditions described in the preceding paragraph.

LONG SERVES

A serve is not long until it actually touches the back wall. Therefore, if the server decided to catch a served ball that is obviously going to be long, he loses the rally and the server gets a point. He must avoid touching it, or else he loses.

COMPLETION OF THE RETURN OF SERVE

For the record, the rules concerning the serve and the return of serve are not in effect once the rally has begun. By definition, the rally is not begun until the serve is successfully returned to the front wall. As soon as the ball gets back to the front wall, the players and the referee can ignore all of the lines on the court and just enjoy the true simplicity of the game, that is taking turns hitting the ball to the front wall.

OFFICIATING RACQUETBALL

Chapter 6 - The Rally

If you have read the preceding chapters on the serve and return of serve, you should know by now that all of the play which occurs after the successful return of serve is called the rally. Except for the hinder rules which are discussed in a separate chapter, there are really only a few special rules governing the rally that warrant discussion. A point is awarded to the server if he wins the rally, but if he loses it, no point is awarded and a "side out" is called.

LEGAL HITS

Only the head of the racquet may be used to hit the ball. This is very difficult for the referee to see, and should only be called if the referee is absolutely sure that the handle, hand, etc. hit the ball rather than the racquet head. The player also may not sling the ball with the racquet. If the referee believes that the player hit the ball twice or carried the ball on the racquet face, that player's opponent should be declared the winner of the rally.

FAILURE TO RETURN

Of course, each player is required to hit the ball before it bounces for a second time. This is sometimes very difficult for the referee to see, especially on diving gets and other times when the referee may be screened. If the referee is unsure whether a two-bounce get occurred, then he should NOT make any call. Allow the rally to continue and permit the players to use the proper appeal process.

Skip balls are almost as difficult to call as two-bounce gets. With the velocity of that can be generated by modern racquets--speeds in excess of 170 mph--it is almost impossible to see the skip. Referees should learn to listen for skip balls and also be familiar with the difference in bounces of these types of shots. Only with experience (that comes from both hitting them and watching them) can referees become familiar with how to detect a skip ball.

There are several clues to detecting a skip ball.

- You might actually SEE the ball skip.
- You might HEAR the ball skip--it will make a squeak when it hits the floor, but you will need to learn to distinguish between the squeak of a ball and the squeak made by shoes.

- You might watch the action on the ball as it leaves the front wall--if it has backspin (toward the front wall) on it, then it skipped. Conversely, if it has topspin (toward the back wall as in "rolling out") then it did not skip.
- You should watch the height of the arc that the ball takes between its first and second bounce after leaving the front wall. A skip ball will take a much higher arc than a good shot will--primarily because of the backspin/topspin factor mentioned in the previous bullet.

In addition, there are several other situations, such as changing hands during a rally, failure to use a wrist thong, or touching the ball with any part of your clothes or body, that are obvious infractions and result in loss of rally.

RETURN ATTEMPTS

A player may swing as many times as he wants as long as he doesn't hit the ball more than once.

CASE STUDY #6A: Player A prepares to hit the ball, but swings and misses. Player B has positioned himself behind Player A, but is unable to move out of the path of the ball and is hit by the ball. Player A says it should be his point. Player B says he was screened by Player A and the rally should be replayed. What is the proper call?

OFFICIATING RACQUETBALL

Chapter 7 - Hinders - Dead-ball and Avoidable

All things considered, the toughest call to make in the sport of racquetball may be the hinder. Very often this call demands keen judgment on the part of the referee. Could Player A have gotten to the ball if Player B had not been in the way? Most top level players agree that knowing when to AND when not to call a hinder is what distinguishes the good referees from the not-so-good ones.

The rules about hinders are intended to ensure the safety of the players as well as the fair outcome of the match. As anyone who plays racquetball knows, situations inevitably arise when one player cannot get to the ball or cannot take the shot he wants because his opponent is in the way. A quick look at the rulebook reveals that there are two fairly broad categories into which all hinders can be placed--dead-ball and avoidable. In those cases when interference occurs, but there is nothing that the opponent could have done to avoid it, then the only fair thing to do is to stop play by calling a dead-ball hinder and start the rally over again. Of course, if the interference could have been avoided, then it's not fair to the person whose shot was impaired to merely play the rally over. This is where the "avoidable hinder" concept comes into play and the player who could have avoided the hinder immediately loses the rally. Now, let's take a look at some specifics regarding the dead-ball hinder.

DEAD-BALL HINDERS

Body contact is one of the most common types of dead-ball hinders. However, body contact is not always a hinder. Play should be stopped only if the contact was sufficient to prevent the hindered player from making a reasonable return or if continued play might result in injury. Play should NOT be stopped because of incidental contact, particularly if the player whose turn it is to hit the ball will have an advantage if play continues. So, even if two players bump into each other, a hinder should not be called if the offensive player can recover well enough to take an unimpaired shot.

CASE STUDY #7A: Ms. Widebody, while running to get to a ceiling shot her opponent has hit, contacts the opponent slightly with her racquet as they pass each other. Ms. Widebody immediately stops, making no further attempt to retrieve the ball. Both players walk toward the service zone as if they both think they won the rally. What should the referee call? Answer on page A-2.

Sometimes a player who has been hit by his opponent's racquet on the follow through will just stop playing because he thinks a hinder occurred. According to rule

4.15(a)(3), contact with the racquet on the follow through is normally not considered a hinder. The logic here is that, in most cases, the player who is hit by a follow through, is normally guilty of crowding which would be an avoidable hinder on the person who was hit. Don't let the players dictate the game. These types of hinders are the referee's call, not the players'.

One of the few calls which can be made by the players themselves is the backswing hinder. (The others are the safety holdup and being hit by the ball.) Whenever contact is made during the backswing, only the player who is taking the shot may call a hinder. The player who was hit may NOT make this call. The call must be made immediately (not after seeing whether the shot was good or not!) and is subject to the referee's approval. The referee should tend to be liberal in granting this type of hinder and, at the same time, consider whether the contact was avoidable in which case an avoidable hinder should be called. Since there is a pretty good chance that backswing contact is avoidable, give strong consideration to calling the avoidable hinder.

CASE STUDY #7B: Mr. Prevaricator backs up to hit a shot from the rear corner of the court. Mr. Veracity, situated behind Mr. Prevaricator, moves backward attempting to get out of his opponent's way. Mr. Prevaricator takes the shot and skips the ball. After the shot, Mr. Prevaricator says that he had made contact with Mr. Veracity on his backswing and, thus, missed the shot. The referee says he didn't see contact. Mr. Prevaricator asks the referee to question Mr. Veracity if there was contact. What is the call and should the referee question Mr. Veracity whether there was any contact? Answer on page A-2.

Even when no actual contact occurs, the players' positions on the court can be such that the ball passes so close to one player that the other player is prevented from having a clear view of the ball. This is commonly referred to as a "screen." An important thing to note about this rule is that the ball must "pass close" to the one player. If the ball doesn't pass close, then a "screen" hasn't occurred--even if the other player didn't get a clear view of the ball. Incidentally, a ball that passes between the legs of one player is NOT an automatic hinder. A hinder should be called in this case only if the ball passing through the legs was the reason why the other player couldn't return the ball.

Generally speaking, a dead-ball hinder occurs when one player hits his opponent with the ball. But, a few years back, the safety holdup rule was introduced to the game. Simply put, this rule allows a player to holdup his shot if he believes that he is going to hit his opponent with either the ball or the racquet. Although the player holding up his shot is the one who makes this call, it must be made immediately and is subject to the referee's approval. In the interest of continued safety during the match, the referee should always give the player who holds up the benefit of the doubt. The

advent of this rule has saved many a player from getting too many of those doughnut-shaped bruises on their backsides.

While holding up your shot is certainly the sportsmanlike thing to do, sometimes you don't have time to and the ball hits your opponent. Assuming the hinder wasn't avoidable (and therefore an avoidable hinder), this is a dead-ball hinder. But there is one exception. If the ball obviously did not have the velocity or direction to reach the front wall, then there is no hinder. This rule is often misapplied. Note the specific wording of this rule. It says that the ball must **OBVIOUSLY NOT** have the necessary velocity or direction. In other words, if there is any doubt at all whether the ball would have reached the front wall on a fly, then dead-ball hinder is the proper call. This rule was intended to keep from rewarding a player (by giving him an opportunity to replay the rally) who hits a poor shot, such as one that causes the ball to go straight up and then lands on top of his opponent's head, that had absolutely no chance of making it to the front wall on the fly. But some players try to force a judgment out of a referee on a blistering killshot hit three inches off the floor that hits the opponent on the foot. Of course, such a shot may or may not have skipped before it reached the front wall. But remember, if there's any doubt at all, the proper call is dead-ball hinder.

Sometimes a ball on its way to the front wall will just barely touch the opponent and the ball may not change speed or direction. According to the rules, this hinder must be called by the player who was hit. It, too, must be called immediately and is subject to referee approval. Since it is usually impossible for the referee to determine if the ball did hit the player, the referee may find himself in a difficult position. If the player who said he was hit made an immediate indication and the ball passed close enough to cause contact, then the hinder should be allowed. But whenever a player does not immediately indicate that the ball hit him, the referee must make a decision. Try to recall whether the player hesitated and whether the ball passed close to him. Although most players are basically honest, don't be tricked into calling a hinder that never occurred. There are a handful of players who are devious enough to claim that their opponent's perfect killshot hit them (even though it didn't) on the way to the front wall and try to talk the referee into replaying the rally. While it's often difficult to tell, the referee should base his approval on how rapidly the call was made by the player and whether the ball appeared to pass close enough to have touched the person.

Other types of dead-ball hinders include court hinders and other interference.

COURT HINDERS

There are two types of court hinders.

"Designated Court Hinders" - These are predetermined surfaces that will result in the play being stopped any time the ball hits it regardless if it takes a good bounce. Such surfaces could include things such as thermostats, ventilation grates, or any part

of a wall that is not contiguous with the court's normal playing surface like a protruding ledge at the gallery opening. If the ball hits a designated court hinder it will likely take a bad bounce, but there's always a chance that it won't. Bad bounce or not, a ball that hits a designated court hinder is immediately dead. If the surface might produce a good, true bounce, it is a good idea to NOT designate it as a court hinder, and instead take advantage of the undesignated court hinder rule. Remember, any ball that hits a designated court hinder is immediately dead, regardless of whether it takes a good bounce.

"Undesignated Court Hinders" - Light fixtures present a problem in many courts. Be sure you check the lights in the court on which you are refereeing. If the fixtures are loose, the ball will sometimes take an untrue bounce. Be ready to make this call. A player who hits a bad ceiling shot may try to fake you into calling a court hinder. Be sure to tell the players that you will make this call, not them. They may raise their hand to indicate they believe a court hinder should be called, but at no time allow them to call it themselves. Court doors may also result in court hinders if they do not fit flush. In the heat of the match it is often difficult for a player to hold up completely when the ball comes off at a bad angle. You should explain to the players prior to the match that if they hold up, or are obviously attempting to hold up, that a hinder ball will be called. But if they follow through with a normal swing, and you did not see any court hinder, the shot will stand. This means that as the referee, you must follow the ball off the back wall. Some referees have a tendency to watch only the front court and, therefore, may miss the bad bounce if it occurs at the back wall.

In summary, if the ball touches any surface that was identified by the referee as being a "designated court hinder" prior to the match, then the rally should be stopped immediately and replayed, regardless of whether or not the ball takes an irregular bounce. But if the ball takes an irregular bounce off any other surface, such as the door handle, then the referee should call hinder provided, of course, that the outcome of the rally was adversely affected by the irregular bounce.

One final note on court hinders. On September 1, 1990, the AARA rules were changed to allow the players to appeal the call or non-call of court hinders. This is the ONLY type of hinder that is appealable.

OTHER INTERFERENCE

This type of dead-ball hinder allows for things such as the ball hitting a wet spot, a player's shoe falling off, something being dropped on the court from the spectator gallery, etc.

- **Wet Ball.** First of all, the referee must have seen the interference. Referees are sometimes screened or not watching close enough and, as a result, have no basis for determining if the ball picked up speed or not. Remember, the referee cannot and should not call something he did not see. If the rally is affected by the wet ball, then it should be replayed. The rule regarding a court hinder on the serve is slightly different. If the served ball hits a wet spot on or in front of the short line, then the serve is a fault and not taken again. However, if the serve is otherwise good, but hits a wet spot, then the server gets to take that serve again. So, if it happened on the second serve, it would still be second serve coming.

- **Loss of Equipment.** When a player loses a piece of equipment, the referee must think very fast. First of all, the referee should NOT call "hinder" until the lost object interferes with play and, more specifically, with player safety. Once a hinder has been called, the referee must determine whether the item was a piece of required equipment. (Shoes are required, but caps are not!) If the item is required, then it is a dead-ball hinder. However, if the item is NOT required then "avoidable hinder" is the proper call. (Avoidable hinders are discussed in more depth later in this chapter.) There is one other point to remember about the loss of equipment. Rule 4.14(h)(2) states that "safety permitting, the offensive player is entitled to one opportunity to hit a rally ending shot."

- **Outside Interference.** If a foreign object enters the court, Rule 4.14(h)(1) calls for play to be stopped immediately. Such objects include a ball from another court or a drink spilled or a pencil dropped from the gallery. By the way, the rule covering foreign objects entering the court contains no provision for one last shot.

CASE STUDY #7C: Mr. Splat hits a cross-court pass which Mr. Flop must dive for just to retrieve. Just after Mr. Flop dives and returns the ball to the ceiling, his properly attached racquet slips from his hand because the thong has become unattached. The ceiling shot leaves Mr. Splat with a perfect set-up at the short line. But before Mr. Splat hit the shot, the referee calls hinder and stops play. Mr. Splat tells the referee that he should have been allowed to hit the shot because the detached racquet did not interfere with his shot. Is he right? Answer on page A-2.

One general concept that should always be kept in mind when trying to determine whether a hinder should be called is that the person who is "hindered" must make a reasonable attempt to get to the ball and the ball must be returnable (not necessarily a perfect setup.) By now, it's easy to see that most hinders involve a good deal of judgment. That's one of the reasons why referees are so important in the sport. Furthermore, hinder calls are NOT appealable even when line judges are being used in the match. Among friends who are playing without a referee, courtesy dictates that the only person who may make this call is the one who was hindered.

So, what is the effect of a dead-ball hinder call? The rally is ended immediately. Therefore, anything that occurs after the call is immediately voided--including a perfect killshot! The rally is then replayed and the server has two serves coming. As previously mentioned, the only exception is when a player loses a piece of equipment, the offensive player is allowed one more shot if safety permits.

AVOIDABLE HINDERS

Have you ever felt like your opponent could have gotten out of your way, but didn't? Well, in a tournament match, this situation calls for the referee to make two decisions. First, did a hinder occur and, second, could the hinder have been avoided? If the answer to both questions is YES, then the referee can call an "avoidable hinder" and declare you to be the winner of the rally regardless of how the rally ended. This means that you win a point if you were serving or get to serve if you were receiving. This call is a significant one which obviously involves personal judgment.

With regard to avoidance, Rule 4.15(c) in the AARA's 1990-91 Official Rulebook says that while making an attempt to return the ball, a player is entitled to a fair chance to see and return the ball. Furthermore, it says that it is the responsibility of the person that has just hit the ball to move so that the other player may go straight to the ball and have an unobstructed view of the ball.

So, just where does this leave us in defining avoidance? Well, to greatly oversimplify the issue, an avoidable hinder is "something that you did that you didn't have to" or "something that you could have done, but didn't" which resulted in a hinder. A player's intentions should NOT be considered when making this call. If, for example, Player A moves to the left thinking that he will be getting out of the way, but in so doing runs into his opponent, the proper call is "avoidable hinder." It makes no difference that he was trying to get out of the way. He simply moved in the wrong direction, and a hinder occurred which wouldn't have had he not moved or moved in another direction. Remember, while an intentional hinder should always be considered an avoidable hinder, a hinder doesn't have to be intentional to be avoidable and justify the awarding of an avoidable hinder.

Now, let's get down to some specifics. The rulebook now defines nine specific categories of avoidable hinders. Even if you think you know the wording of these categories, they are worth going over again. They are as follows:

- **Failure to Move.** This occurs when a player does not move sufficiently to allow his opponent a shot straight to the front wall as well as a cross-court shot which is defined as a shot directly to the front wall at an angle that would cause the ball to rebound directly to the rear corner farthest from the player hitting the ball. Not stated, but certainly implied by this wording, a player must have had sufficient time to move, but didn't. Otherwise, how could it be considered a failure to move? Generally, jumping

to avoid being hit by a low killshot is considered acceptable movement among skilled players who believe that if a player who is several feet in the air is hit, then the shot taken wasn't an offensive shot and therefore a dead-ball hinder should be called instead of an avoidable hinder. This issue is often debated and will hopefully become more clearly defined in the near-term future.

- **Stroke Interference.** This happens when one player moves, or fails to move, and thereby prevents his opponent from having a free, unimpeded swing. Some players refer to this action as "crowding." No matter what you call it, it's still against the rules.

- **Blocking.** While there's not much distinction between blocking and stroke interference, this one clearly establishes that in doubles, the partner of the player returning the ball may NOT move in front of either opponent.

- **Moving into the Ball.** A player may not step into the path of the ball. Getting hit by the ball is usually a dead-ball hinder, but if you move when you don't have to and get hit by the ball, you are guilty of an avoidable hinder and, therefore, automatically lose the rally.

- **Pushing.** Players are never allowed to deliberately push their opponents. On occasions, the player returning the ball might be enticed to give his opponent a little shove to "help" him get out of the way. But like the offensive foul in basketball, this is not permitted. Even a slight push might be enough to throw the opponent off balance, thus giving the "pusher" an unfair advantage.

- **Intentional Distraction.** This occurs when a player uses any type of disruptive technique to break the concentration of his opponent. These actions include things such as shouting, stamping the feet, or waving the racquet.

- **View Obstruction.** If you move across your opponent's line of sight just before he strikes the ball, then you've created an avoidable hinder.

- **Wetting the Ball.** Since the server is the last person to touch the ball before it is served, he has the responsibility to ensure that it is dry. If the ball is wet and is not corrected prior to the serve, then the receiver wins the rally.

- **Equipment.** Any improperly worn equipment (such as eyeguards) or any equipment not actually required on the court (such as a hand towel) which interferes with play or affects the safety of the players results in an avoidable hinder.

CASE STUDY #7D: The match is in the tiebreaker with the score 10-10. Ms. Rightstuff hits a wide angle pass shot. However, just as she hits the ball, the "anti-vibration" device in her racquet breaks free and flies across the court. As Ms.

Pinch goes to retrieve the pass shot, she is apparently distracted by the "anti-vibration" device and stops playing--even though she could easily have retrieved the ball. The referee calls hinder. Ms. Pinch, who had served that rally, argues that the proper call is avoidable hinder and, thus, she just won the game. What is the proper call? Answer on page A-4.

What's the effect of an avoidable hinder call? The rally is awarded to the player who was hindered regardless of how the rally actually ended. Therefore, if Player A stamps his feet just as Player B is about to hit the ball, then Player B wins the rally, even if the shot skips in. If Player B was serving, he gets a point. If he was receiving, then it's now his turn to serve.

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Chapter 8 - Miscellaneous Situations

CRITERIA FOR AARA SANCTIONING

One of the few requirements for AARA sanctioning of a tournament is that the AARA's rules must be observed. Any modifications to these rules (such as altered scoring systems or modified match forfeiture times) must be stated on the entry blank. Therefore, the tournament director must make such decisions prior to preparing the tournament entry blank. One rule that is frequently waived, but not always stated on entry blanks, is the requirement to offer consolation divisions. To provide the most familiar environment for players, officials, and spectator, the number of rule modifications should be minimized. In addition to listing the rule modifications on the entry blank, the tournament director should list the modifications on a tournament information sheet to be given to players when they first check-in and also post a list of modifications in prominent locations around the tournament site, especially near the tournament desk.

Another requirement for AARA sanctioning is that an AARA approved ball be used. There is a wide spectrum of balls that have been approved by the AARA. The list is updated annually to ensure that the prescribed standard of the balls is maintained. This also protects the players from having to play with some ball that has unusual playing characteristics. It is recommended that the tournament director contact the AARA state or regional director to find out which balls are approved prior to committing to the use of a particular ball. As far as selecting the ball to be used in each match, the rulebook states that the referee does it. It also suggests that an alternate ball be identified for immediate use in the event that the ball selected breaks. In actual practice, however, the tournament desk usually gives the referee one ball and it should be used unless there is something obviously wrong with it. Moreover, the players should have the primary vote as to whether the particular ball offered is acceptable. A good referee will let the players choose and reserve his right to make a decision for those times when the players just can't seem to agree on the ball to use.

The final criteria for AARA sanctioning is that all players be members of the AARA. The responsibility for checking this is usually handled by the state board or the tournament director.

BROKEN BALL

If the ball breaks during a rally, the rally should be replayed with two serves. The exception to two serves is when the ball breaks on the second serve. In this situation, it is second serve again.

In all broken ball situations, the referee must be sure the balls are broken. The only acceptable way to check for a broken ball is to squeeze it with your hands. If the player hits the ball while checking it for being broken, the appeal is void and the rally stands.

CASE STUDY #8A: After a very long rally, Player A checks the ball and finds a small cut on the surface that is not all the way through. He hands the ball to the referee who verifies the imperfection in the ball. The player states the ball is broken and, thus, the rally should be replayed. What is the proper referee's decision?

PLAY STOPPAGE

If any foreign object enters the court, the referee should stop play and call for the rally to be replayed. In other situations in which a player loses a shoe or other properly worn equipment, the referee should call hinder to stop play if the object interferes with play. If the object is not a required piece of clothing or equipment (such as towel, vibration damper, hat) the referee should call an avoidable hinder if the object interferes with play.

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Chapter 9 - Line Judges and Appeals

Before taking your referee's position to start the match, be sure that both of your line judges and both players understand their duties and the proper appeal procedures. Annex C is a thorough line judge briefing that you are welcome to reproduce, distribute, and use as needed. In some cases, it may also be necessary to explain the use of line judges and proper appeal procedures in your pre-match briefing to the players.

Always use two line judges--never one or three. It's a good idea to give one line judge the responsibility of keeping a backup scorecard. This helps in verifying not only the score, but also the number of appeals and timeouts taken.

The line judges should be positioned in locations that allow them very good views of the court, but yet separated enough from the referee and each other that they all have different perspectives. You may want to ask the players if they want the line judges placed in any particular location, but make sure that you are comfortable with their positioning.

Balcony viewing only. This is the typical case for most courts. The referee should always stand as close to the center of the court as possible. This allows him a clear view of the entire court and in most cases will be in the same alignment as the receiver, thus allowing better judgment on screen balls. The line judges should be at the far ends of the back wall, one on each side of the referee.

Referee's box and back wall glass. In some clubs, the referee is in an elevated position, such as a ladder or a specially constructed referee's box. When there is no room for line judges on this same level, they should be positioned on the floor at opposite rear corners. They should be asked to stand (at least for the serve) so they can have the proper perspective to observe for short serves and foot faults. When the line judges can either be up with the referee or down at floor level, it is best to put one in each position, as long as you can communicate with the one at floor level.

Side wall and back wall glass. The referee should again position himself in the middle. But on some glass courts, the referee's box is positioned at the top corner of the back wall. This does not give the referee a good angle, but unfortunately he has no option. Most experienced referees do not consider standing on the floor in the middle an acceptable alternative to being elevated and at the corner. Use your own judgment in such cases. Even when there is side wall glass, it is NOT a good idea to

position a line judge on the side wall close to the short line. Experience has shown that calls made from that position are not very accurate. There is something about the speed of the ball traveling across the field of vision (instead of head-on) that makes the ball (short or not) difficult to judge.

Do not designate the line judges primary and secondary. Although you may choose to always go to one line judge first, both line judges should display their signal at the same time. While the principal purpose of line judges is to provide relief from a potentially incorrect call, a good referee also uses the results to evaluate his performance. Are too many of your calls being overturned? If so, perhaps you ought to watch more carefully. By the way, on most calls like short serves, the line judge who has the cross-court view is the one which has the best view and you should put most credence upon. Conversely, when you are absolutely sure of your call and one line judge disagrees, this is possibly an indication that he is either not too skilled or, even worse, may not know that his signal is to indicate whether he agrees or disagrees with your call.

The line judges should watch each shot very carefully. Often a player may indicate his intention to appeal by raising his hand during the rally. The line judges should make a mental note of the shot and have their opinions ready when the referee asks for it. Although the player must wait until the rally is over to actually make the appeal, he may decide not to appeal especially in those instances when the rally ends in his favor.

The line judges should not look at each other and, if possible, not even at the referee. The referee will explain the appeal and the line judges should immediately give their signal. If a line judge agrees with the referee's call, the proper signal is thumb up. If he disagrees with the referee's call, the proper signal is thumb down. If he didn't see the shot, then a flat palm down is indicated. A line judge should not be afraid to indicate he did not see a call. Often he may be screened by one of the players and it is much better to indicate he didn't see the call, than to make an improper decision. But don't use the "no opinion" signal too often or the players will think you are really not paying close attention to their match.

The rulebook goes into depth about the outcome of an appeal, but there are really only three things to remember:

If both line judges have their thumbs down, then the referee's call is overturned.

If one line judge has his thumb down and the other has an open palm down, then the rally is replayed as if it was a hinder.

Any other combination of signals means that the referee's call stands.

LINE JUDGE PROCEDURES

1. A line judge should never say anything except to indicate to the referee when he/she is not sure exactly which shot is being appealed.
2. A line judge should not signal his call until the referee asks for the signal.
3. Line judges should not look at each other.
4. The line judge should extend his arm out for all to see clearly, and leave it out for a few seconds to give everyone (especially the referee and players) a chance to see the call.
5. If a line judge has to leave, he should notify the referee, but continue to judge until a replacement is found.

All appeals are to be made directly to the referee, not the line judge. The referee should stress this in his pre-match instructions. Remember "any appeal made directly to a line judge by a player or team or made after a massive demonstration or complaint by the player will be considered void and forfeit any appeal rights for that player or team for that particular rally." This is covered in Rule 3.7.

REPLACEMENT OF LINE JUDGES

Prior to the Match - Occasionally, a player will object to the appointment of a particular line judge. The tournament director and referee should make every effort to find an acceptable replacement. If a replacement is not available, then explain to the players that you have briefed both line judges on their responsibilities and the match must begin.

During the Match - Many people falsely believe that both players must agree before a line judge may be replaced. If either player or team objects to a line judge, an appeal may be made to the referee or tournament director for replacement. (Rule 3.6) This can be a touchy situation for both the director and referee. If the referee truly believes that the line judge is not doing a good job, then a replacement should be found. If the referee feels that the player is just upset and has vented his frustrations on the line judge, then the referee should calmly and politely indicate to the player that the line judge will remain and the game will continue.

REPLACEMENT OF THE REFEREE (RULE 3.3)

Occasionally a referee must be replaced. If both players (or teams) agree on the replacement of an official, then the tournament director should find a substitute. If you are removed, analyze the reason for your removal, but do not get in a shouting match with the players. Perhaps you just had a bad game or were slow in making your calls. Maybe they just don't feel right with you in control. Be critical of yourself, but not of the players. A good referee will analyze his mistakes and go right back to another match. If you honestly believe you were doing an efficient job, then just shake the game off as a learning experience. But remember, in most instances where both teams agree, the referee probably was having a difficult time. If only one player requests the removal, then the tournament director must evaluate the referee's performance and make a decision. If the tournament director has not been watching the match, he may simply indicate that the game should continue and he will watch. If the director believes the referee is doing a suitable job, then he may leave the match and allow the referee to continue. If the referee is inadequate, then a replacement is necessary. If you are director, be diplomatic and be sure to take the replaced referee aside and talk to him. Calmly explain why you thought a new referee should take over. If he was deficient in certain areas, explain how he may want to improve his refereeing skills, but remember above all, thank him and encourage him to return.

CASE STUDY #9A: During a very close match, Mr. Complainer questions the referee's call (for about the eighth time) and then, without saying why, leaves the court. A few minutes later, Mr. Complainer returns with the tournament director and asks for the referee to be replaced. The opponent says that he does not want a change. The tournament director decides not to replace the referee and the referee tells the tournament director that he has given Mr. Complainer a technical for leaving the court without asking permission. The tournament director allows the match to continue. Were the decisions of the tournament director and the referee correct? Answer on Page A-4.

APPEALABLE CALLS

The most common calls that may be appealed during the rally are:

1. Kill Shots (skip balls) (Rule 3.8(a)) Most skip balls are detected by bounce and/or sound. With many power players, it is almost impossible to see the ball skip. Skips often occur immediately off the racquet. The referee must listen intently, as well as watch the second bounce of the ball. Overhead kills react differently than forehand kills. Be familiar with the different types of bounce. A player may appeal a referee's call of a skip ball. If the referee is overruled, indicating the shot was good, then the referee must decide if the shot could have been retrieved. If, in the referee's opinion, the shot could not have been retrieved, the rally (either a point or side out) is awarded to the shooter. If the shot could have been retrieved, the rally is replayed.

2. Fault Serves (Rule 3.8(b)). Devote most of your attention to the ball itself. However, you must also watch for foot faults. They make the serve as defective as one that has been hit short. There have been matches won on an "ACE" serves that should have been called a fault serve because the server foot faulted. If a second serve is called short and it is replayed because of an appeal, it usually results in that serve (the second one) being replayed. There is, however, one exception. The referee can call it an "Ace" if he believes that the serve he called short was truly unreturnable and his call of "Short" did not distract the receiver.

3. Double Bounce Pickups (Rule 3.8(d)). All players should help the referee as much as possible and call double bounce pickups on themselves. Of course, in most instances, this is an unfortunate fantasy, and the referee will have to make this decision. DO NOT CALL WHAT YOU DO NOT SEE. Quite often the referee will be screened by the player's body and cannot tell if the get was good. Allow the play to continue. If the referee makes no call, then the automatic assumption is that the shot or "get" was good. Never say that you are not sure whether it was good or not. Its far better to make no call than to admit that you are not sure. Its the referee's job to express an opinion on every play. If there are line judges, the players can appeal. If no line judges are present, then the players will have to abide by the referee's decision, unless they both decide to overrule the referee. If the referee does not call a double bounce, and the player believes the opponent did not get the ball, he should clearly indicate the appeal by raising his non-racquet hand, thus alerting the officials as to the exact shot which is being appealed. This is probably the call that causes the most anguish and hard feelings during a match. If players would only realize that by calling their own double bounces, they are not only helping the referee, but also enhancing the spectators' appreciation of the game, many difficult situations could be avoided.

4. Encroachment (Rule 3.8(e)). As a referee or linesman, it is very important that you watch more than the receiver's feet. Often, the receiver rushes the serve and illegally encroaches over the receiving line with his racquet while his feet are still behind the receiving line. Some referees merely observe the receiver's feet and mistakenly assume that since the feet were behind the line, everything was legal. Remember, no part of the receiver's body or racquet may cross the plane of the receiving line until the ball has bounced or broken the plane of the 5-foot line.

LIMIT ON APPEALS

Basically, a player or team may make three appeals per game. However if either line judge disagrees with the referee, the appeal does not count against the three appeal limit. A game ending rally may be appealed even if the three appeal limit has already been reached. As a referee, you should develop a system for keeping track of the number of appeals used. One idea is to use the otherwise useless 19th, 20th, and 21st points on the scorecard. Put an "X" through one each time an appeal is used.

CASE STUDY #9B: Mr. Gotcha hits a shot which the referee declares to be a winner. Mr. Smallchance appeals the call. The referee's call is overturned and the call is reversed. Mr. Gotcha asks how many appeals Mr. Smallchance has used. At this point, the referee realizes that Mr. Smallchance had previously used 3 appeals, and that the one just used was actually his fourth. What is the proper call? Answer on page A-3.

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Chapter 10 - Technicals

In certain situations, the referee may have to issue a technical or technical warning. A technical results in a point deduction. A warning has no deduction. Although technicals are seldom required, some players require a point deduction to control their behavior. As a referee, you should strive to be as consistent as possible in all your calls. Inconsistency often results in player frustration, anger and unsportsmanlike conduct. If the referee is firm and confident in his calls, then even if in doubt, the player will normally accept the referee's judgment. Problems occur when the referee hesitates continually and refuses to make calls. Rule 4.18 lists the situations where technicals may be issued. If necessary, the referee should not hesitate to give a technical. Remember, give a technical or warning the first time the situation occurs. Some players also have a tendency to test referees. If players know they can take advantage of the referee, they will push the rules to the limit. If the first infraction goes without a warning, then the player expects to get away with similar misbehavior a second, third and fourth time. A thorough explanation of technical type infractions prior to the match very often assures in the players minds that "this referee" will keep the match under control. There is often a fine line between a good referee and one who attempts to be the center of attention and dictatorial. You can often judge the effectiveness of the referee by the flow of the game. If there are constant stoppages, discussions, and interruptions this usually indicates the referee normally lacks control and consistency. If the match goes smoothly and the referee is unnoticed, this usually indicates the referee did a good job.

FORFEITURES

1. The referee can forfeit the match only, never a game.
2. The referee may forfeit a player even though there hasn't been any technical assessed.
3. If the player engages in blatant unsportsmanlike conduct, such as hitting someone intentionally with the ball, racquet or fist, the referee should forfeit the match.
4. If possible, the referee should assess a technical, in an effort to handle the situation and use extreme caution before invoking a forfeiture.

FORFEITURE DUE TO LATENESS

Rule 3.5 states that "any player or team that fails to report to play ten (10) minutes after the match has been scheduled to play" may be forfeited. Attempt to be as lenient and reasonable as possible with respect to this rule. Many tournament directors request that all players "report in" at least 30 minutes prior to their match. Before any referee forfeits a match for lateness, he should consult with the tournament director. If the player hasn't signed in at registration, then there is no reason to wait any longer than the 10 minute forfeit time. If the player has registered, a "subtle" reminder over the public address system, such as "Unless Mr. Procrastinator reports to court eight in two minutes, his match will be forfeited" may be sufficient to encourage the culprit.

CASE STUDY #10A: About 10 minutes prior to the scheduled starting time, a message was relayed from the local hotel that Mr. Tardy was on his way, but would probably be a little late for his match. The scheduled match time arrived, but Mr. Tardy had not. This was a professional tournament with money and reputation on the line. As the minutes ticked away, everyone--the crowd as well as Mr. Tardy's opponent--grew more restless. The opponent was an up and coming local player. The winner of the match was to receive \$250 and advance to the quarter-finals. Fifteen minutes, twenty minutes and finally twenty-five minutes passed. Finally, the tournament director told Mr. Tardy's opponent that the match would be forfeited if Mr. Tardy's opponent desired the victory. The opponent found himself in a dilemma. He wanted the opportunity to play Mr. Tardy, who by the way was one of racquetball's greatest legends, but also wanted the \$250. He suggested waiting 5 more minutes. The 5 minutes passed and just as the tournament director started to announce that Mr. Tardy had been forfeited from the tournament, Mr. Tardy walked in the door. He said that his driver had gotten lost on the way to the club. As fate would have it, Mr. Tardy went on to beat the opponent and eventually win the tournament. Many of the other players and some spectators who witnessed this incident felt that a rule is a rule and the match should have been forfeited at the specified 10 minute forfeit time. Did the tournament director make the proper decision? Answer on Page A-3.

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Chapter 11 - Resolving Disputes

While most matches proceed without incident, the referee and the tournament director should be prepared to handle problems that can arise. As with most difficult issues, advance planning and knowledge of procedures can greatly lessen the heartburn of all involved. Good planning for resolving disputes should begin long before the tournament does.

Every tournament must be managed by a person designated as the tournament director. The tournament director may be called upon to participate in resolving certain types of disputes that may arise during the course of competition. The AARA rulebook also suggests that the tournament director establish a Tournament Rules Committee to resolve those disputes that cannot be successfully resolved by the referee, tournament desk personnel, or tournament director. This committee should be identified before the tournament starts and should be composed of an odd number of qualified persons who should be prepared to meet on short notice, if required. The highest level AARA official (state, regional, or national) attending the tournament should chair the committee. If possible, committee members should include the state director or designated representative and any other qualified individuals such as regional or national officers in attendance. However, the tournament director should not be a member of this committee.

The AARA Rulebook contains information that can answer many of the issues that a tournament director will be likely to face. Many of these rules specifically call for the involvement of the tournament director. These rules range from deciding whether to grant an extension beyond the standard forfeit time of 10 minutes (Rule 3.5(d)) to ruling on the suitability of a player's attire (Rule 2.5(b)). Moreover, Rule 3.9 states that if a player feels that a rule has been interpreted incorrectly, he has the right to require the referee or tournament director to show him the rule in the rulebook. For this reason, the tournament director should take the time to read the rulebook prior to the tournament and have one close at hand (like in his pocket) at all times. It can be very embarrassing to have a player exercise that right and there be no rulebook in the building that can be referred to.

Rarely does a dispute arise about the referee assignment process, but remember that the AARA rulebook gives players (teams in doubles) who agree the right to reject an appointed referee, either before or during a match. If only one player (or team) wants the referee replaced, the tournament director must decide. When called upon to make such a decision, it is recommended (but not required) that the tournament director (or

his appointed representative) determine the basis for the request, but refrain from making a decision until there has been an opportunity to actually observe the match and assess the referee's ability. Of course, in those instances when the referee's incompetence is apparent, the referee should be removed immediately.

No matter how competent the referee may be, situations may develop during a match that demand the involvement of the tournament director. For instance, there are rules which say that if a player feels the referee has interpreted the rules incorrectly, he may require the tournament director to show him the rule in the rulebook. Because many of these situations can be resolved by the tournament desk, the tournament director should consider giving them the authority to act on his behalf. However, the tournament director should ensure that the personnel at the tournament desk are prepared. There should always be at least one copy of the current AARA Official Rulebook available at the tournament desk so that rule questions can be answered by reference to the specific rule.

Any person involved in resolving a dispute should be sure to listen to both sides, even though it is likely that the referee's position will be upheld. He must exercise diplomacy, and be honest and fair in reaching a decision. Even though tempers may explode, the person must remain calm. All discussions should be kept to a minimum and to the point. Once a decision has been made, it should stand. If necessary, advise the player of his further rights of protest as discussed later in this chapter. In those instances when it is determined that the referee has made an error, take the necessary steps to correct it, but don't make the referee seem like a fool or undermine his authority in front of the crowd or players. Don't hesitate to uphold the referee's assessment of a technical foul or forfeiture of the game for improper conduct. Sometimes, this is the only way to control a situation. Pretend that you are the tournament director faced with the following situation.

CASE STUDY #11A Mr. Fleetfoot holds up his swing to keep from hitting his opponent, Mr. Block. Because the referee makes no call at all, Mr. Fleetfoot turns to the referee and asks "What's the call?" The referee responds by assessing Mr. Fleetfoot with a technical foul and deducting a point from his score. Having gotten a technical, Mr. Fleetfoot then asks "Will you explain why you gave me a technical?" The referee tells the player to resume play. Mr. Fleetfoot then tells the referee that he wants to see the tournament director. Instead of responding to the player's request, the referee assesses another technical. Mr. Fleetfoot states that he will not continue play until he sees the tournament director, so the referee forfeits Mr. Fleetfoot for his refusal to play and declares that Mr. Block is the winner of the match. The tournament director then arrives at the court and interjects himself into the situation. What should the tournament director do? (Answer on page A-3.)

The tournament director must be aware that the AARA rulebook states that any decision not involving the judgment of the referee will, on protest, be accorded "due

process" as set forth in the By-Laws of the AARA. This requirement was mandated as a condition of the AARA's recognition by the United States Olympic Committee which seeks to protect player's rights to fair and open competition. The tournament director should ensure that the "due process" requirement is satisfied by the dispute resolution structure discussed in the preceding paragraphs, namely, the referee, the tournament desk, the tournament director, and the tournament rules committee. Tournament directors wishing to know more about the "due process" requirement should contact their AARA State Director.

DUE-PROCESS AND THE PLAYER'S BILL OF RIGHTS

According to the AARA Constitution, each player is entitled due-process as set forth in the Player's Bill of Rights. In the case of a tournament that is on-going, the proper sequence of events is to protest to the:

- referee
- tournament control desk
- tournament director
- tournament rules committee

Although the player may have to abide by the immediate decisions made by the above process, the player is entitled to have his appeal heard higher-level authorities including the state association, the National Rules Committee, AARA's National Board of Directors, and finally, an independent arbitration organization--the American Arbitration Association.

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Chapter 12 - Doubles

When "doubles" is the name of the game, the referee's job sometimes becomes "doubly difficult." This difficulty is not just because the action is faster, the rallies are longer, and the potential for hinders is increased, but also because the rules governing doubles are spread throughout the rulebook and not too easy to find. To help alleviate the problem, this chapter will address all of those special rules that distinguish doubles from singles.

Doubles teams are classified by the skill level of the higher ranked player on the team. In other words, an "A" player cannot play in a division lower than "A" regardless of whether his partner is a "C" or "novice" player. In the adult age divisions, such as "35+," both players must meet the designated minimum age. Of course, in juniors play, both players must be either at or under the designated age of the division. Sometimes, one member of a team will ask if he can get a new partner because of some unforeseen circumstance, such as an injury to his original partner. The rule governing this states that a partner change can be made until the match has been called to the court for its first match.

As in singles, the team that wins the coin toss has the choice of serving or receiving first. The team that receives first in the first game **MUST** serve first in the second game. The team scoring the most total points in the first two games gets the choice of serving or receiving first in the tiebreaker. If the total points are tied, then another coin toss is held and the winner gets the choice.

Make sure that you mark the scorecard in some manner to indicate which partner from each team will be serving first their team. You might need to refer to this information should a question about an out-of-order serve arise.

The team that serves first at the start of **EACH** game is allowed only one server the first time that team is up. During the remainder of the game, however, both players from each team get to serve, one after the other. The player who serves first is also the first one to serve the second time that team gets to serve. So, that player actually serves twice before his partner serves once. This same procedure is also followed at the start of the second game as well as the tiebreaker.

A doubles team may have either partner serve first. Once established, however, the order of serve must remain intact throughout that game. The order of serve may only be changed between games. Be especially alert for partners who might be serving "out-of-order." Believe it or not, "out-of-order" serves do occur--especially after very

long, intense rallies. At times, the players can't even remember who was serving. If a team happens to serve "out-of-order," straightening out the situation can be a little tricky.

Here's exactly what the rule says, "...when either partner serves out-of-order the points scored by that server will be subtracted and an out serve will be called: if the second server serves out-of-order the out serve will be applied to the first server and the second server will resume serving. If the player designated as the first server serves out-of-order, a side out will be called. In a match with line judges, the referee may enlist their aid to recall the number of points scored out-of-order."

It is not the referee's duty to prevent out-of-order serves, so don't warn a team that they are about to serve out-of-order unless they ask you who should be serving. On the other hand, you should stop play as soon as the ball has been served, explain the reason for the penalty, straighten out the order, and then proceed with the game.

The referee, however, can limit some of the confusion by keeping track of whose turn it is to serve. One proven method for doing this is to use either a coin or the plastic lid from a can of balls to keep track of who was serving. Use the "Heads" side to represent the first server. If, for example, the receiving team wins the rally, simply look at the coin and if it is "Tails Up" then you know that the second server must have been serving. Therefore, flip the scorecard, return the coin to the "Heads Up" position, and call "Side out!"

The non-serving partner **MUST** stand in either of the small boxes at the ends of the service zone. Many players are not aware that their partner can stand in either box, and that a change can be made at any time--even between first and second serves. From the positions that non-serving partners sometimes take, it seems likely that many people are not aware of other requirements that govern the non-serving partner's actions during the serve. Specifically, the partner must be on or inside the lines of the service box from the time the server begins his service motion until the ball has crossed the short line. Moreover, he **MUST** be erect, with his back to the wall, and have **BOTH** feet on the floor. Any violation of these results in a "foot fault." The only exception is if the partner steps over the short line before the ball crosses it, which results in an automatic loss of that serve. If the serve accidentally hits the partner in the service box, then that serve is taken over (dead-ball serve). But, if the partner intentionally touches the serve or is hit by the serve while outside of the box, then the result is automatic loss of serve.

Both members of the receiving team must remain behind the five-foot line until the ball has either bounced in the five-foot zone or has crossed the five-foot line. If either partner crosses the five-foot line too soon, the serving team is awarded a point, regardless of whether the ball is returned by him or not. The receiving team can also attempt to gain an advantage by employing certain confusing tactics that are within the

rules. For example, as long as neither partner violates the five-foot rule, they may stand anywhere they want. This includes standing in an "I" formation or swapping sides to receive whenever they want to.

There is a much greater chance of hinders occurring during a rally in doubles. Therefore, the referee should be very liberal in calling hinders and letting the players call some of their own--especially when safety is a concern. One important concept to keep in mind is that BOTH players are entitled to a fair chance to get to and hit the ball. If either player is hindered, then a hinder should be called even if the ball was obviously one that the other player could have gotten to. However, a player cannot be hindered by his own partner and hitting your own partner with the ball results in a loss of the

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Chapter 13 - Obtaining and Assigning Referees

Every tournament should be managed by a person designated as the "tournament director." According to the rulebook, the tournament director is responsible for appointing officials and assigning them to specific matches.

OBTAINING REFEREES

Before the tournament entry blank is prepared, a decision must be made about the general method to be used for obtaining referees. The method decided upon MUST be described on the entry blank so that all players who enter will understand their refereeing responsibilities, as well as the penalty if they do not fulfill them. Several methods have been devised to obtain referees. The most common among these are to require that (i) the winner refs the next match and (ii) loser refs the next match. The advent of the "referee fee" has added a new incentive that seems to have had positive results. There are several considerations in deciding which system to use.

Winner Refs. This system clearly identifies the person who is supposed to referee the next match. The tournament director should specify on the entry blank that winners who fail to referee or find a suitable substitute to do it for them will be immediately forfeited from the tournament. This is a very strong and effective incentive to referee, particularly if the players realize that the tournament director will carry out the forfeiture penalty. This system virtually assures the availability of a referee. Moreover, this system should produce a fairly competent referee since it is generally, but not always, true that the better the player is (the referee just won the last match on the court), the better referee he will be. However, there are some drawbacks to the "winner refs" system.

- Many players question why their immediate "reward" for winning a match should be performing a task (refing) that they probably consider undesirable. Furthermore, the more matches they win, the more they will have to referee. Since the winners are still in the tournament, they may claim that they need to take a shower and rest for a match later that same day. The only consolation that the tournament director can offer in such circumstances is that the player's opponent will have the same disadvantage and suggest that the player try to find a suitable substitute to carry out the refereeing responsibility.

- Who will referee the very first match to be played on each court since there are no winners yet? This same problem will also be encountered at the start of each day. The winners of the last matches played on the previous day, which often are very late, are compelled to referee the first matches the next day, which could be early the next morning, even though the next match they themselves may have to play may not be until much later in the day. A possible solution for this is to have some dedicated members from the host club volunteer to referee at such difficult times. Also, consider offering such persons some added incentive, such as a reduced entry fee.

- In some instances, the winner is truly not qualified to referee the next match. This happens most frequently when there is a great disparity in the skill levels of the two matches, such as when an "Open" match is scheduled to follow a "Novice" match on the court. This, too, is a problem that the tournament director must be prepared to address on a case-by-case basis.

Loser Refs. Like the "winner refs" system, specifying that the loser must referee also clearly identifies who is supposed to referee the next match. However, the incentive to referee is not as strong as the threat of forfeiture since the loser is out of the draw anyway. Other incentives must be used, such as withholding tournament souvenirs (shirts, etc.) until the player's referee responsibilities have been fulfilled. In some areas of the country, the local AARA organization is strong enough that players who fail to fulfill their responsibilities can be barred from future tournament competition for a period of time. The penalty for not refereeing should be stated on the entry blank as an indication of the tournament director's seriousness about applying the penalty. The "loser refs" system certainly eliminates one of the drawbacks of the "winner refs" system, namely the winner of the match feeling that he is being "punished for winning." In fact, if the tournament is being played in a single elimination format, each player (except for the eventual winner) will only lose one time per event. This means that each player who enters an event knows, in advance, that he will have to referee one and only one match at the tournament (unless he wins the tournament). While many tournament directors have switched to this system of identifying referees, it also has some drawbacks:

- The threat of not getting a tournament souvenir is far less effective than the threat of forfeiture. As a result, the tournament director must be prepared to find a substitute referee if the "loser" would rather be penalized than referee.

- The problem of who will referee the very first match to be played on each court is still prevalent since there will be no losers yet. Moreover, finding referees for the matches to be played at the start of each new day of the tournament becomes an even greater problem. Players who lose the day before are less likely to show up the next day, especially when they may have been eliminated from the tournament and not have to play the next day. In addition, there is a higher likelihood that players will accept the penalty rather than referee.

- Of course, some of the referees identified by this system also may not be very qualified. As with the "winner refs" system, the tournament director must be prepared to address this problem on a case-by-case basis.

It is apparent that each of the preceding systems has both good and bad features. In recent years, many tournament directors have instituted a policy of paying referees which, when employed as part of a "loser's refs" system, seems to work better than any system developed to date. By assessing a "referee fee", usually \$5 for every event that a player enters, the tournament director is able to use that fee to pay everyone who referees a match. Mathematically, sufficient funds are collected to pay the referee for every match played, including first round and third place matches, in a standard single elimination tournament, regardless of the number of divisions. For doubles events, each player from a doubles team should be required to pay one-half of the referee fee. Paying the referee of every match when one or more round robin divisions are conducted will require that the tournament director pay out slightly more than is collected. However, most tournament directors have found that even if there is a small additional cost involved, it is well worth the reduced hassle of finding referees. When used with a "loser refs" system, everyone (except for the eventual winners of each event) is given an opportunity to earn their fee back by fulfilling their referee responsibility. In those instances when the loser refuses to referee, the tournament director can use the \$5 referee fee to pay the substitute referee.

Tournament directors who have used the "referee fee" say that it attracts plenty of volunteer referees--usually more than are needed. Not only are the volunteers plentiful, but it seems that the same group of persons seem to volunteer time after time. The experience which these persons acquire through such repeated exposure is invaluable because it increases their skills. While substitute referees can be selected in the order that they volunteered, it is recommended that the assignments always be given to the best referee available at the moment, such as those persons who are certified referees. This policy not only provides the best possible referee for every match, but also increases the perceived value of obtaining referee credentials through the AARA's National Referee Certification Program. Such a policy will encourage more people to become certified and, thereby, improve the overall quality of referees available to the tournament director. The biggest drawback to using a "referee fee" is the need for internal controls to safeguard the cash, especially if the funds are to be handled by the tournament desk. Sometimes the action gets quite furious around the desk and just a slight relaxation of the controls could result in a significant loss of cash and ruin an otherwise successful event.

ASSIGNING REFEREES

The AARA rulebook states that the assignment of a referee to a specific match is the responsibility of the tournament director. At most tournaments, however, this responsibility is delegated to the persons operating the tournament desk. It is these persons who, from match to match, are charged with ensuring that the referee assigned is qualified. This is especially important in those divisions where important titles or rewards (money or merchandise) are at stake. Such matches are likely to be hotly contested, and the players expect and deserve these matches to be officiated by qualified referees. Special attention should be given to obtaining qualified referees for the semi-final and final matches. At times like these, the tournament director will be thankful that there are certified referees available.

Rarely does a dispute arise about the referee assignment process, but sometimes even highly qualified, certified refs are rejected by the players for reasons as strange as luck. Remember that the AARA rulebook gives players (teams in doubles) who agree the right to reject an appointed referee, either before or during a match. Chapter 11, which discusses methods for resolving disputes, has a paragraph which addresses the proper method for handling a player's request to replace a referee.

After a referee has been assigned to a match, the personnel at the tournament desk should check to see that he has all the necessary materials (ball, scorecard, pencil, towel, etc.), that he knows what court he will be refing on (it's a good idea to write the court number on the scorecard), and then double check to see that the players have been paged. This will help ensure that the match and tournament run on time.

One more consideration involves the use of line judges. Line judges reduce the pressure that is placed on the referee to make the right call and help the players to feel more confident that there is some recourse if the referee should happen to miss a call. Line judges (two per match) are NOT required for every match. However, according to the rulebook, line judges should be used for all semi-final and final matches. In addition, players are entitled to line judges whenever they are requested. The tournament desk should advise the referee of any match that requires line judges and help him to obtain them. It is much easier to be a line judge than a referee, but that is no excuse for using unqualified persons. These people should be interested, understand those rules that are appealable, and be willing to volunteer their time since there usually are no funds to pay them. For more information about the use of line judges and the appeal process in general, see Chapter 9.

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Chapter 14 - The Lighter Side of Refing

(Some Personal Reflections By Otto Dietrich)

What are the odds on flipping a coin and having it end up perfectly balanced on its edge? Well, believe it or not it happened to me once and, for that reason, I don't flip a nickel any more (their smooth edges make them more likely to end up on their sides.) Lots of people ask how many matches I've reffed over the years. Frankly I don't know, but in 1987 I kept records and found that I had reffed 414 matches. I've been actively reffing racquetball since 1981 and reffed matches ranging from first round matches between two novices playing in their very first racquetball tournament to a season-ending Professional Championship Match with a \$25,000 first prize AND the National Professional Championship title on the line. When you "call the shots" that often, you are bound to encounter some very interesting situations--such as the balanced coin. Here are a few more of those very special incidents.

Davey Bledsoe's knowledge of the rules of the game is almost as impressive as his forehand and his foot speed. All three, but especially the first, make reffing his matches a real challenge. On one particular occasion, Davey's opponent was serving and just as the serve crossed the short line, Davey yelled out "SHORT!" Thinking that it was me who had yelled "SHORT", the other player stopped in his tracks, but Davey didn't! He returned the ball for an uncontested winner, picked up the ball, and walked up to the serve zone as if he had won the rally. At this point I told Davey that I had called the serve good (as was later confirmed by the lines judges) and told him that since I considered his shouting of the word "short" to have been an intentional distraction of his opponent, I was therefore awarding the rally to his opponent. Davey immediately asked me to read the rule to him. Of course, the rule book clearly says that an intentional distraction is an avoidable hinder, but Davey insisted that I read the rule more carefully, pointing out that the rule's specific wording says that it applies only to a distraction of the person "who is hitting the ball." Davey's contention was that since it was him (and not his opponent) who was "hitting the ball" when the so-called "distraction" occurred, then this rule didn't apply. While Davey was technically correct, I pointed out that chaos would reign if such a tactic was legal and that it wasn't the intent of the rule to apply only to the person hitting the ball. So, I declared Davey's actions to have been an avoidable hinder nonetheless. When I became the National Rules Commissioner in 1987, clarifying that rule was high on my agenda. As a result, rule 4.16(f) in the Official Rulebook now covers any action that results in "disrupting one's opponent." Therefore, it no longer makes any difference whose turn it is to hit

the ball. If you distract your opponent, you're liable to have an avoidable hinder called on you.

The introduction of new rules can create some embarrassing situations. Take, for example, the 5-foot receiving zone that was introduced a few years ago. At one of the first tournaments played with the 5-foot line actually painted on the floor, Charlie Garfinkel was serving. Apparently "The Gar" was concentrating so much on his "spot theory of racquetball" that he forgot to check the "spot" on the floor where he was standing to serve the ball. Just as I called the score, I looked up and noticed that Charlie was standing in the 5-foot zone, rather than the service zone, to serve the ball. Charlie served the ball and I called this king-size foot fault. Just as Charlie realized his error, the audience broke into laughter. This time, for a change, the joke was on the "GAR."

Sometimes, however, players can turn the tables on the referee. One particularly good one was perpetrated by a fellow named Peter Wong who was obviously of Chinese ancestry. Although Peter speaks perfect English, he pretended during our first meeting--a pre-match briefing--that he couldn't understand English and spoke only Chinese. Naturally, I was perplexed about how to handle this situation and was on the verge of panic when Peter finally let me in on the joke. If you run into Peter, don't let him pull this one on you!

Jerry Hilecher is another "character of the game" who has been known for his extensive bag of tricks. A few years ago he pulled one out which caught me completely off guard. Having just served at match point and won the rally, Ed Andrews walked off the court and went to the locker room. After the crowd left the area, I was getting ready to go to the tournament desk to turn in the score card when Jerry, who was still on the court, yelled out "I appeal that last shot." Since I couldn't find anything in the rule book specifying any time limit on when an appeal can be made, I quickly searched for the line judges--one of whom was nearly out of the building by this time. I told them my call and asked for their opinion--confident that at least one would agree and the match would be over once and for all. But lo and behold, one line judge disagreed and the other had no opinion. So, as called for by the rules, the rally had to be replayed. Ed was understandably furious, but there was no alternative. Rule 3.7(b) now specifies that if a player wants to appeal, it must be made before he leaves the court or before the next serve begins--which ever occurs first.

Thrilled about the prospect of refereeing at my first major pro stop, I sought some advice from the tournament director about the subtle differences I should be aware of that might distinguish the pro game from amateur play. (After all, I didn't want to be too "ticky-tacky" about things, such as foot faults, if the pros weren't accustomed to having referees who call them.) Recognizing my sincerity, she introduced me to Ben Kolton who she described as a very knowledgeable person who could help put me at ease. Ben spent several minutes, reassuring me that I had nothing to worry about. As

fate would have it, the very first match I was assigned to was one of Ben's. Anxious about this opportunity to display my skill, I called the score "ZERO SERVING ZERO" to start the match. Ben's opponent immediately hit a very hard, head-high serve which Ben reached out and caught on the fly BEFORE it hit the back wall. Who would have believed it! The very first point of my very first "pro" match, I found myself hesitating on the call--unsure as to whether there was some unwritten understanding accepted by the pros that should have resulted in this serve being called long even though it was stopped before it got to the back wall. So I took a chance (stuck by the rulebook) and called the serve good and awarded a point to the server. Ben turned around and looked at me in a very puzzled manner, but didn't say a word. As it turned out, that very point was the ONLY point scored by Ben's opponent throughout the entire match. Afterwards, I cornered Ben and asked him about the possibility of there being some unwritten understanding or, perhaps had he caught the ball as some form of test for me. He said "No, I just forgot that we weren't warming up any more!" So much for my imagined subtleties of reffing the professional game of racquetball.

There's no doubt that racquetball is a highly competitive sport, but as you can see, it also has its lighter moments too. Although I would never suggest refereeing a racquetball match as something to do when you are in the need of a laugh, there is a good chance that it could provide you a memorable experience as it has for me. Thanks again to these players. I will always have fond memories of my encounters with them!

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Chapter 15 - Conclusion

To be a competent referee you have to want to do a good job. No one is perfect, but a player who makes an effort to know the rules makes a better referee than the player who simply goes through the motions. When refereeing ask yourself "If I was playing, would I be satisfied with the quality of the referee?" If the answer is "NO," you had better reevaluate your efforts. Every match deserves a good referee, no matter what level of play. Do your best, develop a consistency in your calls and give the match your complete attention. A well-refereed match usually results in a better played contest.

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Annex A - Answers to Case Studies in the Text

CASE STUDY #4A Page 4-4

The receiver is correct and Mr. Flash should be allowed only one more serve. The referee would have been correct (that it should be "first serve" if the ball had broken during the rally. But, as stated in rule 4.14, the rally is the play that follows the successful return of the serve to the front wall. Since this serve was not successfully returned to the front wall, the rally never began. Rule 4.9(c) says that if the ball breaks on the serve, the serve is taken over, but prior fault serves are NOT canceled.

CASE STUDY #4B Page 4-5

The proper call is side out. Mr. Tricky served two consecutive fault serves (one before and one after the timeout) which should have been a side out. See rule 4.11(a). Calling a timeout does not cancel any previous fault serve. It must be pointed out that the referee here created his own problem because he called the score (instead of "second serve") both after the initial argument and after the timeout. There are some players who will use such diversionary tactics to get an extra serve (especially in doubles) if they think the referee isn't doing a good job of keeping track of the match and who is serving. As a referee it is a good idea, as soon as a timeout is called, to make a note of who is serving and if it should be first or second serve when play resumes.

CASE STUDY #4C Page 4-7

If the referee agrees that the serve was a screen, then a fault serve should be called. Otherwise, the rally should be awarded to Mr. Cool by virtue of the avoidable hinder (an intentional distraction as described in rule 4.16(f)) that Mr. Speedy was guilty of when he yelled when he shouldn't have. If Mr. Speedy thought a screen serve should have been called, then he should wave his hand and continued playing, but not say or do anything that would interfere with the on-going rally. Also, the referee should inform Mr. Speedy not to yell in the future.

CASE STUDY #4D Page 4-9

The call was correct assuming that Mr. Lob could not have returned the serve. Once the referee's call was overturned by the appeal, it became the referee's judgment as to whether Mr. Lob would have been able to retrieve the ball. If the referee was SURE that the ball couldn't have been returned AND that his call of "Short" didn't

cause Mr. Lob to stop, then the proper call would be "Ace." Nevertheless, some players will claim that the referee's call caused them to stop, but seldom, if ever, does a referee make the call so fast as to stop the receiver from making his initial movement. But, if you are not sure whether the serve could have been returned or whether your call stopped the receiver's movement, it's best to just replay the serve. Don't award an "Ace" unless it obviously was one. See rule 3.8(2).

CASE STUDY #4E Page 4-6

This is an interesting situation. Normally, since the server has 14 points and the ace (if upheld) could be the game-ending point, the referee would allow the appeal. If the referee did not think the serve was an ace, he would not allow the appeal since it would not be the game-ending point. But in this case, the player's appeal was made to the line judge and not the referee. Thus the appeal is automatically void and the serve is declared short. Therefore, it is second serve coming.

CASE STUDY #8A Page 8-1

Body contact is not an automatic hinder. See rule 4.15(3). However, if Ms. Widebody could have gotten to the shot, then the proper call would be hinder. If Ms. Widebody could not have retrieved the ball, a hinder should not be called. As the skill of the players increase, there tends to be less contact and when contact does occur, the players generally want to play through it unless it is really disruptive. So don't be too quick to call a hinder as the playing skill gets higher. Moreover, if the contact is disruptive, the higher level players will generally want to know if the hinder should be an avoidable hinder. You should be prepared to explain (briefly) why it was or wasn't.

CASE STUDY #8B Page 8-2

To be acknowledged, a backswing hinder (rule 4.15(5)) must be called immediately--not after the shot has been taken. Asking for such a hinder afterwards gives that player an option (take the shot if it's good or call a hinder if it's not) which is not fair to his opponent. Since Mr. Prevaricator didn't call the hinder immediately, the referee shouldn't even bother asking Player B if there had been any contact. Remember, this doesn't necessarily mean there was no contact, just that the referee didn't see it and it wasn't called soon enough to be acknowledged. In this particular situation, the players could agree to overturn the referee's call.

CASE STUDY #8C Page 8-5

Mr. Splat is right as long as the racquet did not interfere with his shot or either player's safety. According to rule 4.14(h)(2) if a player loses properly attached required equipment, the referee should stop play only if player safety is in jeopardy. The rule also states that the referee should allow the player one opportunity to hit a rally ending shot. Of course, the loose equipment could also be very distracting and, if it does distract the other player, a hinder should be called. Note that if the racquet had not been properly attached (thong not attached) or had been a piece of non-required equipment (such as a cap), this hinder should have been declared an avoidable hinder. Also, if a foreign object (such as a ball from another court) enters the court, play should be stopped immediately, regardless of whether it causes any interference.

CASE STUDY #8D Page 8-8

If you read the answer to the previous case study, you know that Ms. Pinch is right if the flying device did distract her. It is clearly a non-required piece of equipment.

CASE STUDY #10A Page 10-4

YES, both decisions were correct. The tournament director was justified in not changing the referee without observing the match to see if Mr. Complainer's complaints were valid. He should, however, observe the match until he is sure that the referee is qualified. Also, Mr. Complainer deserves a technical since he left the court without asking the referee or calling a timeout. He does have the right to talk to the tournament director if he wants a change in the referee, but he cannot do so in the middle of a game without some explanation. Because he did not explain his actions, Mr. Complainer delayed the game--an action which is prohibited by rule 4.17(a)(6).

CASE STUDY #10B Page 10-6

The referee has created a real problem in this instance by having recognized an appeal when none actually remained. In the interest of fairness, however, the referee should apologize to Mr. Gotcha and explain that even though his call was probably incorrect (as was indicated by the line judges signals), they should never have been consulted. Therefore, the decision reverts to the referee's original call which must stand even though it was probably incorrect. This situation is like having mistakenly called "hinder" just before a winning shot is hit. Furthermore, Mr. Smallchance should be told not to appeal anymore, unless, of course, it is a game-ending rally. See rule 3.7(d).

CASE STUDY #11A Page 11-2

This is a difficult situation. The forfeit time according to the rules is 10 minutes, but rule 3.5(d) also states the tournament director may permit a longer delay if circumstances warrant such a decision. If the tournament director had not been notified that Mr. Tardy was on his way, then a forfeit may have been warranted. In this situation obviously other factors were taken into consideration such as the spectators who had purchased tickets to watch the match and the other player's willingness to wait for the other player to show up. Thus, it seems that the tournament director did act within his authority specified in rule 3.5(d).

CASE STUDY #12A Page 12-2

This referee has obviously lost his objectivity and assumed the role of an all-powerful, all-knowing, master of the court. Not only did the referee fail to handle the situation in a professional manner, but also he distorted several established rules. The whole incident might not have occurred if he had made a call right away. Players should never have to ask "What's the call?" After being questioned, the referee attempted to take the offensive and compensate for his lack of confidence by assessing a technical. Players always have the right to be shown the rule in the rulebook (rule 3.9). Since Mr. Fleetfoot felt that the referee did not understand the technical foul rule, it was proper for the tournament director to have gotten involved. By the time the director got there, things were already out of hand. If the referee tells the story the same way it is related in the text, then the tournament director probably should return both players to the court, assign a new referee, and reverse the technical fouls. Mr. Block may not like it, but it seems to be the fairest thing to do under the circumstances.

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Annex B - More Case Studies (and More Answers)

A. SERVING AND RETURNING THE SERVE

CASE STUDY #A1:

The server begins with both feet on, but not over, the short line. He uses a cross-over type of service motion, where his back foot breaks the plane of the service box, but does NOT touch the floor. Does the breaking of the plane constitute a foot fault?

ANSWER: Rule 4.10

NO! A foot fault requires actual contact with the floor surface. This is similar to the server beginning his service motion near the back of the service zone and his racquet arm extending over the back line before he makes ball contact. A fault should not be called.

CASE STUDY #A2:

To hit a backhand, high Z-lob serve, the server drops the ball out of the service box (in front of the service line). Is this a fault, an out serve, or a legal serve?

ANSWER: Rule 4.10

This is a fault serve similar to beginning one's motion outside the service zone.

CASE STUDY #A3:

The server, who is right-handed, stands near the 3-foot drive service line on the left side of the court and hits a drive serve behind him into the left side wall. The server has been trying to hit the crack for an ace. Although the server is standing legally within the 17 foot drive serve area, his serve does not always hit the crack. More frequently the ball pops up behind him and the receiver holds up his swing (safety) rather than hitting the server with the ball. What is the proper call?

ANSWER: Rule 4.16

The server has decided to gamble on hitting the crack for an ace serve. In this case, he has also assumed responsibility for getting out of the way if the serve does not crack out. If he hits the crack, it is obviously an ace, but if it pops up and the server is in the way--causing the receiver to hit the server or else hold up to keep from hitting him--it is an avoidable hinder.

CASE STUDY #A4:

The server occasionally hits a high Z-lob serve on his second serve. The receiver decides to return this serve with a ceiling ball for the entire first game. The first time the server uses this serve in the second game, the receiver moves up to short hop the ball, but holds up because the server is in his way. Is this an avoidable hinder?

ANSWER: Rule 4.16

It's an avoidable hinder for failure to move. The server is always responsible for knowing what the receiver is doing and to get out of the way to allow the receiver to shoot the ball. The referee should either explain this before the match or immediately after the first hinder has occurred.

CASE STUDY #A5:

As the server drops the ball to serve, he stumbles and decides to catch the ball and begin his motion again. Is this a fault serve or can the server start his motion again?

ANSWER: Rule 4.11

One key consideration in this call is whether the server's racquet made a non-continuous motion toward the ball. If it did, then it was a balk or fake serve. Secondly, the rule now allows the referee to exercise judgment and determine whether there was any deception involved or whether the balk was an accident that had no ill intent, such as to see which way the receiver might be leaning or conceal the actual instant the ball is going to be contacted. If the referee believes no deception was involved, he can declare it "no serve" and allow the server to serve again.

CASE STUDY #A6:

The server hits the serve and it skids along the floor as if it hit a wet spot. The referee did not see the ball skid and calls the serve an ace. The receiver appeals to the referee to consult with his line judges. Is this an appealable call?

ANSWER: Rule 4.15

The referee is the only person who can make this call. The new rule (Rule 4.15 a (i)) now allows court hinders to be appealed, and thus, the player may appeal the referee's call of wet ball.

CASE STUDY #A7:

The server begins his service motion without checking the receiver. The receiver has his racquet up, indicating that he's not ready. The referee warns the server indicating next time he will receive a technical for delay of game. Was this the proper call?

ANSWER: Rule 4.5

The proper call was made by the referee. The rulebook, however, does not say how many warnings are appropriate in situations such as described above. To be reasonable, the referee should (i) offer stern advice the first time it occurs, (ii) issue a technical warning the second time it occurs stating that if it occurs again, a point will be deducted, and (iii) assess a technical foul and deduct a point from the offender's score the third time it occurs. Furthermore, these offenses are cumulative throughout the entire match.

CASE STUDY #A8:

In doubles, the server hits his first serve short. On the second serve, the server hits his partner who is legally standing in the service box. Is this second serve over or does the server get two serves?

ANSWER: Rule 4.9

It is still second serve. This is handled like the broken ball situation. If the ball breaks on second serve, it is still second serve.

CASE STUDY #A9:

The server stands and drops the ball as if to hit a lob serve. His initial motion indicates he is hitting a lob serve, but then he suddenly pulls back his racquet and hits a drive serve. Although it is extremely difficult to do, the player bounced the ball legally and stayed within the legal boundaries of the service zone. Is this a legal serve?

ANSWER: Rule 4.3

The rule states that a balk or fake serve occurs if the server makes a non-continuous movement of the racquet toward the ball. This is obviously the case here and the purpose is quite obviously to deceive the opponent as to exactly when the ball will be contacted. This is a text book case of a balk or fake serve.

B. DEAD-BALL AND AVOIDABLE HINDERS

CASE STUDY #B1:

Player A is setting up to hit a cross-court pass shot. As he finishes his swing, his racquet contacts Player B who immediately stops--not even attempting to retrieve the pass shot. Player B asks for a hinder. Should the referee give Player B the hinder?

ANSWER: Rule 4.15(a)(3), (5) & (6)

If Player B could have gotten to the ball, but didn't because of the contact, then hinder would be the proper call. However, if the contact was caused by Player B's having taken a position too close to Player A (crowding) then the contact would not be considered a hinder at all. This is covered in several parts of rule 4.15. In many situations of this type, the defensive player is playing too close to the player shooting the ball. The follow through is a normal extension of the offensive player's motion. Referees should not be fooled and fall into the trap of allowing the defensive player to dictate the call. Use your judgment to decide whether the defensive player was playing too close.

CASE STUDY #B2:

In doubles, Player A hits a shot to the opposite side of the court. Player B lunges, but misses the ball. After seeing Player B miss the ball, his partner who is standing in deep court attempts to retrieve the ball but collides with Player A's partner. The referee calls point explaining that Player B missed the ball. Player B's partner argues he could have retrieved the ball. Was the referee's decision correct?

ANSWER: Rule 4.14 (e)

In doubles both players are entitled an opportunity to retrieve the ball. If the referee believed Player B's partner could not have retrieved the ball then his call was correct. But if the referee believed Player B's partner had a chance to get to the shot, then a hinder should have been called and the rally replayed.

CASE STUDY #B3:

As Player A hits the ball his "vibration dampener" flies out of his racquet. Player B stops completely as the "flying object" lands in front of him. Player A's shot passes Player B and the referee calls point for Player A. Player B argues it is a hinder. Was the referee's call correct?

ANSWER: Rule 4.16 (i)

The referee's call was incorrect. First of all the "vibration dampener" obviously affected Player B's concentration. If the object that a player loses is a required piece of equipment, the referee should call hinder. But since a dampener is NOT a required piece of equipment and its loss affected play, the call should have been an avoidable hinder.

CASE STUDY #B4:

Player A hits a ball setting up Player B. In going for the ball, Player B contacts Player A and the referee calls hinder. Player B continues and rolls out the ball. Player B argues his shot should count since the contact didn't affect the shot. What's the call?

ANSWER: Rule 4.15(3)

In this situation, it seems that the referee may have made the call too early. Body contact is not an automatic hinder and the call of "hinder" stops play, wiping out anything that occurs thereafter, including a perfect "rollout." So, regardless of whether the referee made the call too early, his call of hinder stands. Moreover, the hinder call is not appealable. When refereeing, don't be too quick to call "hinder" unless, of course, you believe someone is in danger of being injured. Many times, one player will be trapped against the wall and the other ready to hit a shot to the open court when the referee calls hinder. If there is no chance of injury, allow play to continue. If you have to stop play, fully evaluate the situation and determine whether it should be an avoidable hinder.

CASE STUDY #B5:

Player A hits the ball back at himself and the ball goes between his legs. Player B moves over to retrieve the ball off the back wall for a set-up. The referee calls hinder indicating the ball went between Player A's legs. Was the referee's call correct?

ANSWER: Rule 4.15 (a)(4)

The referee's call was correct only if he believed Player B was attempting to retrieve the ball before it went to the back wall and was interfered with by the ball passing so close to Player A. In this instance, it sounds as if Player B intended to take the ball off the back wall and thus no hinder should have been called. A ball that passes between the legs is not an automatic hinder. It's a hinder only if it interferes with the opponent's opportunity to see or hit the ball.

CASE STUDY #B6:

In a doubles match, Player A's team hits a short ceiling ball. Just as Player B's team goes to retrieve the ball Player A yells to his partner to move to the right. Player B and his partner stop, thinking the referee called something. The referee calls hinder and tells the players to replay the rally. But Player B and his partner want an avoidable hinder to be called. What's the proper call?

ANSWER: Rule 4.16(f)

When it is one team's turn to hit the ball, they are the only ones allowed to say anything. Player A's team may not do anything (including talking each other) that might distract Player B's team from hitting the ball. Even though Player A was yelling at his partner, it did distract Player B and thus an avoidable hinder should be called.

CASE STUDY #B7:

Player A hits a cross-court pass that comes off the back wall. Player B swings at the ball as it comes off the back wall and skips it in the floor. He immediately turns around and complains that the ball hit a crack in the back door and took an erratic bounce. He wants a hinder. What is the proper call?

ANSWER: Rule 4.15a(1)

The rule states "play is stopped when the ball takes an irregular bounce off a rough or irregular surface which the referee determines affected the rally." Although the rule indicates the referee must have seen the erratic bounce, this is not always possible. In the referee's pre-game explanation, he/she should explain that if the "player holds up or gives some sign such as verbal or raised hand indicating an erratic bounce

occurred," then a decision will be made whether there was a court hinder. In this particular case, the player did not make any indication prior to skipping the ball, and the referee obviously did not see a hinder. Thus, the non-call will stand. Of course, this is the only type of hinder that a player may appeal. The player should consider using an appeal if he is certain that a hinder occurred.

CASE STUDY #B8:

Player A hits a shot to the deep right corner of the court. Player B retreats to deep court and decides to hit a cross-court shot. Player A blocks the path for a cross-court shot, but allows Player B a straight-in shot. Player B hits Player A with the ball. The referee calls a hinder but Player B asks for an avoidable hinder indicating he should be permitted a reasonable angle for the cross-court shot. What is the correct call?

The rule now clearly states that the offensive player must be permitted a straight-in shot and a cross-court pass. Player A has allowed the straight-in shot, but blocked the angle for the cross-court shot. The paths for both the straight-in shot and the cross-court shot must be available.

CASE STUDY #B9:

Player A hits a drive serve from the right side of the service box which hits the left side wall and comes off at a very wide angle forcing the receiver, Player B, to turn around completely. As Player B follows the ball around off the back wall, Player A moves back and blocks Player B's straight-in shot to the front wall. The referee calls a dead-ball hinder explaining that it wasn't an avoidable hinder because Player A had attempted to move out of the way, but simply was unable to tell what angle the serve would come off of the back wall. Was the call correct?

ANSWER: Rule 4.16(a)

This rule requires the other player to move out of the way, which is defined as allowing a straight-in shot or a cross-court pass. It is the responsibility of Player A to know where his serve is going and to get out of the way of Player B. Even though Player A attempted to move, his intent has no bearing on the proper call. Player A must allow Player B an opportunity to return the ball and by blocking Player B's shot he took away Player B's shot. The proper call probably should have been an avoidable hinder.

CASE STUDY #B10:

Player A is trapped along the wall blocking Player B's direct path to the ball. The referee calls an avoidable hinder. Player A complains and asks for an explanation. After a brief explanation, Player A asks to see the tournament director. The referee refused, indicating it was a judgment call and, thus, the tournament director was not required. Was the referee's decision correct?

ANSWER: Rule 3.7(a)

Hinders are not appealable. The only question that may be asked in this situation was "did the referee understand the rule and have a thorough knowledge of when to call the avoidable hinder?" If it was obvious to Player A that the referee did not know what an avoidable hinder was, then he would have a right to ask for the tournament director to get a clarification of the rule. In this situation the referee should be open-minded and reasonable. If as a referee, you are not sure of a rule interpretation, then ask for the tournament director's assistance. If, in the above situation, it was clear that the referee knew the avoidable hinder rule then the tournament director would not be necessary.

C. MISCELLANEOUS SITUATIONS

CASE STUDY #C1:

Player A, while trying to return a shot off the back wall, slings the ball off his racquet. Player B raises his non-racquet hand to appeal. After the rally. Player B argues that Player A carried the ball and thus should lose the rally. The referee argues that even though the ball probably was "slung" rather than "hit," there is no rule for a "sling-like shot." Was he correct?

ANSWER: Rule 4.14(b)

There is a rule specifically saying that the ball may not be carried or slung. Although this seldom occurs, when it does the referee usually cannot tell. Some telltale signs are (i) no sound of the ball hitting the strings and (ii) the ball coming off the racquet and going in an unexpected direction. If you see it, call it, and explain the call because many players probably have never heard of the rule.

CASE STUDY #C2:

Player A dives and believes he retrieves the ball before two bounces. The referee calls a two-bounce "get", thus determining Player B the winner of the rally. Player A becomes incensed, waves his arms, yells a few words at himself and they finally opens the door, leaves the court and approaches the referee to appeal the call. The

referee listens to the appeal and asks the line judges for their decision. What is the proper call(s)?

ANSWER: Rule 3.7(b) and (c)

The referee made an error in allowing the appeal. First, the referee may refuse to recognize the appeal due to Player A's excessive demonstration. Second, Player A's appeal is automatically void as soon as he leaves the court. The proper call would be to not allow an appeal and the referee's original call should stand.

CASE STUDY #C3:

Player B appears to skip a forehand shot, but the referee makes no call. Player A looks surprised, and indicates his intention to appeal when the rally is over by raising his non-racquet hand immediately. As the rally continues Player A interferes with Player B's set-up and is called for an avoidable hinder. Player A turns to the line judge closest to where the earlier skip occurred and appeals Player B's earlier skip. What is the correct call?

ANSWER: Rule 3.7(c)

Sound confusing? Well, it would be except for one very important aspect. Player A made an improper appeal! He appealed to the line judge and, by doing so, he forfeited all of his rights to appeal. Player A could have appealed if he had appealed to the referee. If, on appeal, the shot had been ruled a "skip," then the point or side out would have been given to Player A since anything occurring after the appeal (including an avoidable hinder) would have been voided. While the rule doesn't actually provide for warning the player before forfeiting his appeal rights, in actual practice, it is probably advisable to give a warning first. If the practice continues or the player makes any excessive demonstration of his point, then the referee should explain that the appeal rights on that play were forfeited because of the player's actions and then call the score so the match can get started again.

CASE STUDY #C4:

Player A pulls a muscle in his left leg while attempting to retrieve a shot. After the rally he asks for an injury timeout. The referee indicates Player A has a total of 15 minutes. Player A uses 10 minutes and then continues but loses the game. In the next game Player A again aggravates the muscle pull and asks for another injury timeout. What would you call if you were the referee?

ANSWER:

This is a trick question. Injury timeouts are not permitted for muscle cramps. Rule 4.17(b). If the injury occurred as a result of contact, such as sprained finger obtained from diving for a ball, then he would be entitled to a total of 15 minutes during the match to recover. This time can be broken into smaller segments, such as an initial 10-minute timeout, then 5 minutes more later in the match.

CASE STUDY #C5:

Player A breaks the strings on his racquet after only 1 point in the first game. He leaves the court to get a new racquet and upon returning is informed by the referee that he has used one of his timeouts. The player argues that for a broken string he should have been permitted an equipment timeout and not have to use his regular timeouts. Who was correct?

ANSWER: Rule 4.17(c)

The referee was correct. The player must use one of his regular timeouts to repair or replace an equipment problem. If the player had already used all his timeouts, then the referee could allow an equipment timeout (not to exceed two minutes) if the referee believed the adjustment was necessary for safe and fair continuation of the match.

CASE STUDY #C6:

After the first rally of the game, Player A protests that Player B is not wearing eyeguards. The referee stops the match and instructs Player B to put on eyeguards. Player B obliges and returns to the court. Player A argues that Player B should be charged with a timeout. The referee disagrees indicating it is his determination and Player A simply forgot. Who is correct?

ANSWER: Rule 2.5(a)

Surprise! Both are wrong. Player A is partially correct in that Player B should have had a timeout charged against him. The referee should also have given Player B a technical foul (minus 1 point) as called for by the rule. In this instance, since it is obvious the referee was not familiar with the rule, Player A should have asked for the tournament director for a clarification of the rule. Had this been the second infraction by the same player in the same match, then the referee should forfeit the match to Player A.

CASE STUDY #C7:

In doubles, Team A is on the court warming up. Team B is outside awaiting their time. During warm up a player on Team A pulls a muscle and cannot continue. The remaining player on Team A leaves the court and returns with a new partner. The assigned referee accepts the change and decides to start the match. Team B argues the match should be forfeited. The referee explains the game had not started, in fact, no other games in the division had started, and thus the change is allowed. Who is correct?

ANSWER: Rule 1.6(a)

The referee is wrong. Once both teams have been called to the court the match is considered to have begun. Once the match has officially begun, a change in partners is NOT allowed. If the players had not been called to the court, and they had not played any other matches, then a change would be permitted.

CASE STUDY #C8:

The referee calls the score and then the receiver raises his racquet to indicate that he is not ready. After 5 seconds the score was called, the server calls a timeout. The referee looks at the card and informs the player he has no timeouts remaining. The referee then says, "Serve." The receiver indicates that he wants the 5 seconds he has remaining from the original 10. The server argues the receiver should receive a technical for raising his racquet after the score was called! What's the right call?

ANSWER:

First, the receiver may indicate he wants 10 seconds (either by raising his racquet or turning his back to the server) at any time as long as the server hasn't begun his service motion. The 10 seconds starts immediately following the referee's call of the score or "second serve." (Rule 4.5) So the server's complaint about the receiver having raised his racquet after the score was called is not valid. The server called a timeout when he had none remaining. This IS a violation and the referee could have given the server a technical (Rule 4.17(a)) for delay of game. Again, this is a touchy issue. If the referee had really been on his toes, he would have kept both player informed about the number of timeouts remaining each time one was used. If this had been done, then there would be no question that the server had no timeouts remaining. One final consideration. Both the server and the receiver actually had more than 10 seconds to get ready after the score was initially called--5 seconds expired prior to the timeout being called plus the time taken to discuss the issue. Strictly speaking the serve should really commence immediately. However, when there is some disruption in the normal rhythm of the match--such as a rules

question--it is advisable for the referee to repeat the score (unless it is second serve coming) and start the play over again. While this obviously takes quite a bit more time than the original 10 seconds, it provides for less confusion among the participants. So, what's the call? The referee should assess the server with a technical foul (deduct one point), briefly explain why the point was deducted, and then call the score to start a new 10-second so play can resume again.

CASE STUDY #C9:

Player S wins a hotly disputed match by a score of 11-10 in the tiebreaker. Before his next match, Player S gets in a verbal argument with his defeated opponent. During the dispute, he pushes the opponent who falls and breaks an expensive television in the lobby. The owner complains to the tournament director. The tournament director proceeds to forfeit Player S out of the tournament. Player S argues since the problem didn't occur on the court, he cannot be defaulted. Who is right?

ANSWER:

The tournament director was within the scope of his authority as specified in the rulebook (Rule 3.8(e)) in forfeiting Player S. All players must display proper conduct both on and off the court. However, if the tournament director was not a witness to the event, it would have been better for him to have questioned all witnesses and players involved in the situation before he made a final decision. Players must abide by tournament rules as well as host facility rules. Even though the player was ejected from the tournament, he still has a right to appeal (see Chapter 11.)

OFFICIATING RACQUETBALL

Annex C - Line Judge Briefing Sheet

1. First, and foremost, give the match your undivided attention. Watch the match as if you were actually reffing it. In other words, make a call (only to yourself, of course) on every play.
2. Only the following calls or non-calls can be appealed:
 - a. Fault serves (except for screen serves)
 - b. Out serves
 - c. Safety zone (receiving line) violations
 - d. Drive serve zone violations
 - e. Skip balls
 - f. Double bounces
 - g. Court hinders (since September 1, 1990)

Since there are very few calls that are appealable, make sure that you know and understand the wording of the applicable rules, especially those concerning fault serves, the safety zone, and the drive serve zone. If you have any doubt about these rules, ask the referee to explain them and, if possible, have the referee show them to you in the rulebook.

3. If you see a rule violation during a rally, do not react in any way. Remember it, but keep it to yourself until an appeal is made. If no appeal is made, then forget it immediately. Moreover, ignore any comments or questions that a player may direct to you. The rules require the players to make all of their comments and appeals directly to the referee. In fact, if a player makes an appeal to a line judge or after making an excessive demonstration, Rule 3.7(c) says that the player has forfeited the right of appeal.

4. Whenever an appeal is made, it is critical that you know which "get" or shot is being appealed. Most players will raise their hand during the rally to signal their intention to appeal a particular "non-call." In general, if you cannot be certain of the exact "get" or shot that is being appealed, you should indicate that you have "no

opinion." Therefore, an indefinite appeal, such as "I appeal all of my opponent's gets during the last rally" should never be recognized by the referee. There are, however, some instances when a line judge could express an opinion even if he doesn't see the exact "get" or shot being appealed. Specifically, if you watched the whole rally and thought that all "gets" and shots were good, then you have a basis for expressing an opinion if an appeal is made. But if you thought there was one or more uncalled errors or aren't sure whether one or more "gets" or shots were good, then you **MUST** know the exact play being appealed.

5. After the referee tells you what HIS CALL was, you should signal whether you agree with HIS CALL (thumb up) or disagree with HIS CALL (thumb down) or for whatever reason have no opinion about the call (open palm down). For example, if the referee calls a skip ball on a shot that you thought was good, the correct signal for you to give--if an appeal is made--is "thumb down" to indicate that you disagree with the referee's call. Never indicate your opinion until the referee has told you exactly what is being appealed and what his call was. When indicating your opinion, make it obvious that your opinion is your own! Therefore, you should never look at the other line judge, be influenced by the crowd's reaction, or listen to what anyone else says. Moreover, hold your signal long enough and in such a manner that the referee, as well as the players, can see it. If you're not sure what the appeal is, it is okay to ask the referee to repeat it. Too often, line judges feel pressured to express an opinion when they really aren't sure of the call--they may have been screened on the shot or may have been distracted. In such cases, don't hesitate to indicate no opinion (open palm down).

6. In those very important matches, one line judge should also be used as an alternate scorekeeper. The alternate scorekeeper should keep a complete scorecard that parallels the official scorecard being kept by the referee. This person should record all points, timeouts, and appeals, just like the referee does. In addition, this person should keep track of whose serve it is and the order of serve, especially in doubles.

7. Last, but certainly not least, I want to thank you in advance for serving as a line judge. While only a few players will ever acknowledge how well you may perform, rest assured that your efforts help to ensure the fairness of the contest and make the referee's job a whole lot easier.

OFFICIATING RACQUETBALL

Annex D - Rule Interpretations of the AARA National Rules Commissioner

According to Article 502.0F of the AARA constitution, the duties of the National Rules Commissioner include explaining, interpreting, and revising the written rules of racquetball. These explanations, interpretations, and revisions are to be submitted to the Board of Directors and require a two-thirds majority vote of the Board for approval.

The following paragraphs are the rulings made by Otto Dietrich during his tenure as the AARA National Rules Commissioner. Those rulings that have been submitted to and approved by the Board are so annotated.

Case #1. In doubles, the non-serving partner has an obligation to quickly move out of the service box on the serve to allow the receiving team a reasonable opportunity to return the serve. However, Rule 4.7(b) prevents the non-serving partner from leaving the service box until the ball passes the short line. In the case of a drive serve directed to the back corner on the same side of the court as the non-serving partner, the non-serving partner may not have sufficient time to move out of an avoidable hinder position as described in Rule 4.16(a). Time is the most critical factor that must be taken into account in this situation. So, when the receiver elects to return a hard drive serve BEFORE the ball reaches the back wall, there usually is insufficient time for the server's partner to move completely out of the avoidable hinder paths described in Rule 4.16(a). So, if a hinder results (either a safety holdup or if the return of serve actually hits the non-serving partner), the proper call is dead-ball hinder (as opposed to avoidable hinder) and the rally should be replayed. Of course, when a drive serve is returned AFTER it touches the back wall, then there usually has been sufficient time to move. In this instance, if the non-serving partner fails to move, then the proper call is probably "avoidable hinder." **Approved by the AARA Board of Directors on October 13, 1990.**

Case #2. During rallies, play can develop in such a manner that two players (A and B) may be so standing so close together that when Player A hits the ball and, as Player B moves to retrieve the ball, he immediately contacts Player A resulting in a hinder (assuming, of course, that Player B could have returned the ball if he had not contacted Player A.) If Player A did not have sufficient time to move out of Player B's way, a dead-ball hinder should be called, as opposed to an avoidable hinder. This opinion is consistent with the opinion rendered in **Case #1**, which states that an avoidable hinder should only be called in such instances if the player could have "avoided" the hinder. Avoidance basically means that a hinder occurred because either (i) there was something that the player could have done, but failed to do, that resulted

in the hinder, or (ii) there was something that the player did, but did not have to do. Since there was insufficient time to move, an avoidable hinder should not be called.
Approved by the AARA Board of Directors on October 13, 1990.

Case #3. With regard to the loss of a player's eyeguards during a rally, Rule 4.14(h)(2) states that if a player loses any properly worn equipment, the referee shall stop the play if the occurrence interferes with ensuing play or player's safety. Because the eyeguards are a required piece of safety equipment, their loss immediately affects the safety of the player who has lost them. Therefore, hinder should be called immediately. Of course, the rule's allowance of one rally ending shot is still permitted. In the event that the eyeguards were intentionally lost, the proper call would be avoidable hinder for the distraction also (probably) a technical foul for unsportsmanlike conduct. **Approved by the AARA Board of Directors on October 13, 1990.**

Case #4. Rule 2.5(b) states that a player's shoes must have soles that do not mark or damage the floor. However, the rulebook contains NO wording that actually states that shoes must be worn. A number of years ago, the rules did specifically state that players must wear shoes. Some years ago, the wording of the rule was changed and, as a result, there is no any mention of shoes being required. I have also been told that there are a few players across the country that do play without shoes, including some who have played on the professional circuit. While there may be some safety considerations that should be taken into account, for some players wearing shoes increases (rather than decreases) the likelihood that they will lose their balance on the court. On the basis of a question posed by a partially disabled player, I ruled that he should be allowed to play in an AARA-sanctioned tournament without shoes. However, should excessive perspiration become a problem, a referee would be justified in requiring a barefooted player to eliminate the problem, which could include having him put on shoes. While it may be a somewhat frivolous observation, the absence of a specific rule requiring about shoes also applies to shirts or for that matter any other clothes. Indeed, the ONLY piece of equipment required by the rulebook is eyeguards. Of course, without a racquet, a player would not be able to legally hit the ball and would surely lose the match. **Approved by the AARA Board of Directors on October 13, 1990.**

Case #5. Rule 4.17(b) states that a player may be "granted an injury timeout" and the injured player "will not be allowed more than a total of 15 minutes rest during the match." Because of several questions about this wording, I have ruled that this rule allows a player to call an unlimited number of timeouts for either the same injury or an unlimited number of different injuries as long as the total amount of injury time taken during the match does not exceed 15 minutes and each "injury" is the result of some form of contact as defined in the existing rule. This appears to be another area where the rulebook could be reworded to clarify this issue. Note: The

1990-1991 version of the Rulebook clarifies this point. **Approved by the AARA Board of Directors on October 13, 1990.**

Case #6. There have been several questions about the proper bouncing of ball for the serve. Simply stated, the ball must travel from the hand to the floor and then from the floor to the racquet without touching any other surface. Failure to execute the bounce in this manner is a fault serve. For example, the player may not bounce the ball off the side wall as part of the service bounce. There is one exception to this action being called a "fault serve" and that is when the other surface touched is some part of the player, in which case the proper call is "out serve." **Approved by the AARA Board of Directors on October 13, 1990.**

Case #7. Closely related to **Case #6** is when the server bounces the ball (as part of the service motion), catches the ball, and then bounces it again. Because there is no rule which expressly prohibits this, such an action is legal provided the server's racquet hasn't begun moving toward the ball to hit it. If the racquet has started moving toward the ball and the ball is caught, then the balk or fake serve rule takes over. Remember, too, that the server is allowed only 10 seconds to serve the ball. Should the delay involved in catching and re-bouncing the ball take more than 10 seconds, the proper call would be "an out" for failing to serve in 10 seconds. **Approved by the AARA Board of Directors on October 13, 1990.**

Case #8. There is no need for the server to actually serve the ball to get point for a 10 second delay by the receiver. Of course, this assumes that the server is prepared to serve and waiting on the receiver. Mutual delay should be handled by a warning from the referee to both players to speed up the game. **Approved by the AARA Board of Directors on October 13, 1990.**

Case #9. In singles, no conversation is allowed while the ball is in play. In doubles, only the team whose turn it is to hit the ball may speak while the ball is in play and that conversation must be limited to matters that concern the teams strategy, such as who hits the ball, who should move where, etc. Any violation which interferes with play should be called an "avoidable hinder" for intentional distraction. **Approved by the AARA Board of Directors on October 13, 1990.**

Case #10. An out-of-order serve penalty in doubles cannot be assessed after the offending team has become the receiving team. However, any points scored while the team was out-of-order should be deducted assuming that the number can be recalled accurately (which is very unlikely). **Approved by the AARA Board of Directors on October 13, 1990.**

Case #11. If a player slips on a wet spot on the floor and, therefore, is unable to return the ball, no hinder should be called. This is NOT a case of "Other Interference" as defined in Rule 4.15(a)(7) and is just a case of "tough luck" especially

if the wet spot was "caused" by that player's opponent. **Approved by the AARA Board of Directors on October 13, 1990.**

Case #12. In the case of a ball that is defective (has a "nick" in it for example), but is not actually broken, the ball should be replaced as soon as the defect is noticed. However, the preceding rally is NOT replayed as provided in Rule 4.14(g) because the ball is not actually broken. However, if the defective ball obviously affected the fairness of the preceding rally (in the sole judgment of the referee), the rally should be replayed. **Approved by the AARA Board of Directors on October 13, 1990.**

Case #13. According to Rule 4.15(b), the referee's call of "hinder" generally voids everything that follows--even being hit by the ball. When a player holds up his swing (safety holdup) he, in effect, has called "hinder" even if neither he nor the referee actually say the word before the ball hit the player. So, if the player holds up and the ball then hits the opponent, "hinder" is the proper call. However, the referee must be sure that the player who held up did so for safety reasons. If he held up for any other reason such as he thought the ball might hit his opponent or he just decided to let the ball go past so it could be played off the back wall, then the player who was hit loses the rally. **Approved by the AARA Board of Directors on October 13, 1990.**

Case #14. The referee has basic a responsibility to keep track of who should be serving in doubles, but not to prevent an out-of-order serve. If an out-of-order serve is about to occur, the referee should not stop the serve because there is a penalty involved. Instead, the referee should immediately declare "no serve" (as is done when a serve is made while the receiver is signalling "not ready"). The referee should then assess the appropriate penalty and proceed with the match. **Approved by the AARA Board of Directors on October 13, 1990.**

Case #15. The rulebook does NOT prohibit the double stringing of a racquetball racquet. Provided the string is made of the materials listing in Rule 2.4(d), the only other requirement is that the string may not mark or deface the ball. **Approved by the AARA Board of Directors on October 13, 1990.**

Case #16. During a rally Player A signals his intent to appeal a non-call of a two-bounce get. Because the referee makes "no call," the rally continues and ends with the ball breaking. Should Player A be allowed to make the appeal? Unless it is obvious that the ball wasn't broken when the two-bounce get being appealed occurred, an appeal should not be allowed. Whether an appeal should be allowed is a judgment call by the referee.

Case #17. Although not expressly stated in the rulebook, all players must wear--in addition to lensed eyeguards manufactured for racquet sports--a shirt, and an pair of shorts, pants, or other similar apparel. Failure to observe this rule would

constitute unsportsmanlike behavior (and would warrant a technical foul or forfeiture of the match) if not corrected upon request of the referee or tournament director.

Case #18. One player thinks that a ball struck by his opponent was not hit hard enough to reach the front wall. So, the player catches the ball before it touches the floor--presumably to avoid having to chase it after it bounces. While this could be classified as an "avoidable hinder" under Rule 4.16(d) for "moving into the ball", common sense indicates that this would be the proper call only if the ball might have reached the front wall had it not been touched. Rule 4.15(a)(2) says that when a ball hits your opponent, a hinder should not be called if the ball obviously did not have the velocity or direction to reach the front wall. This rule was designed to prevent a player from benefiting from an obviously defective shot. While it would always be wise for a player to let the ball bounce before touching it, if it is obvious (in the referee's opinion) that the ball did not have the velocity or direction to make the front wall, no hinder should be called even when a player intentionally stops or catches the ball. Of course, if the referee has ANY doubt about whether the ball would have reached the front wall, a hinder should be called and if the player touched the ball intentionally, the proper call would be "avoidable hinder."

Case #19. Although not specifically stated in Rule 4.6--the drive serve rule--only applies to those drive serves that pass between the server and the closest side wall. Note that the rule does state that "The drive serve zones are not observed for cross-court drive serves..." So, a drive serve to the other side of the server's body is legal. Of course, any serve may be declared a "screen serve" by the referee, but because this is not a violation of the drive serve rule, the call of "screen serve" is dependent upon the judgment of the referee.

Case #20. A violation of Rule 4.6 occurs only when the ball, racquet, or the server's feet break the plane of the drive serve line during the serve. This time frame (i) begins with any continuous movement of the server that results in the ball being served and (ii) ends when the served ball crosses the short line. Other parts of the server's body--such as the buttocks or the arm not holding the racquet--may break the plane without constituting a violation of the rule.

Case #21. Rule 4.7(b) requires the non-serving partner in doubles to stand erect in the service box "...with both feet on the floor...from the moment the server begins service motion until the served ball crosses the short line." Rule 4.11(d) states that if the non-serving partner intentionally touches a serve, it is an out serve. Rule 4.11(j) also says that an out serve results if the non-serving partner is hit by the served ball while outside the service box. When a player standing in the service box lifts his foot in an attempt to avoid being hit by the ball served by his partner, but is hit by the ball nevertheless, the proper call is dead-ball hinder. Even though his foot did not remain on the floor--as provided by Rule 4.7(b)--common sense dictates that it is more important that the player tried to avoid being hit and, therefore the movement is

justified provided, of course, that it was not part of an intentional attempt to touch the ball. Whether the movement was intended to touch the ball is subject to the referee's sole judgment.

Case #22. In doubles, the discovery of an out-of-order service situation results in all the points scored while out-of-order being deducted. However, it does NOT result in any appeals used, timeouts taken, technical fouls assessed, etc. being restored for either team.

Case #23. Although Rule 3.5(d)(1) empowers the referee to forfeit a match (never a game), the player may still appeal the referee's decision to the tournament director or the tournament rules committee. However, the appeal must be made immediately while the opponent is still close at hand so that the match can be resumed immediately should the referee's forfeiture be overturned.



