Guidelines for

WSF Assessors

12th December 2012

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GUIDELINES FOR WSF ASSESSORS

INTRODUCTION

As part of its commitment to improve international refereeing, WSF has adopted a Competency-Based Training and Assessment (CBTA) framework. Programmes have been developed for the different levels of refereeing. They specify:

- the pre-requisites needed to enter the programme - eyesight and hearing requirements, existing refereeing qualifications and previous refereeing experience;
- the competencies (knowledge and skills) required;
- training to achieve the competencies;
- refereeing activity needed for appointment and re-appointment; and
- assessment requirements, including standards and the number and level of assessments needed for appointment and re-appointment.

Full details can be found in the respective WSF CBTA Programmes on the WSF website.

These Guidelines have been developed to assist WSF Assessors in using the Assessment Sheet to assess Candidates for WSF Referee (WSFR), Regional Referee (RR) and National Referee (NR) levels. They can be adapted for use by Regional and National Assessors to assess their own candidates. However, WSF recognises the right of Regional Federations and National Associations to determine their own standards. Therefore, the procedures outlined in this document are best practice recommendations, particularly for those Member Nations that do not yet have a full referee training programme, or who are in the process of developing one.

The competencies (required knowledge and skills) are the same for all three levels of referee, but assessment requirements and standards differ. However, note that the standards and pre-requisites specified in these Guidelines and in the WSF CBTA Programmes for RRs and NRs are the minimum expected of candidates nominated for appointment as WSFRs. Individual Regional Federations and National Associations are free to set more demanding standards.

A single Assessment Sheet has been developed to cover the competencies and standards, specified in the different CBTA Programmes. It is not intended to replace any assessment sheets that Regions or Nations may already be using: rather, it demonstrates how competencies might be assessed.

WSF Assessors should check that they are using the latest version of the Assessment Sheet. The date appears in the "footer" of each page in the format YYMMDD and on the WSF website. All Assessors and Regional Representatives on the Referees Committee will be notified when a new version is introduced.

GUIDELINES FOR USING THE ASSESSMENT SHEET

This section explains how to complete the Assessment Sheet. It contains definitions of terms used and explanations of the standards to apply in assessing performance against the different competencies.

While the assessment of a Candidate's performance is always dependent on the judgement of the Assessor, Assessors are required to follow these Guidelines in reaching their overall assessment. This helps ensure that, in the interest of fairness towards Candidates, all Assessors apply similar standards. Where an Assessor decides not to apply a specific guideline, this must be documented (with reasons) on the Assessment Sheet.

The terms used and a full explanation of the standards to apply are covered for each page of the Assessment Sheet. Note that words indicating the masculine gender are to be interpreted to include the feminine gender.

Page 1 – Headings:

The Assessment Standard to be applied must be agreed between the WSF Assessor and the Candidate before the start of the assessment. An existing WSFR can be assessed only against WSFR Standards; an existing RR can be assessed only against WSFR or RR Standards; and an NR can be assessed against WSFR, RR or NR Standards. The Candidate should initial one of the three boxes.

The Names of Players A and B should be provided (with their Country) and current PSA or WSA Ranking in the boxes provided. Note that both Player Associations normally update their Ranking Lists monthly, so current rankings may change during a tournament. Tournament Referees are being asked to display copies of current rankings for reference purposes – accurate rankings need to be submitted with Activities and Assessments by those nominated for Annual Review.

Most of the other headings are self-explanatory. WSF Assessors will normally assess Referees whose "Current Referee Level" will be WSFR, RR or NR.

Page 1 – Key to Poor Decisions:

An important aspect in achieving consistency between WSF Assessors is the interpretation of the Key to Poor Decisions. To achieve this consistency, the following definitions apply:

- Marginal Difference on Interference – where the Candidate's decision is different but within an acceptable limit to that of the Assessor. Standard to apply: on a close call the referee awards a let, but the assessor would have given a stroke. However, on the first occasion in a particular situation when the referee gives a decision which is marginally different from the Assessor's, the Assessor should note that decision but not mark it as Marginally Different at that point. Then:
    - if this decision is the only one made in this situation during the match, the Assessor should mark it as Marginally Different at the end of the match;
    - if the candidate makes more decisions in this situation during the match, and is consistent in giving the same decision as on the first occasion, the Assessor should consider marking all of these as being correct; or
    - if the candidate is inconsistent, the Assessor should mark all decisions that are different from the Assessor's as Marginally Different.
- Incorrect Decision on Interference – where the decision is clear to the Assessor, but the Candidate gives a different decision. Standard to apply: the Candidate awards a let when the striker's backswing is clearly prevented, but the Assessor would (correctly) have awarded a stroke. Then, if the Candidate consistently makes Incorrect Decisions in the same situation, the Assessor should mark all these decisions as incorrect
- Totally Wrong Decision – where the Candidate misinterprets the situation and gives a totally wrong decision on any Rule. Examples:
    - an interference situation demands that the referee award either a let or a stroke, but he awards a no let;
    - the referee applies the wrong Rule, such as applying the Injury Rule when there is blood; or
    - the referee misinterprets a Rule, such as allowing a player 1 hour to recover from an injury after first ruling the opponent's play was dangerous and imposing a conduct warning.

Page 1 – Decision Table:

Every decision made by the referee must be inserted in the Table in Column R using the Code specified on the Assessment Sheet. These decisions must include all appeals for interference and all appeals against marker calls. The Score at that point is also recorded.

If the Assessor disagrees with the Referee's decision, he must insert his own Decision Code in Column A and then note the Code O = Marginal Difference, / = Incorrect Decision or X = Totally Wrong Decision (as defined above) – over the Decision Number in the first column. The Assessor should identify all "influential" decisions particularly early in the match as these will often reduce or increase the number of subsequent stoppages. An example is giving a "No Let" if there has been minimal interference. Mark such a decision by placing an I in the I/D Column. The Assessor should also identify every decision that he considers "difficult" by placing a D in the same Column – e.g. majority decisions (when observed) in a 3-Ref system, decisions that are referred to a Video Reviewer and some decisions in very long or close matches could be considered "difficult".

The player (A or B) who appeals against a Referee's or Marker's decision or requests a Let is identified in the Column headed A/B.

The Comments section should be used by the Assessor to make notes to remind him of the situation (which can also be shown diagrammatically on one of the 5 boxes at the bottom of the page). In particular, the Assessor should record sufficient information for completion of page 4 of the Assessment Sheet. When assessing in a 3-Referee system, he should record a split-decision (if observed) or if the Referee has been overruled. The Assessor may like to use his own shorthand or language which he can "translate" later before debriefing the Candidate.

At the end of each Game insert the Game Score in favour of Player A in the relevant box on the front page. At the end of the match copy all game scores to the top of the Comments section.

Page 1 – Summary of Decisions:

At the end of the Match, insert the total number of decisions in the Match and add the number of Marginal Differences, twice the number of Incorrect Decisions and four times the number of Totally Wrong Decisions. Then calculate the %.

Pages 2 and 3 – Supplementary Pages:

To be used if there are more than 25 decisions in the Match. Unused pages should not be forwarded to the WSF Office or copied to the Candidate.

Page 4 – Rules Interpretation and Decision-Making:

This page is completed at the end of the Match. In order to be assessed as having met the overall WSFR, RR or NR standard in the Match, the Candidates must achieve the required standard in all the competencies that can be judged in that Match. However, this Page must be completed even if the overall assessment is "Match was not valid for assessment" as there may well be useful feedback for the candidate on some of the 14 standards.

It is important that all WSF Assessors follow common standards which are explained in detail below. Note that although the competencies are the same for WSFRs, RRs and NRs, some of the standards are less demanding for RRs and NRs.

Rules Interpretation and Decision Making: "If the Candidate has met the required standard, place a tick (✓) in the box. If he has not met the required standard, place a cross (X) in the box. If unable to be assessed, place a cross (X) in the last column. There can be only one tick or cross in any row".

1. **Knows thoroughly all the Rules arising in a match and applies them correctly.**

   Knowledge of the Interference Rules is covered under points 3 to 9 below. Knowledge of all other Rules (such as turning, further attempts, injuries and bleeding, fallen objects etc) should be covered here if they arise in a match. [It is unlikely that a single match will provide the Candidate with the opportunity to demonstrate full knowledge of *all* the Rules of Squash. Therefore, unless the match requires no decisions (unlikely), there should always be some Rules that the Candidate has needed to apply. So "Not Able to be Assessed" is unlikely to be appropriate].

The Candidate will have performed to WSFR standard if he makes no more than 10% "errors", to RR standard if no more than 12½% "errors" and to NR standard if no more than 15% "errors". The Candidate will not have performed to either WSFR or RR standard if he is judged to have made any totally wrong decision; or to NR standard if more than one totally wrong decision.

2. Good consistency in decision-making.

Consistency in decision-making is the primary requirement of all officiating and is the ultimate test of a WSFR, RR or NR during a match. Consistent interpretation of Interference situations is particularly important. It may well be that the Assessor would apply a slightly different standard on particular interference categories to that applied by the Candidate, so he should permit the Candidate to establish his own standard, as long as it is within acceptable limits. He must then assess whether or not the Candidate's subsequent decision-making remained consistent with this standard.

Interference Categories

For each of the Interference categories in 3 – 9 below, the Candidate will have performed to WSFR standard if he makes no more than 10% "errors", to RR standard if no more than 12½% "errors" and to NR standard if no more than 15% "errors". The Candidate will not have performed to either WSF or RR standard if he is judged to have made any Totally Wrong Decisions; or to have performed to NR standard if he is judged to have more than one Totally Wrong Decision.

3. Recognising front wall interference

The candidate must demonstrate a good understanding of when a player will be struck by the opponent's ball travelling directly to the front wall. In considering this, the Candidate must take into account both the player's position between the opponent and the front wall and whether the opponent is in position and ready to play the shot that would hit the player.

4. Recognising poor movement off the ball

The Candidate must demonstrate a good understanding of the player's movement in clearing out of the opponent's direct path to the ball after completing his follow through. A player who does not make every effort to clear must be penalised with a stroke (if the opponent requests a let).

5. Recognising poor effort to get to and play the ball

The Candidate must demonstrate a good understanding of the player's movement to the ball. The player must make every effort to get to and play the ball rather than the opponent – see "minimal interference" and "created interference" below. If he fails to make every effort and just asks for a Let, the referee should give "No Let".

6. Recognising swing-interference.

This is often a difficult area for referees. Elite players require very little room to play their shots. The Candidate must demonstrate a good understanding of the "room to play" concept. In addition, he must be able to identify whether any swing-interference prevented a shot being played.

7. Recognising minimal interference.

The Candidate must demonstrate an awareness of situations in which a player does not make every effort to play the ball – choosing instead to stop and request a let after encountering minimal interference. If the Referee does not send a clear signal to the player that the latter must make every effort to go to and play the ball after encountering minimal interference, the flow of the match will probably suffer, and too many lets will result.

8. Recognising created interference.

The Candidate must demonstrate an understanding of situations where a player takes a slightly indirect line to the ball in order to create interference, or creates more interference than there would have been if he had taken a direct line. This is an area where Candidates frequently do not demonstrate sufficient understanding of the game at the elite level.

9. Recognising winning returns.

It is too easy for a referee to award a Let when a tough (but correct) "No Let" decision is required. The Candidate must demonstrate both the competence and the confidence to say "No Let" when a winning shot has been played.

10. Good control of the match, using Conduct Penalties when necessary.

The Candidate must demonstrate the ability to maintain firm and effective control of the match, without being officious or overbearing. A Candidate who overlooks poor conduct by a player is not performing to standard.

11. Good composure, avoiding confrontation under stress.

The Candidate must remain calm and retain good composure if his decision-making is to be dispassionate, particularly when under stress while refereeing a match between elite players in the presence of many spectators.

12. Effective communication with the players, avoiding lengthy discussion.

The ability to explain decisions quickly and clearly, plus the ability to communicate effectively with the players are essential elements of competence. Dialogue must be kept to a minimum and decisions must not be debated. The correct Referee's and Marker's "calls" must be used.

13. Independent decision-making in a 3-Referee System.

The Candidate must make his own decisions without being influenced by decisions made by Side Referees using WSF Decision cards, correct hand-signals or the ASB TopSquash electronic consoles.

14. Effective working with Side Referees or Marker.

In a 3-Referee situation, the Candidate must consult the Side Referees in a timely manner whenever a player requests a Let or appeals against a call (or no call) of Down, Not Up, Out or Fault. He must announce decisions without indicating whether they were unanimous or majority decisions or whether he agreed with them.

In a Referee/Marker situation, the Candidate must recognise the separate duties of Referee and Marker, and must support the Marker and only intervene if the Marker has made an error in his call of the score.

Page 5 - Description of the Match:

The Assessor's judgement of the level of difficulty of the match is crucial in gaining an overall appraisal of the Candidate's performance. The Assessor needs to pay attention to the players' ranking, their behaviour on court and the importance of the match. If the match was very one-sided, or if there were comparatively few decisions, or if most of the decisions were straightforward, this should result in the Assessor's designating the match as "easier than the required standard" and therefore "not valid for assessment". On the other hand, a lengthy match (in excess of 60 minutes), with a large number of varied interference decisions would merit the description of "more difficult match."

Page 5 - Referee and Assessor Positioning:

A Candidate's performance may be affected by his position during a match. If he is in the optimal position, he should have a better opportunity of performing to standard than one who is positioned twenty rows behind the court. As a guideline, Assessors may apply the following standards:

Good	In the position prescribed by the Rules, immediately over the back wall or on an overlooking balcony.
Reasonable	Seated in the audience in a central position (in line with the T) no more than 15 feet (4.5 metres) from the back wall and raised sufficiently to permit a good view of the action on court.
Poor	Further back from the court and/or without sufficient elevation.

Similarly, the position of the Assessor may well affect the assessment. Ideally, the Assessor would be seated close behind the Candidate, in order to have a similar view of the court. If the position of the Assessor is nowhere near that of the Candidate, this needs to be taken into consideration in the Assessor's assessment of the Candidate's performance. In a 3-Referee system, the Assessor's priority is to assess the Central Referee. He should not compromise a "good" position with regard to the Central Referee for a "poorer" position which gives him visibility of all three referees.

Page 5 – Summary Assessment of the Match:

The Assessor must first of all decide whether there was enough information available from the match to make a valid assessment. Candidates need to be found competent against all categories listed on page 4 unless the Assessor documents that there was sufficient evidence to state that the Candidate had met or not met the required standard without assessment against all categories.

It may be that the Candidate made correct decisions throughout the match but, unless it was a difficult match with a sufficient number of difficult decisions, there may be insufficient evidence to assess the Candidate. While it is not possible (or advisable) to reduce the assessment of the level of difficulty of a match to an arithmetical formula, a guideline for a match that meets the standard of difficulty for a valid assessment for WSFR level is one that requires a least 25 decisions of which at least 5 are considered by the Assessors to "influential" or "difficult" rather than easy; for RR level, at least 20 decisions of which at least 4 are "influential" or "difficult"; and for NR level, at least 20 decisions of which at least 3 are "influential" or "difficult".

If there were fewer overall decisions but a significant number of influential or difficult decisions, the Assessor may feel he has enough evidence to assess the Candidate. Similarly if there were few decisions but the Candidate made one or more "totally wrong decisions", this should be sufficient for the Assessor to state that the Candidates had not met the required standard on that match [unless he has good reason not to apply the Guideline – in which case a valid reason must be given in the Assessor's Summary (see below)].

The Assessor should have agreed with the Candidate before the start of the assessment whether he is assessing against WSFR, RR or NR Standards. The Standard cannot be changed once agreed at the start. If judged to be "Not at WSFR Standard on this match" it cannot be marked as "Met RR Standard on this match" or as "Match was not valid for Assessment". Similarly, if judged to be "Not at RR Standard on this match", it cannot be marked as "Met NR Standard on this match" or as "Match was not valid for assessment".

The Assessor must summarise his assessment of the Candidate by ticking only one box and may not modify any of the 7 statements provided. Any qualifying statements can be provided in the Assessor's Summary box – see below.

Page 5 – Assessor's Summary:

The Assessor should fill in the Assessor's Summary section prior to asking the Candidate to sign the assessment. He should identify the Candidate's strengths and weaknesses and recommend further training, mentoring or support if he considers this would be helpful.

Page 5 – Candidate was receptive to Feedback:

After discussion, the Assessor should indicate whether the Candidate was receptive to feedback.

Page 5 – Final Comments:

The Assessor should complete the Final Comments section, prior to signing and getting the Candidate to sign in the space provided.

The original and complete Assessment Sheet of any assessment against WSFR standards, even if "not valid", must be sent by the WSF Assessor to the WSF Office within two weeks. He must also give a copy to the Candidate whichever standard has been applied.