

USTA Tournament Regulations require that every sanctioned tournament have a referee. While USTA makes no stipulation that this person must hold a current Referee certification, except in the case of National level tournaments, many sections do have such a requirement.

In order to hold and maintain Referee certification, an official must attend and pass an annual school taught by either a Sectional or National Trainer-Evaluator. These schools are important to the referee not only for the chance to receive the most up-to-date information on rules and regulations, but also as a networking opportunity in which officials can have a free-flowing discussion on effective procedures for running tournaments.

Top-level referees know that simply attending an annual school and passing tests are not sufficient for maintaining their skills. As with any activity, regular review of applicable rules, regulations, techniques and procedures will not only ensure the necessary base of knowledge, but will also give the referee the confidence that that knowledge can be applied promptly, correctly and effectively.

The qualities and skills held by good referees cover a broad spectrum, as they do for any effective leader of a complex enterprise. Apart from basic knowledge of rules and regulations, a referee needs to develop these particular traits:

- Leadership. A referee must be able to command the respect of his deputies and umpires, tournament staff and, most importantly, the players.
- Organization. A smooth-running tournament is the product of preparation and constant attention to detail.
- Communications. Knowledge of rules and regulations must be effectively communicated. Being right isn't enough. A good decision that you don't sell well undermines your credibility.

Some of the basic principles that every referee should know and demonstrate in their referee assignments are:

1. Exercise general supervision over all aspects of play. This includes the responsibility to work with the Tournament Director to ensure that there are sufficient referees' assistants (Deputies, Roving Umpires, Court Monitors, on-court Umpires, etc.) to supervise play on all courts and the orderly assignment of players to courts and recording of match scores.
2. Be present at all times. Do not accept an assignment as a referee unless you can, with the exception of brief breaks, such as for meals, be at the tournament. You must also wear the official USTA uniform (Officials Code of Conduct #1) while serving as a referee. The uniform makes you instantly recognizable to players, coaches, parents, etc.
3. Appoint a Deputy Referee who should be present whenever the Referee is away from play. There must be a clear line of authority of who is performing the duties of the referee whenever the referee is on meal break or otherwise unavailable for immediate on-site rulings.

4. Meet with the umpires, roving officials, tournament staff, etc. Discuss the tasks of each official and the proper use of the Code of Conduct and Point Penalty System.
5. Keep players, officials, and tournament staff aware of the daily plan, including number of courts in play and system of calling matches. This is especially important in inclement weather situations.
6. Utilize good judgment in situations not covered by the rules. This entails the referee's having a detailed knowledge of the tournament regulations and tennis rules to determine when the situation is not covered by the rules. When a situation isn't, your word is the law, which increases the importance of being able to "sell" your decisions.
7. Make the draw publicly with the assistance of committee members. Keep the draw up-to-date. Anyone who wants to attend the draw can attend. This may entail holding the draw at the local tennis club or other public place. Always ensure that the one official copy of the draw is kept up-to-date and is the only draw copy with the official match times. Even though you may be using a computer to make the draw, the entry blank should state the time and place for the draw so that anyone who so desires may attend.
8. Make substitutions or changes in the draw when necessary. Make player substitutions or match rearrangements or time changes in accordance with the rules and regulations, always balancing the issues of fostering play while being fair to all concerned.
9. Designate a check-in area and tournament clock. It is important that reporting players and players awaiting their matches have a single place and time that will not cause player confusion.
10. Schedule matches and assigns courts. The referee or tournament staff needs to have a plan for when and how the matches are assigned to courts. While a computer program can be of major assistance, the referee must be prepared to make decisions on scheduling and court assignments.
11. Check all courts and nets. Do not leave this important task to the last minute when players point out unplayable courts or nets or improperly measured nets or singles sticks.
12. Call all matches; post all results and record time of match completion. Whenever players have more than one match in a day, it is important that times of match completion are recorded to allow for proper rest periods. While you may delegate some duties to non-certified tournament staff, this area still remains your responsibility.

13. Suspend, postpone, and reschedule matches. On-court officials and roving officials can suspend matches, but only the referee can postpone or reschedule matches.
14. Determine the ball change pattern. Also, check to determine that there are enough balls of the type and brand being used to complete the day's play and ensure that all officials and staff know the ball change pattern.
15. Assign and replace umpires. The referee or a referee-designated Chief of Umpires makes officials' assignments.
16. Make decisions on points of law in accordance to the rules of tennis and tournament regulations. Remember, you do not rule on points of fact when called to the court by players or other officials. You are to rule on points of law or tournament regulations only. The referee should possess a good awareness of rule or regulation differences for the specific level or type of tournament being run.
17. Determine who may enter the playing area. The referee must not allow spectators or others to affect the play of matches.
18. Handle infractions observed in non-officiated matches. This may include imposition of the Point Penalty System, Time Violations, footfaults or overrules of bad calls.
19. Be patient, fair, knowledgeable, tactful, prepared, and be a good listener. This about says it all.

Now let's look at the process of refereeing a tournament from beginning to end (for specific details on any particular aspect of operating a tournament, consult *Friend at Court* or the 2003 Referee Manual available online at USTA.com).

The Early Stages.

Generally the first thing that happens is for a Tournament Director to contact you seeking your help as referee for his tournament. Hopefully, this is at least a couple of months in advance, giving you the time to organize properly and recruit officials. This is the time to get things started right so as to avoid future problems. Do NOT accept any assignment as a referee until you are in complete agreement with the Tournament Director about his duties, your duties and working conditions.

Obviously you need to know the scope of the tournament (dates, site, level, age groups, draw size, etc.). Beyond that you need to discuss and negotiate items such as officiating staffing levels, compensation and non-certified assistance (i.e., tournament desk help). Get these ironed out now.

An understaffed, underorganized tournament is unfair to participants and officials alike. In determining staffing needs, pay particular attention to the number of courts being used each day and the number of matches you will need to play each day.

Be particularly reluctant to accept an assignment in which you are the only certified official and the Tournament Director expects you to man the desk fulltime. Except in the case of extremely small tournaments (i.e., one or two courts), this is tantamount to having an unofficiated tournament.

The USTA Officials Committee has drawn up guidelines for staffing and compensation for junior and senior events. A copy is included as an appendix to this report.

Tournament Regulations (see Friend at Court) lay out the pre-tournament processes for such things as appointing a Tournament Committee (you are on it) and a Tournament Appeals Committee (you're not), creating and distributing entry blanks, handling those entries, seeding and making the draw. While much of this is second nature for experienced referees, you cannot go wrong if you simply follow the procedures in FAC.

A few pre-tournament pointers:

- Learn to use the new TMD computer program from USTA; while a member of the tournament staff may have the duty to input data, it remains your responsibility. Also, the program is quite powerful and can make your job so much easier if you know how to take advantage of its capabilities.
- Using TMD in association with online entry streamlines that process considerably.
- Develop your own Referee's Survival Kit and make sure you keep it complete from tournament to tournament. A tournament can easily get off track for want of easily obtainable items such as a spare net strap.

Tournament supplies needed include:

- An adequate supply of balls, new and used.
- Singles sticks.
- Water, and a system for replenishing it.
- Benches or chairs courtside for players.
- Umpires' chairs as needed.
- Court-clearing tools such as squeegees and rollers.
- Scorecards.
- Drawsheets and Schedule Sheets.
- Friend at Court.
- Tournament Clock (prominently displayed at Tournament Desk).
- Net-measuring device (and a crank to raise and lower nets is nice, too).
- Stopwatch.

In Your Referee's Survival Kit you will probably want:

- First-Aid Kit, including latex gloves and a 50% bleach solution for cleaning up blood).
- Pens and pencils (and a pencil sharpener).
- Twist ties and duct tape for making temporary court/net repairs.
- Spare net straps.
- White-Out.
- Push pins and Scotch Tape for posting information.
- Portable bulletin boards.
- Scissors, stapler, rubber bands, paper clips, etc.
- Sunscreen, bug repellent and rain gear.
- Signage (i.e., "Tournament Desk," "Check In Here," "Turn Off Cell Phones").

- Develop your plan for operating the Tournament Desk, check-in procedures, ball handling (new and used), posting matches in progress, draws, match times. Make sure there is a clear chain of command and that your assistants, both certified and non-certified, know the limits of their authority. Posting first-match times online is a great recent development.
- Develop your plan for court coverage by officials. At which stage will you rove? Will you be using solo chairs? Line umpires? Do you have a communications plan (e.g., walkie-talkies)? If you have more than a

handful of officials, you will probably want to appoint a Chief Umpire and discuss with them their duties and responsibilities.

•In scheduling your tournament, start with the finals and work backward. Schedule heaviest on your first days to give yourself some wiggle room in the event of inclement weather or a spate of long matches. Have a master scheduling plan for the entire tournament. Sure, you will have to adapt and modify, but it helps immensely to have the basic roadmap. The Garman System (see appendix), when used with TMD, takes much of the mystery out of scheduling and can help your tournament run smoothly, keep waiting time to a minimum and keep your players, parents and coaches happy. TMD is able to accommodate the diverse rest requirements of various junior and senior age divisions. The Cardinal Rules of Scheduling are:

- 1) Never post a time of a match unless there is certainty that the time being posted is correct.
- 2) Once posted, never change the time, unless weather or darkness causes a change to be made

Once Play Begins

Tournament Regulations cover procedures for handling a number of problems that may arise as your tournament gets under way, including such things as players omitted from the draw and defaulting players for lateness. Do not hesitate to consult your Friend at Court when such situations arise. Remember that as referee you must always balance the two goals of fostering play and being fair to all parties (thus, you may accept into the draw a late entry who would be unseeded, but not one who would be).

Daily routine

- Get to the tournament in plenty of time each day to:
 - Make sure courts are clean and set up properly (nets measured, singles sticks, water, etc.).
 - Post updated draw sheets and match schedules.
 - Ball supply is adequate.
 - Meet with tournament desk staff to discuss the day's plan.
 - Meet with officials to discuss coverage plan and review any issues that arose the previous day.
- During the day:
 - Don't get trapped behind the tournament desk. Spend time roving the courts.
 - Monitor progress of matches and adjust scheduling as needed.
 - Oversee any Medical Timeout or Bleeding Timeout.
 - Be prepared to rule on the appeal of a default issued by one of your officials.
 - Post match results and ensure that next-match times are made available.
 - Make decisions with regard to suspending matches for inclement weather or darkness.
 - At the end of the day, make your official match schedule for the following day and post it.
- Closing out the tournament:
 - Make sure all draw sheets are complete and forwarded to the proper sanctioning body.
 - Post results online, if possible.
 - Make sure your officials are paid promptly.
 - Forward to the proper authority (i.e., Grievance Committee) Point Penalty reports that may result in suspension system action.
 - Restock your Referee's Survival Kit for your next tournament.