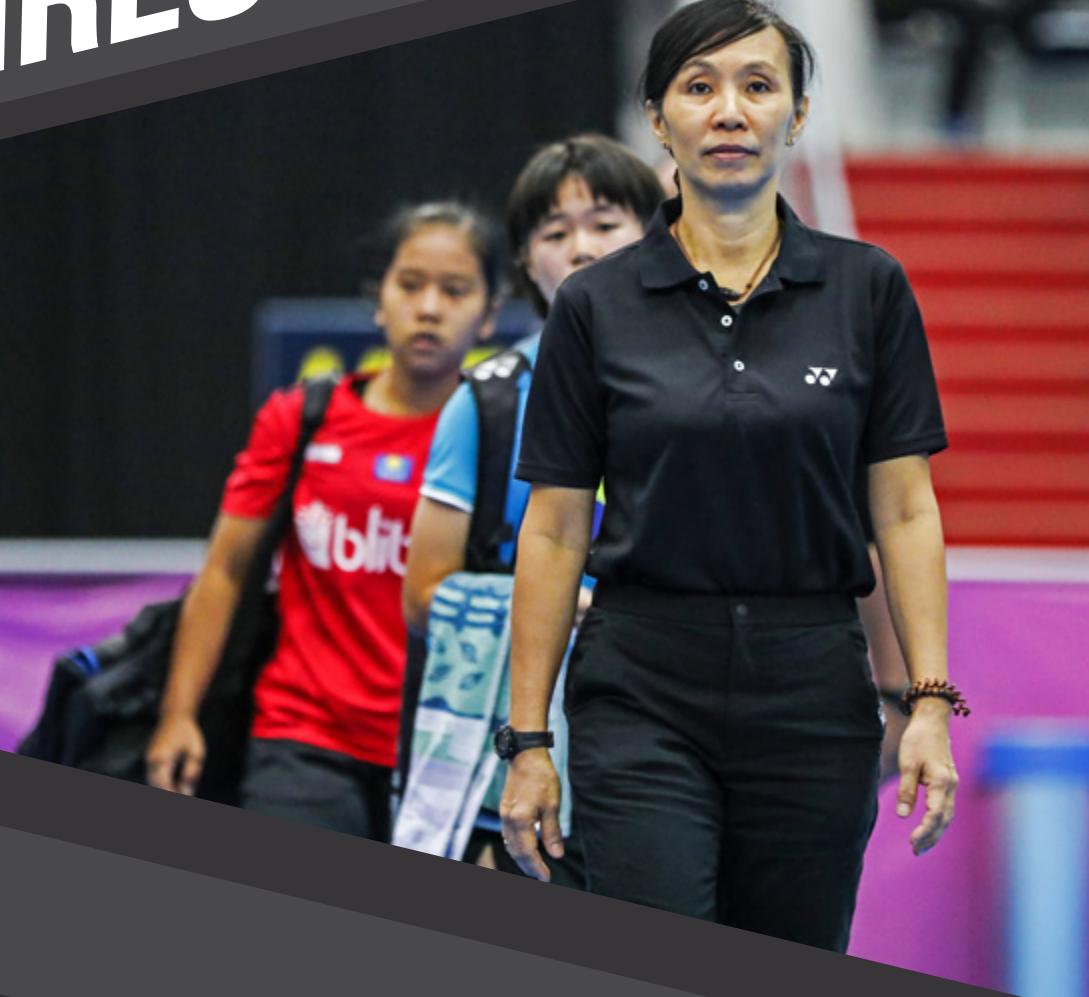


**BWF**

BWF TECHNICAL OFFICIALS' RESOURCES  
**UMPIRES' MANUAL**



**LEVEL 2**

# BWF TECHNICAL OFFICIALS' RESOURCES

## UMPIRES' MANUAL

### LEVEL 2

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### MORE INFORMATION

The resources for Technical Officials are available in different languages. The material can be downloaded from the BWF Education website: [development.bwfbadminton.com](http://development.bwfbadminton.com)

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## SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BWF TECHNICAL OFFICIALS' RESOURCES

Welcome to the BWF Level 2 Umpires' Manual, which forms part of the BWF Technical Officials' Resources. The BWF is committed to providing quality resources to assist in the training of technical officials from grassroots to international level. This resource is free for anyone to use in improving their umpiring skills.

The BWF Technical Officials' Resources are outlined in Table 1.1.

RESOURCE	SEQUENCE	TARGET LEVEL
<b>LINE JUDGES' MANUAL</b>	SINGLE LEVEL	From grassroots through highest world levels.
<b>UMPIRES' MANUAL</b>	LEVEL 1	Up to and including <b>national</b> level.
	LEVEL 2	Up to and including <b>continental</b> level.
<b>REFEREES' MANUAL</b>	LEVEL 1	Up to and including <b>national</b> level.
	LEVEL 2	Up to and including <b>continental</b> level.

**Table 1.1. Overview of BWF Technical Resources**

These resources are available to all Member Associations to use in training their technical officials. Each country will have their own structure for training, evaluation and certification of technical officials. For those who are interested in forming part of the technical officials team, the first step is to contact your national federation to inquire about opportunities and procedures.

### 1.2 MANUAL OVERVIEW

This Level 2 Umpires' Manual forms part of the BWF Technical Officials' Resources outlined in the previous section. It is aimed at:

- experienced national-level umpires who are looking to start umpiring internationally;
- continental-level umpires who are looking to polish their skills (including those who have an interest in progressing to BWF accreditation).

As such, the basic umpiring knowledge and procedures covered in the Level 1 Manual will not be addressed in detail here. For a refresher on the following fundamentals of umpiring, readers should refer to the sections of the Level 1 Umpires' Manual noted below in Table 1.2.

TOPIC	LEVEL 1 UMPIRES' MANUAL PAGES
Badminton basics	6 - 9
Umpiring overview	13 - 15
Umpire scoresheet	35 - 43
Basic umpiring match procedures for umpires	17 - 27
Types of service fault and basic service judging	31 - 34

**Table 1.2. Level 1 Umpires' Manual References for Basic Umpiring Topics**

This Level 2 Manual builds on the technical content addressed in Level 1, which has hopefully become second nature to the umpire through extensive practice at local-, regional-, and national-level tournaments. The subject areas covered in this Level 2 manual can be broadly categorised as follows:

- Topics covered in the Level 1 Manual, but re-examined from a more advanced perspective. The emphasis changes in many cases from simply considering “what an umpire should do” to discussing “how an umpire should do it”. Special focus is given to presentation and communication.
- Standardisation of all aspects of umpiring. The higher the level of tournament officiated the more important this aspect of umpiring becomes when applied to areas as varied as continuous play, misconduct, and service judging. Standardisation also applies to presentational procedures such as march-on and march-off.
- Discussion of interpretation of specific laws and recommendations. Certain points that sometimes cause confusion among umpires at all levels, which often leads to inconsistent application, are presented at appropriate places in this manual. For example, topics like obstruction (Law 13.4.4) and a player delaying in returning to court after an interval (Law 16.2) are covered in detail.
- Introduction to specific topics relevant only for umpiring at elite-level tournaments.

Table 1.3 shows the general outline of this manual.

SECTION	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
<b>1</b>	Introduction and overview of manual contents
<b>2</b>	Required qualities for elite-level umpiring – presentation, control, knowledge, teamwork, leadership
<b>3</b>	Presentation – physical appearance, demeanour, posture, voice, decision making, communication
<b>4</b>	Standardisation aspects – march-on and march-off, toss and warm-up, continuous play, shuttle changes, obstruction, correcting line judges
<b>5</b>	Court awareness – players, coaches, court, equipment
<b>6</b>	Misconduct – stepwise approach, feel for the game, being proactive, general guidelines for handling incidents on court
<b>7</b>	Service Judging – philosophy of approach, consistency of calls, service measuring devices
<b>8</b>	Special topics – clothing regulations, electronic scoring, Instant Review System, use of social media
<b>9</b>	Continuous improvement – how and why umpires should continue to improve their skills during their careers

**Table 1.3. Outline of Content of Level 2 Umpires' Manual**

In order to provide concrete examples, video links have been added throughout the manual. These links can be accessed on the [Video Clips](#) page of the Technical Officials section at the BWF Development website. The clips show real-life moments during badminton matches where technical officials faced some of the situations described in the manual.

### 1.3 UMPIRING RESOURCES

The higher the level of tournament, the greater the demands and the higher the pressure on umpires. At the international level, players will be relying on the umpire's sound decision making and judgement.

Also, umpires will be under the scrutiny of their peers, spectators and perhaps a TV audience as to how they handle, for better or worse, the development of the match. Fortunately, there is no shortage of resources available for umpires to consult in order to thoroughly prepare themselves for working at a high-level tournament.

To keep fresh and up to date, umpires who are committed to continuous improvement should regularly consult the following documents, which are updated periodically. The most recent versions are available on the [Statutes](#) page of the BWF website:

- **Laws of Badminton**
- **Instructions to Technical Officials (ITTO):**  
An invaluable document for understanding how to apply and interpret the Laws, as well as offering general umpiring advice.
- **Vocabulary:**  
All experienced international umpires are expected to use the approved English vocabulary no matter where in the world they may be umpiring.
- **Players, Coaches and Educators, and Technical Officials Codes of Conduct:**  
An important duty of the umpire is to manage the behavior of the players and coaches participating in a match. The Codes of Conduct for these persons describe what is acceptable and what isn't and can form the basis of decisions an umpire makes around issues concerning misconduct. Of course, umpires themselves are held to high standards of conduct while at a tournament, as related to their high visibility and responsibility in carrying out their duties professionally. The Technical Officials Code of Conduct contains useful reminders as to the expected behavior.

The following resources are also key for umpires' ongoing development:

- **BWF Umpire and Service Judge Instructions**  
This PowerPoint deck of slides is updated periodically and emphasises presentation aspects that umpires and service judges are expected to adopt at the higher level of the game. It is a useful resource, as it offers concise yet comprehensive guidance around standardisation of many different procedures to be implemented at continental- and BWF-level tournaments. These can be accessed using the "Download" arrow at:  
<https://corporate.bwfbadminton.com/technical-officials/umpires/>
- **Personal Network**  
All of the above sources of written material are undoubtedly useful. Equally valuable, though, can be the discussion with peers, especially around issues and questions where an umpire is uncertain or is curious as to the best course of action regarding a specific circumstance in a match. Learning from the experience and insights of other umpires who may have faced these situations, or at least thought about them, can add helpful context to the Laws and ITTO. All umpires who are serious about improving their skills and being as well-prepared as possible to face any situation that might arise are encouraged to build and maintain a network of umpiring colleagues with whom they can discuss and debate ideas as needed.

During matches, umpires may need to make decisions that require them to recall and apply laws and recommendations from various documents. For example, in dealing with an incident of misconduct, the umpire may need to recall, with just a few seconds of deliberation time, relevant content from the Laws, ITTO, and Players Code of Conduct. In deciding what to do, the umpire will also need to consider any specific instructions from the referees at the daily briefings, and then weigh all of this against the umpire's feel for the game and the context of the situation.

It is only natural for umpires to feel a bit stressed in such circumstances. However, they will become more comfortable by gaining as much officiating experience as possible, especially at more competitive and high-profile tournaments. And of course, the more familiar umpires are with the materials cited above, the more confident they will be in reaching a decision. As we will see in the next section, confidence is one of the key attributes that an umpire needs to be successful at higher-level national and international tournaments.

## SECTION 2. ELITE-LEVEL UMPIRE QUALITIES

### 2.1 GENERAL

There has never been a better time to pursue a passion in badminton umpiring. The profile of the sport is growing internationally thanks to increased investment and sponsorship, more exposure on TV and the Internet, and the charisma of the superstars of today's modern game. At the highest levels of the sport, these changes have led to greater rewards for players, with the world circuit of tournaments totaling millions of dollars in prize money. This is accompanied by an ever-increasing intensity in players' search for world ranking points to gain qualification to the Olympic Games, the ultimate prize for many top badminton athletes.

Technical officials have not been exempt from these changes. Increasing rewards for players means that the need for high-performing referees, umpires and line judges has never been greater. Accordingly, in 2018 the first group of semi-professional referees started work – an elite group of referees assigned to many of the biggest tournaments in the world, with a mandate to raise standards and drive consistency throughout the wider referee workforce. And in 2020, the first semi-professional umpires will be seen on court driving a similar objective.

The possibility of someday being a part of the most prestigious tournaments in the world is a motivation for many, but not all, umpires when they first decide to get involved in badminton officiating. While this typically requires long hours, financial investment, and personal sacrifice, all who get there attest that the satisfaction and benefits are well worth the hardship endured along the way. It is important to note that the road to becoming an elite-level umpire is getting increasingly competitive, with umpiring standards consistently rising. Also, more umpires in more countries are aspiring to be like the umpires they see on TV and on YouTube, and they are embarking on that journey at younger ages.

This section discusses the technical and personal characteristics that are required to be successful at the highest levels of umpiring. It becomes increasingly important for umpires to demonstrate these traits as they move through the ranks of regional to national to continental to BWF levels of officiating.



### 2.2 EXPECTED BEHAVIOURS

- **Mindset:**

When invited to *any* tournament, umpires should consider it an honour rather than a chore or a stepping stone to more prestigious tournaments that may be their ultimate goal. While at a tournament, umpires should keep in mind that they are just one small part, albeit an important one, of the overall tournament. This means that not everything will run according to their personal preferences or how they themselves might have set things up. It is important to respect the work the organisers have done, and in the case of any perceived shortcomings, bring these to the

attention of the manager of umpires or the referee (in a polite, non-demanding way, of course).

Through their conduct and treatment of everyone at the tournament, umpires should demonstrate that they care about the success of the tournament and are happy to be a part of it. This includes, for example, offering constructive, practical, and helpful suggestions to the organisers in areas that could favourably impact the overall success of the tournament, rather than thinking only about the conditions pertaining to their own comfort.

- **Technical Preparedness:**

*"Technical Officials Code of Conduct 4.7. Keep up to date on knowledge of the Laws of Badminton, rules and regulations of the game, trends and principles of their application."*

Players have the right to expect that the officials assigned to their match will apply and interpret the Laws and regulations accurately and appropriately. At the highest levels of the sport, a single incorrect decision by an umpire at a critical point in a high-profile match can potentially have a material impact on a player's future career.

Errors by officials can be placed in one of two broad categories, depending whether the mistake is based on a *point of fact* or a *point of law*. All officials at all levels in all sports make errors of judgement from time to time. These are mistakes based on a point of fact, such as deciding that a player hit the net or that a server struck the shuttle above 1.15 meters. This is unavoidable and part of human nature, although the higher the grade of umpire, the lower the frequency of mistakes should be.

On the other hand, errors based on a point of law (in other words, a decision based on a wrong understanding of a regulation, or applying a law that is obsolete), should never happen for top officials, because learning and renewing this knowledge is something over which umpires have full control. Unfortunately, high-profile instances still arise where the very best umpires in the world make errors on a point of law, sometimes in a match being shown on live TV, which therefore attracts unwelcome publicity. These types of officiating mistakes reflect badly on the elite umpiring workforce overall.

To be as technically prepared as possible for tournaments, umpires should:

- Check the BWF website to make sure that they are referring to the current versions of the Laws, ITTO, and Codes of Conduct.
- Reread the documents cited in Section 1.3 before arriving at the tournament. No matter how experienced umpire are or how well they *think* they know these documents, every rereading tends to reveals a nuance or subtlety in the wording of a law or instruction that they may not have considered previously.
- Practice at lower-level tournaments, or even at club play if this is not possible, in the few weeks leading up to a high-profile appointment, especially if it has been a while since their last tournament. Just as players need to practice to keep on top of their skills, the same is true for umpires.

- **Physical and Mental Preparedness:**

Like everyone these days, umpires typically lead busy lives with competing demands from work, badminton, and family. Getting physically and mentally prepared for a tournament is something umpires should pay attention to in order to facilitate high performance.

Physically, this means getting enough hours of sleep before traveling to the tournament, in order to help minimise any jetlag, and to be as fresh as possible upon arrival and before the typically long first days of the tournament get underway.

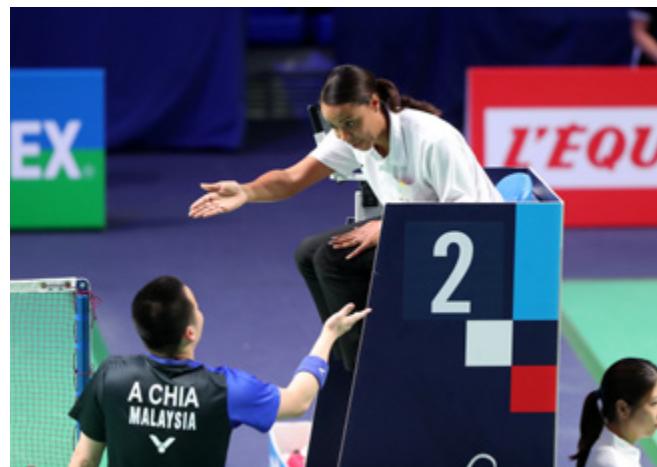
Mentally, this means that before traveling to a multi-day tournament, umpires should try to get work and family matters in order so that during the tournament they will not be overly distracted by non-tournament matters. While at a tournament, umpires should be sure to handle any other

responsibilities during their down time. This will allow them to focus solely on their officiating responsibilities while they are on duty. This includes, for example, getting mentally prepared for the next on-court assignment and not being consumed with personal or work-related e-mails or phone calls.

- **Punctuality:**

Players are expected to be on time and so are umpires. The daily umpire briefing is just one of many duties, often in a compressed timeframe, that referees have to perform before play gets underway, and attendance of all umpires at the posted briefing time is mandatory unless directed otherwise. At the international level when an umpire is being assessed for possible promotion, punctuality is one of the criteria taken into account, with lateness being looked on most unfavorably.

Also, the smooth running of a tournament day requires umpires to be available throughout the hours they have been assigned to work. Sometimes an umpire is needed to fill in at short notice in a match whose time has been rearranged, or for a colleague whose previous assignment is still in progress or who is feeling unwell. An umpire must not, therefore, disappear without giving notice to the responsible coordinator.



- **Confidence:**

For an umpire, commanding the respect of the players on court is paramount. The players want to be able to dedicate their complete attention to their shots, tactics, and strategy, rather than worrying about whether the umpire is making accurate calls and is being equitable to both sides. One way that umpires can help to earn respect is through showing an appropriate amount of self-confidence in the way they carry themselves, in their verbal interactions with players, and in their body language.

Confidence comes with experience and preparedness, and it cannot be faked. Players will be able to see through umpires who on the surface appear calm and sure of themselves but whose actions suggest otherwise. Confidence in decision making means having:

- a solid grasp of the technical basis underlying the facts in question,
- the experience to trust one's instincts, and
- the ability to communicate the decision in a manner that conveys conviction and authority.

Being confident, however, does not mean that umpires should abandon being humble when necessary. Everyone makes mistakes and if this happens to an umpire during a match, the umpire should admit it, apologise, and correct it. Being able to admit to a mistake is also a sign of confidence.

[See video **UMP2V1: Umpire admits mistake and apologises**]

- **Consistent Decision Making:**

Ask players what they value most in an umpire and one of the top answers is likely to be consistency. An umpire should make judgements and apply the laws of the game based on the same thought processes, no matter the score of a match, the stage of the tournament (for example, a first-round match or a final), or the amount of pressure the umpire feels at that particular moment.

This is not to say that when an umpire has to make a decision that is partially subjective in nature

(for example, whether to grant a toweling/drinks break), that the umpire will reach the same decision every time such a player request is made. However, it means that the mental process used and the factors taken into account by the umpire when reaching the decision should be the same every time.

- **Control of the Match – Being Proactive:**

The higher the grade to which an umpire progresses, the more important the umpire's "feel for the game" becomes in maintaining effective control of a match. The very best umpires in the world are able to identify a potential problem in the making and defuse it before it becomes reality. For example, an umpire who senses that a player is gradually becoming more and more agitated can take subtle action to calm the player before it results in a verbal outburst that leaves the umpire no option but to take more severe action (perhaps a warning or fault for misconduct).

Generally, the top umpires have the need to issue fewer yellow or red cards than lower-level umpires, precisely because their instincts alert them to problems in the making before they become issues. Being proactive in this way reinforces the idea that "a good official should always be in the background, never the center of attention". Some of the best work that an umpire does on court relates to subtle player interactions such as this, which keep a match on track and which go unseen to all but the most knowledgeable and observant onlookers.

Developing an advanced feel for the game is not easy and is something that develops over time to different extents for different umpires. It is a skill that cannot be taught in a class or workshop. Experience undoubtedly helps, especially in high-pressure situations, but the extent to which umpires are able to develop this important aspect of high-level umpiring in part reflects the inherent make-up of the umpires themselves. At the very highest levels, "feel for the game" is an attribute that separates good umpires from the very best umpires in the world.

- **Handling Pressure:**

Being an umpire at a world-level event can be tough. A lot may be on the line for the players, who may be looking to gain every advantage they can within the Laws, and perhaps beyond them. Additionally, the match may be broadcast live on TV or streamed on the Internet, meaning that every action of the umpire can potentially be scrutinised and dissected on social media. Umpires' ability to handle high-pressure situations typically reflects the combination of:

- their prior experience in and exposure to similar match environments, and
- their overall preparedness for the specific tournament in question around many of the areas discussed above (technical, physical and mental readiness, consistency of decision making, confidence, being proactive in controlling a match, etc.).



- **Teamwork and Leadership:**

A well-functioning team is only as strong as its weakest member, and teamwork is essential for effective performance both on and off the courts. The umpire crew at a world-level tournament is likely to consist of individuals from different backgrounds and cultures, and with diverse personalities, and an umpire needs to be aware of this and behave accordingly.

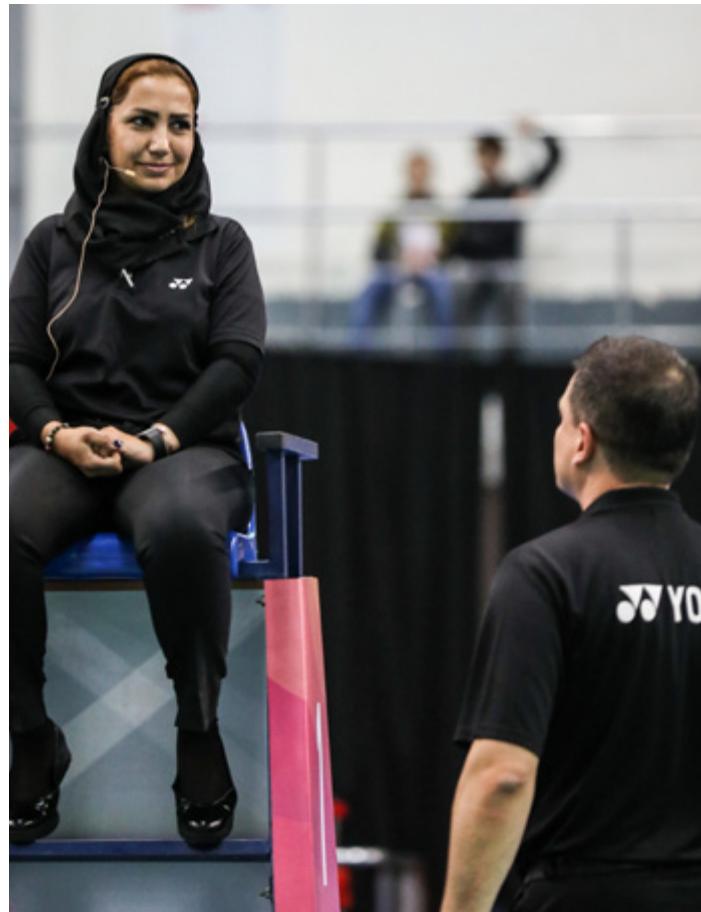
On the court, all the technical officials must work together as one cohesive unit, with the umpire taking a lead role in making this happen. For example, before a match while waiting to march on, the umpire should try to ensure that the line judges feel at ease and build camaraderie with them. During the match, the umpire must acknowledge every call line judges make, and it is also important to establish eye contact with them during the intervals as time allows.

Acknowledging line judges is different from just looking at them. Acknowledging means eye contact, a smile, and/or a small nod of the head. These actions will improve the performance of the line judges by enhancing their alertness, making them feel valued, and conveying that they too have an important part to play in the flow of the match. Additionally, establishing a sense of unity with the line judges in this way will foster respect for the umpire from the line judges' perspective, which will be helpful if during the match the umpire needs to correct a line judge's call.

Similarly, brief eye contact with the service judge after every serve and between rallies is expected of elite-level officials. In addition, top umpires who regularly work together over time often develop advanced teamwork through subtle body language and discreet signs that the service judge uses to help the umpire reach a correct judgement regarding a possible infraction during play. This is different from the more direct intervention expected of a service judge to correct, before the next rally begins, an incorrect action by an umpire on a point of law -- for example, the incorrect administration of the result of an Instant Review System (IRS) challenge. This is another example of teamwork on the court.

Off the court, each umpire needs the personal maturity to adapt to being in an environment with colleagues who may have different backgrounds and social norms than they usually encounter. This includes being sensitive around the use of language and not telling jokes that others might consider offensive. Actions that can foster good teamwork within the umpire crew and across the wider team of technical officials at a tournament include:

- Taking time to get to know all members of the umpire crew and not spending time only with those that the umpire is already familiar with.
- Avoiding playing favourites with line judges. Treat everyone equally.
- Engaging in dialogue with colleagues and being receptive to their perspectives on technical-related matters which may differ from the umpire's own thoughts and ideas.
- Embracing instructions from referees around standardisation even if they go against the umpire's established way of working. If one member of an umpire crew fails to follow the referee's instructions in a particular area, the success of the standardisation initiative is compromised.
- Participating in social events arranged outside of tournament playing hours.



Elite-level umpires also have an important leadership role to play within the umpire team at a tournament. At continental and world events, an umpire crew typically consists of a mix of highly experienced officials, mid-level umpires, and more junior members who may have been appointed to the tournament because of their potential to advance in the years ahead. The lesser

experienced officials may look to the elite-level umpires as role models and as icons of success that they wish to emulate. They may consider the qualities that the higher-ranking officials display as those that they should demonstrate in order to advance their own umpiring careers.

*"Technical Officials Code of Conduct 4.4. Provide leadership, guidance and support to participants and in particular, other Technical Officials."*

How elite-level umpires carry themselves, both on and off the courts, can therefore influence the development of aspiring umpires. Elite umpires should always remember that they too have traveled on a journey to reach their current level and think back on who their own umpiring influences were along the way. Top umpires have accumulated knowledge and best practices over the hundreds or thousands of matches they have officiated over the years, and they should consider it a responsibility to pass this on to their younger colleagues who will be the next generation of elite technical officials following in their footsteps.

Finally, in order to maintain professional appearances, umpires should refrain from socialising with players. This includes not posing for photographs with players and not asking players for shirts or autographs.

## 2.3 SUMMARY

This section has described the necessary technical and personal qualities required for successful umpiring at advanced levels of tournaments. While regional- and national-level umpires may be strong in some of these areas but lacking in others, umpires wishing to advance to the international stage will need to demonstrate competency in *all* of the above attributes.

In every human endeavor, it is natural to focus on our strengths and to shy away from acknowledging and working on those areas where our skills are relatively lacking. In order to reach the highest levels of umpiring however, it is necessary to face head-on one's shortcomings, be willing to receive tough feedback, and accept and embrace the hard work needed to improve. At times this may be uncomfortable, but it is important to remember that even the very best umpires regularly seen officiating the most high-profile matches started in a similar place, lacking skills in one or more areas. Their success came about by setting aside their egos, recognising their shortcomings, and investing the time and effort needed to develop the attributes and skills that enabled them to become more rounded umpires overall.



## SECTION 3. PRESENTATION

### 3.1 GENERAL

The quality standards expected of top-level badminton tournaments are continuously rising. Increasing exposure on TV and the Internet makes sports presentation important, as it demonstrates the commitment of the continental and world bodies to running professional-looking events and is essential for maintaining and expanding sponsors. While players are, and always should be, at the forefront of any tournament, technical officials in general (and umpires in particular) have an important role to play around high-quality presentation.

This includes not only the umpire's execution of routine match-to-match and day-to-day technical duties, but also how the umpire's style and actions are perceived by all stakeholders – players, coaches, spectators, sponsors, etc. A high-quality event requires an enormous investment of time and energy from the organisers, and everyone's collaboration is needed to translate this hard work into a polished tournament. This section highlights the different ways in which umpires contribute to the professional presentation of a tournament, as well as the standards expected at elite levels of umpiring in this area.

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### 3.2 PERSONAL APPEARANCE

Just as players are expected to show up for a match in clean, smart clothing, so are umpires. Appearance matters. Umpires who take pride in their physical appearance will inspire confidence that they also care about the technical aspects of their job. Equally, an umpire who does not look professional may create doubt in a player's mind as to the attitude the umpire brings to all aspects of the job.

Anything an umpire can do to help gain the respect and confidence of players is worthwhile. Moreover, smartly presented technical officials add to the perception of a professional event, especially in the case of umpires who are highly visible when on the court.

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### 3.3 UMPIRE UNIFORMS

Umpires should keep in mind the following best practices regarding uniforms at continental-level tournaments and higher:

- When uniforms are provided by the organisers of a tournament, the umpires should wear them, unless otherwise instructed by the referee.
- If there are different colours of uniforms (for example, shirts or trousers), the umpires should coordinate among themselves which colours will be worn the following day to ensure consistent presentation, unless otherwise advised by the referee.
- In all cases, umpires should bring their "standard" uniform with them (black pants/skirt, black collared shirt with pocket, black socks, black shoes). This can come in handy if, for example, there is a problem with the size of the uniforms, or if no uniforms are provided.
- Umpires should not use jeans when officiating (this includes black and/or designer jeans).
- Umpires at this level should generally not be acting in other roles at a tournament (for example, as team officials or technical delegates), but if this cannot be avoided, they should change out of their umpire uniforms when performing any non-umpire functions.

- Umpires should remember that when wearing their uniforms they are readily identifiable as technical officials – even when off court or off duty and outside the tournament venue. As such, it is important to be especially mindful of one's conduct any time an umpire uniform is being worn. When off duty, consideration should also be given as to the clothing worn:

*"Technical Officials Code of Conduct 4.9. Wear the assigned Technical Official clothing at all times when on duty at the Tournament. When off duty, wear appropriate attire."*

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### 3.4 DEMEANOUR

Established elite-level umpires have refined their presentation skills in matches such that they project the following three key characteristics.

- **Calm Authority:** Through everything umpires do (speech and action), they can appear relaxed while leaving no doubt that they are in control of everything that is happening on and around the court. This allows the players to fully focus on the match.
- **Approachability:** In addition to overseeing the match and communicating its progress to spectators, the umpire is there to look out for the players' interests. Therefore, during a match, players need to feel comfortable in approaching the umpire should the need arise. This might include a question to clarify why a fault or let has been called, or a personal unforeseen circumstance that may have occurred. An umpire who appears cold and stern is good for neither the players (who may feel intimidated about approaching the umpire with a legitimate concern) nor the professional presentation of the match.
- **Confidence:** No matter how tense a high-profile match might be or how nervous umpires might be feeling inside, outwardly they should convey quiet confidence, look alert, and appear as if they are comfortable and enjoying being part of a memorable match. This air of confidence is conveyed in multiple ways – starting from the way they march onto court, to how they sit in the umpire chair, in the tone and style of announcements, and through prompt and firm decision making.



As noted in Section 3.3, umpires should be aware that they will likely still be regarded as "umpires" by participants, spectators and other stakeholders when they are off court, so professional conduct is expected at all times at tournaments. Observation by a player of questionable behaviour of an off-duty umpire, for example, might raise a question in the player's mind as to whether this may carry over into execution of the umpire's subsequent on-court duties. Accordingly, umpires should refrain from excessively loud behaviour, rude language, and heavy drinking during social events while attending tournaments. They are ambassadors of the sport and must behave as such.

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### 3.5 POSTURE

Umpires are highly visible when sitting in the umpire chair, and so how umpires sit and carry themselves during matches is an important element of the professional presentation of a match. All umpires, at any level of tournament, should adhere to the following best practices, which after a few matches will become second nature and not require conscious effort:

- The umpire should sit upright in the umpire chair without slouching.
- The umpire's legs should be close together. An umpire wearing a skirt may cross her legs at the ankles.
- The umpire's hands should be in a comfortable, natural position. Commonly, the hands are placed with palms facing down on the legs above the knees, or on the hinged writing platform if applicable, but this is not a requirement. It is not necessary that every umpire at a tournament adopt the same placement of their hands, rather it is more important that the position adopted by each umpire looks natural rather than forced or rigid.
- During a rally, the umpire should avoid any unnecessary movements that attract attention, such as regularly adjusting one's glasses with a finger. An exception, of course, is head movement as needed during the rally (see below).
- During rallies, small movements of the head are expected in following the shuttle, but umpires should avoid exaggerated head movements from side to side (or up and down). While umpires must, of course, track the shuttle carefully until it ceases to be in play, they should utilise their peripheral vision as much as possible to do this. Large movements of the head are both distracting and, in a fast-paced match, hinder the ability to focus in on the net during a tight front-court exchange to watch for possible infractions (racket or clothing touching the net, point of contact of the shuttle on the opponent's side of the net, or obstruction).
- The above considerations also apply to service judges. In particular, service judges should sit upright with hands in a natural position, and track the shuttle during a rally in the same fashion as described above for the umpire. While the shuttle is in play, the service judge should avoid handling the tube of shuttles to get the next change of shuttle ready; this should be done between rallies.



## 3.6 VOICE

The most obvious way that umpires impact the presentation of matches is the way they use their voice to communicate the score progression and other standard announcements. There are many aspects of the voice that, when combined, result in announcements that are easy on the ears, sound professional, do not attract undue attention, and which can even add to the enjoyment of a match from a spectator's point of view:

- **Volume:** Elite-level umpires have mastered the ability to project the voice effectively without shouting. Using the diaphragm instead of the throat is key. A well-projected voice carries adequately in modest-sized arenas without sounding forced, whereas umpire announcements which border on shouting are unappealing and hard on the ears. It also makes the umpire vulnerable to going hoarse over the course of a long, multi-day tournament.
- **Pitch/Tone:** Clearly there is limited scope for umpires to change the fundamentals around the pitch and tone of their natural voice. The most dedicated umpires, though, will commit to doing what they can to optimise their voice in these areas. In general, based on the acoustics of most badminton venues, a voice that is naturally resonant and lower in pitch is more suitable for badminton umpiring than one that sounds "tinny" or is higher in pitch.

- **Inflection:** This is one aspect of an umpire's voice in which some individuality can be present and indeed is encouraged. Inflection can make the voice sounds interesting and pleasing to the ear, as long as it is not exaggerated or drawing unnecessary attention. With appropriate inflection, umpires' announcements sound more natural rather than robotic.
  - **Pace:** Less experienced umpires tend to rush their announcements – especially the introduction of players at the start of a match. As umpires progress and gain experience, particular attention should be paid to this aspect of their speech. Every word spoken should be clearly enunciated such that words do not slur together.
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### 3.7 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The one time in every match where the umpire is close to being the centre of attention is the pre-match announcement introducing the players to the spectators and potentially a TV audience. Professional presentation is therefore highly visible during this and, to a lesser extent, the other extended announcements that the umpire makes during a match. These announcements are the first example we will address regarding “standardisation”. No matter the level of tournament or where in the world the tournament is taking place, the vocabulary used in these announcements should be identical from umpire to umpire, but also the timing and style should be highly uniform as described in Table 3.1.

ANNOUNCEMENT	WHEN TO START	VOCABULARY	POINTS TO REMEMBER
<b>Start of match</b>	<p>Once the players are on court, have finished any practice serves, and the server and receiver are in their respective service courts ready to play.</p> <p>The announcement should not be started if an umpire on another court is making a pre-match or end-of-match announcement, or if there is a public announcement being made over a loudspeaker.</p>	<p>Singles match example:</p> <p>“Ladies and Gentleman” – Pause – “On my right, X, [Member Association]” – Pause – “and on my left, Y, [Member Association]” – Pause.</p> <p>“[X or Y] to serve, love all” – Pause – “Play”.</p> <p>Doubles match example:</p> <p>See video <b>UMP2V2: Pre-match announcement in doubles</b></p>	<p>Speak slowly and clearly when introducing the players.</p> <p>Know the names of the players when announcing (without looking at the scoring device).</p> <p>Point towards the players on each side when introducing them, with the appropriate arm extended outwards and slightly downwards.</p> <p>Insert small pauses (less than half a second each) into the announcement as indicated.</p> <p>When announcements involve doubles partners, always use “and” between their names.</p> <p>As the introductory announcement varies for Team Tournaments, be sure to review this as applicable.</p> <p>During the pause before announcing “Play”, press the “Play” button, if electronic scoring is being used.</p>

ANNOUNCEMENT	WHEN TO START	VOCABULARY	POINTS TO REMEMBER
			The call of "Play" is an instruction to players that the match is to start and not an announcement as such.
<b>Mid-game interval</b>	When the appropriate rally or an IRS challenge is decided.  If there is intense cheering, the umpire may wait a few seconds for the cheers to subside a bit before making the announcement.	"11-8, interval."  <i>And in a third game, or a match of one game:</i>  "Change ends."	The interval starts the instant the rally or an IRS challenge is decided, so the umpire should click the score of the electronic scoring device at this moment (or start his/her stopwatch, in the case that electronic scoring is not being used).
<b>End of game</b>	After any applause has subsided.	"First game won by X, 21-18."  <i>And in the case of a second game that does not end the match:</i>  "One game all."	The umpire must first call "Game" immediately after the last rally has been decided (except if there is a challenge or if the umpire overrules a line judge's call). If electronic scoring is not in use, the umpire should start his/her stopwatch at this moment.
<b>Start of second (or third) game</b>	EITHER when the players are back on court and ready to play, if the maximum interval time has not yet been reached (unless the full interval time is mandatory),  OR  as the maximum interval time is approaching (approximately 10 seconds before), if the players are not yet in position to play.	"Second game, love all, play"  (or "Final game, love all, play").	See Section 6.5 for how to deal with a player who is late in returning to court after an interval.
<b>End of match</b>	After any applause has subsided and the players have shaken hands with the umpire and service judge.	"Match won by X, 21-18, 20-22, 21-13."	The umpire must first call "Game" immediately after the final rally has been decided (except if there is a challenge or if the umpire overrules a line judge's call). This is the official ending time of the match.

**Table 3.1. Standardisation of Umpire Announcements**

## 3.8 DECISION MAKING

Umpires will generally have to make numerous decisions in addition to the routine calling of the score and standardised announcements described in the previous section. Presentation is enhanced when umpire decisions are made in a way which aligns with the following considerations:

- When the umpire calls “Fault” or “Let”, it should be loud enough that all players on the court hear it and immediately cease the rally.

[See video **UMP2V3: Firm and confident call of “Fault”**]

- A call of “Fault” or “Let” should be made immediately when it occurs. If the umpire delays in making the call, players may doubt that the umpire was sure of the decision, or suspect that the umpire was influenced by how an opponent reacted. If an umpire is unsure as to whether a fault has occurred, no call should be made and play allowed to continue (ITTO 6.8).

- A call of “Fault” or “Let” should be made in a confident tone. If a player is uncertain whether a fault has occurred, then hearing a loud, immediate and confident call from the umpire will help put aside any doubts the player may have about the correctness of the decision.



- If a player seeks an explanation from the umpire around a decision (for example, where there was an infraction during a net exchange), the umpire should answer the player politely and succinctly. The aim is to have the player understand and accept the decision (even if not necessarily agreeing with it), and to resume play as quickly as possible. Any such dialog must therefore be short in duration and to the degree possible use the standardised umpire vocabulary.
- When helping a player understand what a decision was or why it was made, the umpire microphone, if used, should be left on, so the wider audience also hears the explanation. Only if an umpire needs to convey something private or personal to a player should the microphone be covered.
- If an umpire makes a decision in error, then the correct action is to immediately admit it, apologise, and correct it. An example would be if an umpire ends a rally by erroneously calling “Fault” when it is actually a let to be played. All human beings make mistakes and players are generally respectful and understanding when an umpire admits to an occasional error.
- If a player questions a decision on a point of fact (for example, a line call or a double hit) and the umpire is unable to resolve the dispute and resume the match within a short time, it might be prudent to consider calling for the referee. Although the referee has no jurisdiction to change a decision made on a point of fact, calling the referee to court can sometimes be the quickest way to defuse tensions and get the match back on track.

### 3.9 SUMMARY

This section has focused on how umpires can enhance the professional presentation of a tournament. This is achieved by the way umpires:

- present themselves (personal appearance and clothing),
- act (demeanor, posture in chair, general body language),
- communicate (how they talk to the players), and
- use their voices (loudness, tone, inflection).

An umpire's audible style is highly important, and most elite umpires over the years have refined the way they speak on court to improve the professionalism of their work. Umpires aspiring to advance to international grades are highly encouraged to play back commercial recordings of themselves umpiring (or even recordings in general conversation), as it can be surprising how different one's own voice sounds compared to one's perception of it. It is important to solicit as much honest feedback from peers as possible as regarding one's voice, and the most dedicated aspiring international umpires may even consider engaging a voice coach.

The importance of professional presentation in an umpire's work cannot be over-emphasised. In general, the higher the grade to which an umpire advances, the more it will be assumed that the umpire is competent in the technical skills and knowledge that the job entails. At more advanced levels, more attention during appraisals and assessments is devoted to the softer skills around presentation, teamwork, and attitude. Umpires who excel in these areas, in addition to having a sound technical basis, will have a greater chance of officiating at the highest international levels of the sport.



## SECTION 4. STANDARDISATION ASPECTS

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

These days, a spectator watching any badminton match on TV and paying attention to the umpire should notice how consistent the vocabulary is from umpire to umpire and tournament to tournament. Along the same lines, an official attending an umpire workshop at the national or continental level should find that a large percentage of the time is spent discussing uniform ways to handle scenarios that might happen during a match. Such is the current emphasis on “standardisation” for officials (umpires, referees, line judges) at the higher levels of the game.

The benefits of this standardisation are obvious. For players, it means they can know what to expect when a situation arises that is not black and white, but instead requires interpretation or flexible judgement on the part of the umpire. For example, they can have confidence that one umpire will apply the same standard as another when it comes to enforcing continuous play. Also, if a match is being broadcast on TV or the Internet, standardisation adds to the professionalism of the sport when it is seen that an incident happening in a tournament in one country is handled by the umpire in the same way as a similar situation in a match played on the opposite side of the world.

Examples of standardised approaches to umpiring occur throughout this manual. This section discusses some commonly occurring standardisation topics, along with recommended guidelines for umpires to follow.

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### 4.2 MARCH-ON

As discussed in Section 3, presentation of the sport is increasingly important in this media age, and the march-on of players and officials is a prime way in which the professionalism of a tournament can be highlighted. In contrast to most grassroots and local tournaments, where the umpire (and service judge and line judges as applicable) meets the players on the court after the match control announcement, at higher-level tournaments a more formal march-on is often implemented.

There are several common variations of the formal march-on, but each is preceded by the umpire meeting the players and other officials for the match at the designated assembly point. At larger tournaments, the umpires and line judges will often rehearse the march-on before the tournament starts. As the configuration of the courts changes with the progression of the tournament, at a minimum, umpires can expect the referees to have briefed them on the entrance and exit points to use for each court.

The umpire has the following responsibilities at the assembly point:

- Ensure that the service judge is present and has shuttles (unless shuttle control is responsible for delivering shuttles to the court).
- Ensure that the correct number of line judges and court attendants (moppers), if applicable, are present.
- Introduce yourself to the players, and check the names on the scoresheet, which is also a good way for the umpire to get the correct pronunciation of the players’ names. Conduct the clothing inspection along with any follow-up actions required (see Section 8.2).
- Ensure all mobile phones are switched off (although technical officials are not advised to bring their mobile phones on court).
- Attach your microphone if one is to be used (unless it is left on the umpire chair).

- Line up at the appropriate time, and in the specified order of officials and players.
- Inform the assembly-point volunteer, or signal to match control as directed, that the match is ready to be called.

Apart from a very brief introduction and the clothing check, dialog at the assembly point between the umpire and players should be kept to a minimum, unless initiated by a player. This is because just before the match is called onto court, a player's full focus should rightly be on the match ahead rather than being distracted by idle chit-chat with the officials.

Once cued by the assembly-point volunteer and/or by match control, the march-on can get underway. There are several common variations, as described below (Table 4.1).



MARCH-ON STYLE	SEQUENCE	DESCRIPTION
<b>Players &amp; Officials Together to Umpire Chair</b>	Umpire – Players – Service Judge – Line Judges – Court Attendants (if applicable)  <i>* Note: The player(s) appearing on the left side of the scoresheet generally go(es) first, followed by the opponent(s).</i>	This is the most common march-on. Everyone marches on together, with the line judges (and court attendants, if applicable) peeling off to their designated positions, and the umpire, service judge and players proceeding towards the umpire chair. The umpire and service judge stand adjacent to the umpire chair on the singles sideline while the players put their bags down and come over to shake hands before the toss.
<b>Players &amp; Officials Together to Net</b>	Umpire – Players – Service Judge – Line Judges – Court Attendants (if applicable)	Sometimes used at the latter stages (semi-finals and finals) of bigger tournaments. March-on is as above, except that the umpire, service judge and players line up along the net (centred) for individual introduction to the spectators.
<b>Officials First, Players Second</b>	1. Officials 2. Players (either together or one side at a time)	This is an effective way to showcase the players, by having them walk onto court (either separately or together) after the officials have marched on and taken their positions (either on the umpire chair sideline or along the net).

**Table 4.1. Common March-On Procedures**

Within each of the march-on styles above, variations are possible. For example, the line judges are sometimes asked to march on ahead of the other officials and players.

Another march-on style occasionally seen is where the players march onto the court first (with or without the line judges already present), followed by the umpire and service judge. This approach is not

recommended, as it draws unnecessary attention to the officials rather than to the players (who should always be the priority). Furthermore, it can be awkward for the players, who are waiting on the court unsure what to do or where to stand until the umpire and service judge arrive. In the end, however, this is the referee's decision, and the umpire simply needs to be aware of which march-on style will be implemented.

Whichever style of march-on is used, the umpire is usually at the head of the procession and thus sets the pace for those following behind. The umpire should walk confidently and with purpose, at a moderate pace such that no-one has difficulty keeping up. It is important to be sure to enter the court at the correct entrance point, as instructed at the umpire briefing. The umpire should proceed to the designated position on the court, standing up straight (with hands at the sides or clasped in front) and looking straight ahead (not turning around or looking to the side) until the players have arrived for the coin toss. The service judge should adopt the same stance.



### 4.3 THE TOSS

The conducting of the coin toss is another aspect of presentation that has become highly standardised in recent years. It is almost always performed in the exact same position on the court, in the following way (Scheme 4.1).

1. While waiting for the players to join, the umpire stands on the umpire chair side of the court, at the end of the court specified by the referee (based on spectator and TV camera considerations), at the intersection of the singles sideline with the short service line.
2. The service judge stands next to the umpire, also on the singles sideline and closer to the net.
3. When the players arrive, the umpire and service judge shake hands with each of them. The umpire ensures that the players stand in front of and perpendicular to the umpire and service judge, with each side facing a different end of the court.
4. After shaking hands, the service judge walks along the singles sideline past the umpire chair to the other side of the net and then walks along the net to the service judge chair. The service judge stands in front of the chair holding one (singles) or two (doubles) warm-up shuttles.
5. Concurrent with (4), the umpire takes one step forward onto the court and tosses a coin. At higher-level tournaments, and especially with TV coverage, a specific coin may be required to be used.

6. The umpire should catch the coin on the palm of the hand and extend the palm outwards and slightly downwards so to be easily visible to the players. If the coin toss is being captured by a TV camera, the extended hand with the coin showing should be held long enough for the benefit of TV camera.
7. The umpire then establishes which player is serving first, and in the case of doubles, which is receiving first, as well as on which end of the court each side will start. (Note: This should be noted on the paper scoresheet, if applicable, but not until the umpire is in the chair.)
8. The players walk to the service judge to collect the warm-up shuttle(s). In doubles, the service judge should not give a warm-up shuttle to either side before the umpire has concluded the toss formalities.
9. Concurrent with (8), the umpire gets into the umpire chair without delay.
10. Once the umpire is seated, the service judge sits down.

#### **Scheme 4.1. Standardised Procedure for the Coin Toss**

For the finals of top tournaments, arrangements are occasionally made for a VIP to toss the coin. In this case, the umpire's responsibility is to oversee this procedure, ensuring that the VIP knows where to stand, as well as how and when to conduct the toss.



## 4.4 WARM-UP AND READY TO PLAY

Umpires learn in basic training that the warm-up time is two minutes, but there may be less consensus if umpires are surveyed as to when exactly they believe the warm-up starts and when it ends. This is a simple case of standardisation as stated in the ITTO:

*"ITTO 5.2.2.1. ...Unless instructed otherwise by the referee, the two-minute warm-up starts when the umpire sits in the chair and ends with the calling of "Play" to start the match."*

As such, the start of the warm-up period is unambiguous – the umpire should start the clock upon sitting down in the umpire chair. To time the warm-up and the duration of other intervals, umpires should use the timer associated with LiveScore (if electronic scoring is being used), which allows them to pay greater attention to what is happening on the court. If electronic scoring is not in use, umpires should use their personal stopwatches, which should be on their wrists rather than hanging around their necks.



The next key point, then, is when the umpire should end the warm-up period by calling "Ready to play". Clearly this cannot be after two minutes have passed, because by the time the players have made their final preparations at the side of the court, walked over to get a new shuttle from the service judge, and got into position ready to play, more than two minutes will have elapsed. This would be inconsistent with the ITTO stated above. **The recommended practice is instead for the umpire to call "Ready to play" at 90 seconds of the two-minute warm-up period, unless instructed otherwise by the referee.**

If the above procedure is followed, when the players are in their respective service courts ready to start and the umpire has made the introductions, the calling of "Love all, play" will occur close to the targeted two minutes. It is not essential that this happens at exactly two minutes. There is no need for the umpire to rush the players when they are

at the side of the court after the call of "Ready to play", as it is important that each player is fully ready and comfortable to start the match. However, a player who is very tardy in getting into position on court should be discreetly moved along.

There is one exception to the above timing. If there is TV coverage, the referee may instruct the umpires not to call "Ready to play" until a full two minutes of hitting has elapsed. This may be needed in order to allow enough time for the TV commentators to talk through the players' bios and tournament results while they are warming up. Similarly, the umpire may have to wait for a cue from a TV assistant before starting the pre-match announcement. This is simply a matter of following the referee instructions in this area.

## 4.5 MARCH-OFF

The march-off at the end of the match is precisely defined, just as is the march-on. The following sequence of steps at the end of a match is now highly standardised (Scheme 4.2).

1. Final rally ends, umpire calls "Game".
2. Service judge stands up.

3. Players shake hands with each other and with umpire and service judge.
4. Umpire announces the result of the match.
5. The service judge collects the last shuttle used and places it in the shuttle bin (unless pre-instructed that shuttle control will perform this duty).
6. The service judge walks along the net to the umpire chair on the opposite side of the court to which the march-off will occur.
7. At the same time as (5) and (6), the umpire steps down from the umpire chair. If a paper scoresheet is used, the finish time of the match should be noted immediately, but the remaining steps to complete the scoresheet by the umpire should be done off court.
8. The service judge assists in gathering the players with their belongings, ready to march off.
9. The umpire leads the march-off through the designated exit point and to the mixed zone (if applicable).

#### **Scheme 4.2. Standardised Procedure for the March-Off**



Once the march-off has concluded and the umpire has delivered the players to the mixed zone (if applicable), the umpire and service judge should return to their designated areas. In the case of paper scoresheets, the umpire should complete the paperwork and then return the signed scoresheet without delay to match control. If electronic scoring was used, there is no need to print out the scoresheet unless an incident happened that the referee will need to report after the tournament, such as a clothing violation that could not be rectified, a warning or fault for misconduct (yellow or red card), or an injury resulting in retirement. Umpires should bear in mind that calling the referee onto court in the case of an injury not resulting in retirement (or other incident that does not require reporting after the tournament) does not warrant the printing of the electronic scoresheet after the match unless instructed otherwise by the referee.

When off court, umpires should stay in their specified area until their next assignment. If an umpire needs to leave for more than a few minutes, the umpire coordinator or match control must be informed as appropriate.

## 4.6 VOCABULARY

Umpire announcements are probably the most visible example of standardisation. By the time an umpire reaches a national grade, the basic vocabulary should be second nature. Use of the correct vocabulary is essential for any aspiring umpire, including:

- routine announcements;
- acknowledging a service fault called by a service judge;
- explaining the reason for issuing a warning or fault for misconduct.

There is no excuse for not being proficient in this area, as almost all the phrases that an umpire will ever need to use are clearly specified on the [Statutes](#) page of the BWF website. All umpires should refresh their knowledge by rereading this Appendix from time to time.

The list of standard vocabulary provided, however, should not be considered exhaustive. When talking to players during a match, it is OK for the umpire to deviate from the given phrases, as the important thing is to convey the message as simply and as concisely as possible. However, when speaking to players whose command of English is limited, umpires should try to stick to the simple phrases listed in the vocabulary document.

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## 4.7 CONTINUOUS PLAY

Delays during a match are a serious problem in badminton. They are unappealing to spectators, who become frustrated when a match drags on slowly, and more often than not, one of the sides becomes disadvantaged by the opponent's delaying tactics. Moreover, this is against the Laws of Badminton:

*"16.1. Play shall be continuous from the first service until the match is concluded ..."*

It is the umpire's responsibility to ensure that play in a match is continuous, and enforcement of this requirement has become a major emphasis at higher levels of the sport in recent years.

The umpire needs to be alert for the many ways in which a player can try to gain an advantage through slow play. Some examples are shown in Table 4.2, along with how the umpire might respond.

DELAYING TACTIC	POSSIBLE RESPONSE OF UMPIRE
Not returning the shuttle promptly at the end of a rally.	"Return the shuttle."
Extended walking around the court instead of getting into position to start the next rally.	"Get ready quicker."
Talking to a coach at the back of the court for an extended period instead of getting ready to play.	"[Player Name], back on court."
Getting into position quickly enough to receive the next serve but then backing away again.	"No delay."
Requesting a change of shuttle just to buy extra rest time between rallies.	"Do not change the shuttle."
Requesting a towel/drinks break to disrupt the rhythm of the opponent.	"No, play on."

DELAYING TACTIC	POSSIBLE RESPONSE OF UMPIRE
Requesting the court to be mopped when there is no obvious moisture present.	"Use your foot to wipe the court." [See video <b>UMP2V4: Instruction to use foot instead of mopping</b> ]
Unnecessary diving on the court to prompt the need for mopping.	"Do not fall intentionally."
Throwing sweat on the court to prompt the need for mopping.	"No sweat throwing."
Feigning an injury.	Call for the referee to come on court and explain your suspicion to the referee (with the microphone covered).

**Table 4.2. Common Delaying Tactics and Possible Umpire Responses**

This is a lot for umpires to keep an eye on, and it is an area where their "feel for the game" can prove beneficial. The more experience umpires have, the more they will "sense" when a player is getting to the point to potentially use delaying tactics. Also, the better their instincts will be, for example, when deciding whether a towelling request is genuine and should be granted or if the player is just trying to break the opponent's momentum, meaning the request should be refused.

A common question that arises is how much time is too much between one rally ending and the next rally starting, assuming there is no change of shuttle and no extended towelling break. The answer is that there is no fixed time. Although this may seem to go against the spirit of standardisation, it reflects the fact that there are several factors the umpire needs to consider in every instance, such as:

- the length of the preceding rally (a service return into the net or a 70-shot marathon);
- the situation of the match (in very tight score lines towards the end of the game, it is natural for the pace to slow a bit as the pressure mounts, and a few extra seconds between rallies can be appropriate).

The most important consideration that the umpire should always bear in mind is whether one of the sides is being disadvantaged. However, this does not mean that an unreasonably long time between points is acceptable if the umpire perceives that both players are comfortable with it – it is still the umpire's job to ensure that play is continuous.

Deciding whether to grant a towel or drinks break is a decision that an umpire officiating in an international tournament will likely have to make numerous times in a match. First, it is important to remember that there are two kinds of breaks at the side of the court (excluding intervals) as described in the ITTO.

*"ITTO 5.10.3. During a game, if play is not unduly held up, the players may be allowed to have:*

*5.10.3.1. A quick towel only; or*

*5.10.3.2. A towel and drink, at the discretion of the umpire."*

In the first category, the player does **not** need to get the umpire's permission to go to the side of a court immediately after a rally has ended to wipe off sweat if this is done quickly and the player returns to court right away. However, if the player lingers for a more extended towelling or picks up a water bottle, the umpire should usher the player back onto court and remind the player that such an action requires the umpire's permission. Similarly, the umpire should intervene if a player delays in initiating this quick towelling after the rally ends and the opponent is getting into position ready to restart.

[See video **UMP2V5: Player denied quick towel break as not immediate**]

When a player wants a longer towelling and/or drinks break, as in ITTO 5.10.3.2 above, the umpire's permission is needed. The umpire should take into account the following factors when deciding whether to grant the request:

- How long has it been since the last such break or since the last interval?
- Is the next interval fast approaching? For example, if the score is 10-9 there will be an opportunity for the players to towel/drink coming very shortly.
- Are the court attendants required on the court at this moment to wipe the court (making the impact of a towel/drinks break less)?
- Is the player making the request on a run of losing points, meaning it may just be an attempt to disrupt the opponent's momentum?
- Has it been a long and gruelling rally (or even several)?
- How are the playing conditions? In an excessively hot and humid environment, the umpire may be more sympathetic to a towelling request than a match played in a comfortable, climate-controlled arena.



The umpire needs to instantaneously consider all of the above factors in making the decision. It is important to keep in mind that either side, serving or receiving, can request a towelling/drinks break. Experienced umpires will find that they are instinctively able to sense that a player may be about to make a request for a break before it happens, which gives them a few seconds to think through how they are going to respond. Of course, this feel for the game only comes with experience.

By being proactive in ensuring continuous play, umpires are able to make a positive contribution to the flow of the match. One way this can be achieved is for the umpire to act without delay at the end of the rally. When it is obvious that court mopping will be needed, the umpire can signal for the court attendants to come on and mop the court **before** waiting for the players to ask and before announcing the score.

[See video **UMP2V6: Umpire getting mopper on court as soon as rally ends**]

A scenario where a player's continual attempts to delay the game require strategic intervention from the umpire will be discussed in greater detail in Section 6.3.

Finally, umpires should be aware that the practice of permitting players a few warm-up hits after changing rackets between rallies is no longer permitted. This was previously considered a courtesy, but was subject to abuse with players able to buy a few additional seconds of rest time between rallies. On a related note, the umpire should not refuse a player's request to change rackets, even if there is nothing visibly wrong with the one being used, as long as the request is made immediately after the rally ends.

## 4.8 CHANGING SHUTTLES

Another common question is when and how much should an umpire get involved when the players wish to change the shuttle. This is another area in which consistency is being sought from one umpire to another.

The common scenarios around change-of-shuttle requests and the expected actions of the umpire are summarised in Table 4.3.

SHUTTLE-CHANGE SCENARIO	EXPECTED ACTION OF UMPIRE	NOTES
<b>Both sides wish to change the shuttle for wear-and-tear.</b>	A quick acknowledgement is all that is required from the umpire, typically extending a hand towards the service judge.	If the players proceed towards the service judge to obtain a new shuttle without any look towards the umpire, they should be reminded that the umpire's consent is needed.  The service judge should not exchange shuttles before acknowledgement from the umpire is given.
<b>The sides cannot agree on changing the shuttle for wear-and-tear.</b>	The umpire needs to quickly decide whether to grant the request or not. This will depend on whether the shuttle's condition has genuinely deteriorated such that changing it makes sense, or the requesting side is just trying to gain rest time and break the momentum of the opponent(s). The player should be instructed to hold the shuttle up towards the umpire (from the player's current position on the court), and the umpire then makes a quick yes or no decision.	Either side, serving or receiving, can make a request to change the shuttle.  Umpires should NOT allow players to approach with the shuttle or to hand it over – by doing so the players may achieve the goal of buying a few extra seconds of rest. Umpires should make their decisions quickly and firmly.  After making a decision, umpires should NOT engage in any discussion with the player(s) they sided against. The match must resume without delay (after the shuttle is changed, if that is the decision).
<b>One side wishes to change the shuttle for speed.</b>	Assuming the shuttles have been pre-tested, in normal circumstances the umpire would deny the request and instruct the players to continue play.	Normally this request would come from a player who is losing heavily.  The umpire should not permit the players to test the shuttles.  In exceptional circumstances, if the umpire's observations are consistent with the player's protestations, the referee could be called.
<b>Both sides wish to change the shuttle for speed.</b>	The umpire should call the referee immediately.	As stated by ITTO 5.13.3, the referee may ask the umpire's opinion on the shuttles currently being used, and will decide whether to change to a different speed.

SHUTTLE-CHANGE SCENARIO	EXPECTED ACTION OF UMPIRE	NOTES
<b>The umpire observes that a player is interfering with the shuttle between rallies.</b>	<p>The umpire should instruct the players to change the shuttle.</p> <p>The umpire should call the offending player over and firmly state, "You must not interfere with the speed of the shuttle". If the offence is repeated, the umpire will need to consider a warning or fault for misconduct.</p>	The service judge should notify the umpire if a player is observed interfering with the shuttle out of the line of sight of the umpire.
<b>A player has the shuttle in hand when going to the side of the court for a towelling/drinks break or during an interval.</b>	<p>The umpire should instruct the player to leave the shuttle on court.</p> <p>If a player did have the shuttle in hand during any break, the umpire should instruct the players to change the shuttle before play is resumed.</p>	<p>This is to prevent accumulation of sweat on the shuttle which could potentially change its speed.</p> <p>[See video <b>UMP2V7: Player instructed to leave shuttle on court</b>]</p>

**Table 4.3. Expected Umpire Actions around Change-of-Shuttle Requests**

The more experience umpires have, the more reliable their instincts will be in making shuttle-change decisions when the players are in disagreement. As stated above, the key point in such situations is for umpires to take a quick decision (without having the shuttle brought over to them) and have the decision executed without any further discussion. The willingness of the unsuccessful player(s) to accept these shuttle-change decisions can be an indication of the amount of respect that the umpire enjoys.

In addition to handing out new shuttles, the service judge has the responsibility of briefly and discreetly inspecting each old shuttle discarded. If it is felt that the shuttles are being changed unnecessarily, the service judge should bring this to the attention of the umpire as part of their subtle communication, rather than waiting until the next interval. If warranted, the umpire can mention the observation off-court to the referee at the end of the match.

## 4.9 CALLING OF “FAULT”

Broadly speaking, an umpire calls “Fault” to stop a rally in progress when an infraction has occurred (for example, a player hitting the net, or the shuttle glancing off a player’s racket before continuing backwards and landing near a boundary line).

Whenever an umpire calls “Fault”, it should be done loudly and with conviction, such that it is clearly heard and conveys confidence to the players in the umpire’s decision. A tentative call may create doubt in the player’s mind as to whether the umpire was really sure of the call.

[See video **UMP2V8: Clear and confident call of “Fault”**]

Sometimes the call of “Fault” is made by the umpire primarily to add clarity for spectators. There is a push to standardise when these clarifying calls are made -- in particular to avoid calling “Fault” in situations that are quite obvious. Such unnecessary calls can be annoying and/or cause confusion to those watching in the arena and on TV, yet they are still seen to occur with regularity by some international-grade officials.

In particular, umpires should NOT call "Fault" when:

- The shuttle is hit into the net and starts to fall.
- The shuttle hits a player's body and starts to fall downwards towards the surface of the court.
- The shuttle glances off a player's racket and moves forwards towards the net but does not reach the net.
- The shuttle glances off a player's racket sideways and lands well outside the sideline of the court.

[See video **UMP2V9: Obvious fault (no call needed) – shuttle flies sideways off racket**]

Of course, as taught in the Level 1 Umpires' Manual, there are scenarios in which the umpire *must* always call "Fault" for the purpose of adding clarity in an end-of-rally scenario. Examples include:

- when a shuttle comes off a player's racket or clothing and is hit by a partner or continues backwards and lands close to or beyond the baseline or sideline,
- when a player lunges for a shuttle near a sideline and the shuttle touches the racket before landing close to the line.

[See video **UMP2V10: Fault call (for clarification) – shuttle glances off racket, continues backwards**]

[See video **UMP2V11: Fault call (for clarification) – shuttle glances off racket near sideline**]

This is an example of an umpiring decision based on a "point of fact". A player may disagree with the decision, but it is the umpire's judgement alone that matters, and the umpire should attempt to convey this point to the arguing player in case of dispute. In exceptional circumstances, the umpire may consider asking the player called (or not called) for the shuttle touching their racket or clothing whether they felt any contact.

There is no recourse for the referee to change the umpire's decision, so the only time the referee should be called onto court is in the case of an extended discussion in which the umpire is unsuccessful in persuading a player to resume play. Even then, it would only be for the referee to help end the impasse and get the match back on track.

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## 4.10 OBSTRUCTION

The "Obstruction" Law is perhaps the one that causes the most discussion between umpires about exactly what it means and how it should be interpreted. Ask 10 top-level umpires from around the world the criteria under which they would call this type of fault and you might be surprised by the diversity of answers you get. There is clearly a need for greater standardisation around the interpretation of this law.

Obstruction is described in Law 13.4.4:

*"13.4.4. It shall be a "fault" if, in play, a player obstructs an opponent, i.e. prevents an opponent from making a legal stroke where the shuttle is followed over the net".*

The correct interpretation is as follows for a rally in which Players A and B are engaged in a tight net exchange:

*Supposing that Player A plays a legal stroke in which the shuttle is struck on his or her own side of the net, and the follow-through takes the racket head over the net into Player B's court space, if Player B interferes with the completion of Player A's stroke, it is a "Fault for Obstruction" on Player B (point awarded to Player A).*

In such a scenario, what the umpire has to decide is whether player B has impeded the stroke of Player A.

The clearest-cut case is one in which there is an actual clash of rackets during a net exchange. Assuming that the shot which carried the player's racket over the net into the opponent's court space was legal (notably that the initial point of contact with the shuttle was on the player's own side of the net), then since the rackets clashed, the completion of the stroke was clearly hindered and so "Fault" for obstruction should be called. This should be a relatively easy call for the umpire to make.

More commonly, though, the players' rackets only come close to each other during the net exchange rather than physically clashing, and the umpire's decision then becomes more difficult. Umpires should bear in mind that the action of Player B, in the above example, holding the racket above the net (on his or her own side of the net) to try and block the shuttle as Player A makes a shot is not, *in and of itself*, grounds for obstruction.

[See video **UMP2V12: Net play (no fault for obstruction)**]

In order to call a fault for obstruction, continuing with the above example, the umpire must be convinced that Player B's racket impeded Player A's shot or altered how it would otherwise have been played. The umpire should mentally replay the net exchange and make a judgement as to whether Player A was able to play the shot as naturally intended, or if it was adjusted in order to avoid making contact with Player B's raised racket. If the umpire is convinced that Player A had to adjust the shot, then "Fault" should be called. If the umpire is unsure, then "Fault" should not be called.



[See video **UMP2V13: Player obstructs opponent's shot**]

On paper, this sounds relatively straightforward, but as any umpire can attest, in real time it is far from it. During a net exchange, things are moving fast and obstruction is only one of several infractions that the umpire may have to consider simultaneously, along with whether the initial point of contact was on the player's own side of the net or whether the player hit the net.

[See video **UMP2V14: Player hits shuttle on opponent's side of net**]

[See video **UMP2V15: Player hits net with racket**]

Obstruction is probably one of the most difficult calls for an umpire to make, in part because it often requires a judgment rather than being black-and-white as many other faults are. And in the Internet streaming age, such calls are often subjected to online discussion and debate using ultra slow-motion replay. Such is the life of an elite-level umpire calling high profile matches.

Umpires should always remember the *intent* of this law:

*"17.5.1. If in the opinion of the umpire, it is **beyond reasonable doubt** that a line judge has clearly made a wrong call, the umpire shall overrule the decision of the line judge".*

The umpire overrule is intended for **obvious** mistakes by a line judge. In addition to instances where straightforward human error has occurred, this also includes cases such as an inexperienced line judge calling the wrong line (for example, the singles sideline instead of the doubles sideline), a line judge who wasn't paying attention to where the shuttle landed and makes bad "guess", and a line judge who may be biased towards one side.

The type of scenario that this law was never intended to cover is a very close line call that an umpire believes was "probably incorrect". This level of confidence does **not** meet the threshold of "beyond a reasonable doubt" stated in the law. Umpires should **not**, therefore, correct a call that is not obviously wrong, especially not close line calls on the opposite side of the court, due to the distance and angles involved.

Any time an umpire does overrule a line judge, the announcement of "Correction, In" or "Correction, Out" must be done immediately and with conviction, so as to be heard and carry an air of confidence to both sides. If the call has not occurred by the time a player who disagrees with the original line call has started to react (either orally or through body language) then it is too late and it is usually better for the umpire not to make a correction. This is due to the strong perception that will be created that the umpire was influenced by the player's reaction.

[See video **UMP2V16: Umpire correction of line call**]

Umpire recommendations for correcting line judges' calls when IRS is in operation will be covered in Section 8.

If a line judge makes several obviously incorrect calls during a match, for whatever reason (bad judgement, inattention, tiredness, bias), the umpire should consider calling for the referee to report to the problem and potentially to recommend replacing the line judge.

## 4.12 SUMMARY

This section has covered various aspects of umpiring in which standardisation is important including:

- presentation formalities (march-on, march-off);
- announcement consistency (calling of faults);
- interpretation of specific laws (obstruction, overruling line judges).

Standardisation is good for:

- sponsors (because it raises the professionalism of how the sport is presented);
- spectators (because it reduces the confusion that arises when the same scenario is interpreted differently by different umpires);
- players, most of all (because they can have confidence that their matches will be officiated the same way regardless of who is sitting in the umpire chair).

May other examples of standardisation will be found in the remaining sections of this manual.

## SECTION 5. COURT AWARENESS

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This short section is intended to serve as a reminder to umpires of everything that they are responsible for while officiating a match. It is important to note that this goes well beyond such routine duties as:

- making announcements and calling the score,
- making decisions around faults and lets,
- ensuring fairness to both sides,
- dealing with misconduct.

When done properly, elite-level umpiring exemplifies all three phrases in Law 17.2:

*"17.2. The umpire shall be in charge of the match, the court, and its immediate surrounds."*

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### 5.2 THE COURT

The sport has evolved such that these days most tournaments at continental level and above are played on commercially available mat courts provided in strips and assembled with tape or zips. These courts offer superior playing conditions for players in most cases and a better presentation for the viewing public. At world-level events, the mat court is often surrounded by a custom-fitted carpet of a contrasting colour. However, even the best laid plans around courts can sometimes go awry however due to defective materials or unforeseen circumstances. Continuous monitoring of the safety of the playing conditions during a match is a responsibility of the umpire, who needs to react should player safety be compromised.

The force of body movement, combined with rapid changes of direction that occurs during a badminton rally, places strain on the seams of the mat court. If the courts are old or if they have been assembled by inexperienced volunteers, the attachment of one strip of the court to the next may be insecure. They may even start to come unstuck or unzipped with a visible gap appearing. This is potentially dangerous for the players, so the umpire (and service judge) need to spot this problem as soon as it arises, estimate how serious it is, and, if necessary, halt the match to get it fixed. The problem will often go unnoticed by the players, who are focused entirely on the match itself.

Once a problem is noticed, the umpire must assess whether:

- the defect is serious enough to warrant stopping the match immediately to fix it;
- it can wait and be addressed at the next interval; or
- it so minor that it presents no hazard and the match can be played out to its conclusion and the referee informed after leaving the court.

In the case of the latter two categories, the umpire should monitor the issue as the match progresses to make sure it doesn't deteriorate. If the match cannot continue safely, the umpire should explain the issue to the players and call for the referee, who will oversee repairing of the court by the field-of-play (FOP) staff.

It may also happen that the carpet surrounding the court becomes ripped. This is a clear safety hazard, and the umpire should stop play and call for the referee to initiate repairs.

[See video **UMP2V17: Carpet repair**]

For any stoppage of this nature to repair the court or carpet (or any malfunctioning equipment), the umpire should consider the match to be suspended (it is not always necessary for the suspension of play to be formally announced). While the repair is taking place, the players may talk to their coaches at the back of the court.

Conditions may also arise that result in the court being unsuitable to continue play. For example, a strip of lights may power off or there may be a drip of water from the ceiling, either from condensation or after a torrential downpour, which pools in one or more spots on the court.

[See video **UMP2V18: Play suspended due to lighting**]

Especially around moisture falling onto the court, the umpire needs to be alert because of the slip hazard potential. Just as in the previous example, the severity of the problem must be quickly assessed, and the referee informed if appropriate.

### 5.3 EQUIPMENT

Matches at a continental- or world-level tournament will likely be played with an array of peripheral equipment on or adjacent to the court. This equipment includes boxes for the players bags, advertising boards (either traditional or electronic), electronic scoring pad (for example, a LiveScore pad), electronic score boards, and fixed-height service devices. Each of these has the potential to become damaged or non-operational during the course of a match, and it is the responsibility of the umpire (along with the service judge, working as a team), to monitor their working order throughout the match.

Should an equipment box or fixed-height service device become broken, it will likely be necessary to call the referee so that FOP staff can be summoned to make repairs or replace the broken equipment with working spares.

[See video **UMP2V19: Equipment box breaks**]

During this remedial action, the match is considered to once again be suspended. And as umpires (and service judges) become more experienced, they should get into the habit of having a quick look at the electronic scoreboards after every rally to make sure these are displaying correctly. If there is a problem, the referee can be called either immediately or, if more appropriate, at the next interval. If the LiveScore pad itself stops working, the umpire should call the referee so that the IT support staff can be alerted. Umpires should always be prepared to continue scoring the match using the paper scoresheet (which they should have with them), if needed.

Umpires should also ensure that players' racket bags, drink bottles, towels, etc. are kept tidily within the provided equipment box at all times. For example, no clothing, towel or bag strap should be draped over the top of the container.



## 5.4 COACHES

Most coaches at top-level tournaments are well-behaved, and generally the higher the level of tournament, the better understanding the coaches have of what they can and cannot do. But coaches are human beings too, and at times may get caught up in the emotion and stress of an important match, in much the same way as players can. Umpires should make sure they are familiar with the “Coaches and Educators Code of Conduct”, which outlines the requirements and expectations for coaches. Both umpires and referees have responsibilities in ensuring that any person sitting in the coach’s chair at the back of the court abides by this code.

The two breaches that umpires need to be particularly alert for, because of the direct impact they can have on a match, are a coach communicating with players during a rally, and a coach attempting to influence a line judge.



- **Coaching During Rally:**

The Laws and instructions for umpires to follow in this matter are clear:

*“ITTO 5.12.1. Coaching is not allowed from the moment the player(s) is ready for the next service and while the shuttle is in play”.*

*“ITTO 5.12.7. If, in the opinion of the umpire, play is disrupted or a player of the opposing side is distracted by a coach, a “let” shall be called (Law 14.2.5). The referee shall be called immediately if such incident is repeated.”*

In a noisy arena, it can be difficult for the umpire to determine if a coach is making audible sounds during the rally, so the service judge’s assistance in monitoring the coaches is also important. The umpire should use some common sense – coaches moving their lips instinctively due to the excitement and nervousness they are feeling, with no audible sound accompanying the movement, would not be considered coaching or influencing the rally, meaning no action is warranted by the umpire. But if the umpire hears a coach shout “Out”, for example, clearly the player(s) at that end of the court could hear it too, so the umpire should call “Let” (and call for the referee if it was not the first time it happened). If the umpire is unsure whether a coach is uttering sound (in any language) that can be heard by players during a rally, it is recommended to call for the referee and explain the concern. Unlike umpires, referees have the freedom to position themselves in closer proximity to a coach to better observe what the coach is or is not doing or saying.

- **Influencing Line Judges**

One of the most important responsibilities the umpire has in controlling a match is in protecting the other technical officials on the court – the service judge and the line judges. Line judges are especially vulnerable to being intimidated, since in many cases at least some of the line-judge crew may be young (perhaps students) and inexperienced (perhaps line judging their first tournament). The umpire must look out for them.

Players' attempts to influence line judges may be verbal or involve body language, which can be subtle or blatant. For example, some tactics used by players include:

- casually extending their arm or racket after a shuttle lands to try to convey to the line judge that the shuttle was "out";
- cheering to themselves after (or even before) a shuttle lands to try to influence the line judge to make a decision in their favour;
- taking a few steps towards a line judge after receiving a call they disagree with;
- staring at the line judge (for even a couple of seconds);
- gesturing with their hands to the point on the court where they believe the shuttle landed.

And because coaches are sometimes seated quite close to a line judge due to space constraints, line judges are particularly susceptible to unwanted comments, glares, etc. from coaches after making a disputed call.

[See video **UMP2V20: Player warned for trying to influence line judge**]

It is important that umpires get into the habit of using their feel for the game to sense when a line judge's call has the potential to draw a reaction from a coach or player. In such cases, umpires should stay focused on that part of the court for a short time, until being satisfied that no reaction is forthcoming, before turning to enter the score on the electronic pad or manual scoresheet. Any communication or gesture from a player or coach towards a line judge, no matter how minor, should be dealt with firmly by the umpire the first time it happens. In the case of a player, the umpire should call the player over to the umpire chair and explain clearly that no such interactions with the line judge is permissible. In the case of a reaction towards a line judge coming from a coach, the referee should be called and told what happened, so the referee can warn the coach and monitor his or her actions for the remainder of the match. The referee may even potentially remove the coach from the court if the transgression was serious. The umpire should refrain from interacting with the coach directly.

Although not relevant to this discussion of coaches per se, the umpire must be similarly vigilant in protecting the service judge. A player who complains to the service judge after a service fault is or is not called knows full well that the call cannot be changed. Rather in many cases they are attempting to influence the calls that the service judge might make going forward. At the continental level, all players should know the meanings of the signals that service judges make when calling a service fault, thus there is no reason for a player to walk over to the service judge to seek a verbal explanation. This is another form of intimidation. The umpire should prevent this by communicating that any additional clarification needed will come from the umpire rather than the service judge. Depending on the situation, this may simply mean calling the player's name as a reminder that this is not allowed, or it may require calling the player over to the umpire chair to explain this.

[See video **UMP2V21: Umpire protecting service judge #1**]

Umpires should use their feel for the game also to be alert for attempted influence/intimidation of a service judge with the next shuttle change after a disputed call, as this requires the players and service judge to be in close proximity. The service judge must make the umpire aware of any verbal abuse that the umpire may not hear.

- **Other Provisions from the Code of Conduct:**

Other coaching behaviours that umpires are responsible for monitoring are less impactful in terms of their potential influence on the match than the two aspects described above. These include:

- Ensuring that the coaches remain seated in their chairs at all times except during the intervals.

- Ensuring that coaches return to their chairs during intervals at the call of "... 20 seconds". If the coaches are tardy, at the next interval the umpire can call the referee and ask for the referee's assistance in getting the coaches back to their chairs in good time.
- Checking that the coaches are not using any electronic devices.
- Checking that the coaches are appropriately dressed.
- At higher-level tournaments, monitoring that the coaches do not move their chairs so as to obscure or partially obscure sponsorship advertising.

The referee also has responsibility in many of these areas, and if the umpire notices a breach, then the best practice is to call the referee, who will take the lead in the follow-up.

At international tournaments, there may also be advertising restrictions on coaches' clothing (see Section 8). In the case of a breach, the umpire should call for the referee at the next regular interval (at 11 points or between games), rather than disrupting play by calling for the referee immediately when the infraction is spotted.

## 5.5 SUMMARY

With so much to oversee in and around the court, in addition to the umpire's important work of administering the match itself, it is essential that the umpire, service judge, and referee work as one team. Only through such teamwork is it possible to ensure that the awareness and management of the court and field of play described in this section are given the full attention needed to present a polished and professional tournament. Also, working as a team makes it easier to ensure that the participants and stakeholders in the match remain fully compliant throughout with their obligations under their respective codes of conduct.



## SECTION 6. MISCONDUCT

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

Handling player misconduct is an important part of an umpire's job, and it is a complicated one in that every situation is unique, requiring judgement and common sense from the umpire in deciding what action is necessary. It is another area that is ripe for standardisation, not least because the umpire's actions can potentially have consequences on the match outcome if a point penalty is awarded at a critical stage. In addition, there are financial penalties on players that may result if a warning or fault for misconduct are issued.

Interestingly, the very best umpires in the world have to deal with relatively few misconduct incidents during their matches. This is because over time they have developed the skill and experience to identify and head off many potential misconduct risks before they become issues, and also because of the respect they command among players through the reputation they have built up over the course of their officiating careers for professionalism, fairness, fearlessness, and good judgement.

Because every misconduct situation faced by an umpire has its own context within an individual match, no discussion of this topic can be exhaustive. This section will therefore focus on a higher-level discussion and practical advice on how an umpire should approach misconduct issues. In addition, a few common player misconduct scenarios that commonly arise will be discussed in more detail, emphasising standardisation around the thresholds that should trigger action by umpires and recommendations for the nature of that action. Guidelines for umpires when handling misconduct by coaches were covered in Section 5.4.

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### 6.2 TYPES OF MISCONDUCT

Player misconduct in general can be placed into two categories: *chronic misconduct* and *acute misconduct*.

Chronic misconduct is something that builds in a match over time rather than being confined to a single incident, such as,

- a player who takes too long between points and who is not responsive to the umpire's multiple informal admonitions around the need for continuous play,
- a player continually complaining about the performance of line judges and trying to influence them.

This type of misconduct is a good test for an umpire, because the umpire has the opportunity to take action to defuse the ongoing situation and/or reduce the anxiety level of the player before it escalates to the point where reaching for cards is inevitable. This defusing action should be the goal of umpires when handling chronic misconduct, and they should consider it a sign of failure in effectively controlling a match if they ultimately find it necessary to issue a formal warning for misconduct (yellow card), or worse, in such situations.

Acute misconduct, on the other hand, is characterised by one-time incidents that arise with little or no warning, such as:

- a player exploding with a profanity-laden outburst after being faulted for hitting the net at a crucial point in the match,
- a player violently destroying a racket after losing a close game.

In such situations, the umpire's main dilemma will be deciding what degree of action is required, depending whether the level of misconduct merits a yellow or red card, or if a strong informal warning is sufficient.

Even in cases of one-off actions such as these, however, there are often warning signs beforehand that a player's stress level is rising, which represents an opportunity for the umpire to be proactive in trying to calm the player. Even subtle body language from the umpire, such as making brief eye contact with the player, can be helpful in calming a player by sending a signal that the umpire recognises the pressure the player is feeling. The umpire's feel for the game is therefore crucial in dealing with issues of player misconduct both before it happens (prevention) and in the aftermath (corrective action).

Human nature is such that spectators often take a keen interest in matters of player misconduct, and the umpire is responsible for clearly communicating the reason for a misconduct penalty. This is accomplished by the use of standardised vocabulary in the umpire's announcement after the showing of any yellow or red card. And as noted in Section 3.8, when conversing with a player at the umpire chair concerning a misconduct-related incident, the umpire should leave the microphone on unless the conversation is of a personal or private nature.

### 6.3 STEPWISE APPROACH FOR CONTINUOUS-PLAY ISSUES

Section 4.7 described the many ways in which players may attempt to delay a match, and at the higher levels of the game continuous play is a real concern, with the umpire often needing to keep a firm grip on proceedings. In a long, gruelling match or after losing a run of successive points, players will sometimes attempt several of the tactics listed in Table 4.1 to try to gain an unfair advantage and a few seconds of unwarranted extra rest between rallies, or to break the momentum of an opponent.

Since dealing with continuous play is a relatively common scenario for continental-level umpires to face, a standardised approach to tackling it is desirable. The recommended strategy for umpires to adopt in enforcing continuous play is the so-called "stepwise approach".

The advantage of the stepwise approach is that it provides a mechanism for umpires to engage and work with players to improve their pace of play through a series of increasingly stern informal warnings before needing to take more serious action. The standardised umpire vocabulary contains numerous phrases specifically designed for this approach, and which can be readily adapted as required, such as:

"Play" "Play on" "Play now" "Play must be continuous" "Quick towel only" "Back on court"  
 "Get ready quicker" "You must get ready quicker" "You must not delay the game"  
 "You must follow my instructions about not delaying the game".

Each of these phrases can be preceded by the player's name for added emphasis.

It may be useful to see the stepwise approach in practice. There are many examples online of matches in which top umpires have utilised this strategy to control a match around continuous play. For one excellent example, see the link below of the 2016 Women's Singles Final at the All England Open.

[See **UMP2V22: Continuous play – stepwise approach (throughout match)**].

The aim is that through a progression of increasingly stern informal warnings, players will get the message and adjust their behaviour such that the umpire does not need to reach for a yellow card. The informal warnings can be escalated by:

- first addressing the player (from the player's current position on court) to play on;
- then giving the same instruction but using the player's name;
- then calling the player over to the umpire chair for a more pointed warning.

Through the tone of voice used, umpires can convey their increasing concern and decreasing patience, such that if players do continue to use delaying tactics then it can be a surprise to no one, and the players can hardly complain, if the umpire issues a yellow card.

Sometimes this point is reached and then, in the interest of fairness to the opponent and of maintaining credibility and authority, the umpire should not shy away from issuing cards. As mentioned earlier, umpires should consider ongoing continuous play issues to be a good test of their ability to effectively control a match. Indeed, some top umpires feel regret and almost a sense of failure if the point of issuing cards is reached in these situations, as it indicates that they were unable to adjust the player's behaviour through milder means of persuasion.

Another example of chronic misconduct that umpires may sometimes face is a player displaying excessive or inappropriate emotion on court. It is in the commercial interests of badminton to have players with charisma and personality, and for them to be able to show their passion and intensity on the court. Umpires should not take any action to prevent a player displaying natural exuberance and celebrating the winning of points. However, there are limits, as spelled out in the Laws, ITTO, and Players Code of Conduct:

*"Law 16.6.3. A player shall not behave in an offensive or inappropriate manner".*

*"ITTO 5.9.1.7. After a rally, a player celebrating excessively or offensively (e.g. raising a clenched fist or screaming in the direction of the opponent, otherwise excessive screaming, removing a shirt) shall be reminded that unsportsmanlike and offensive conduct is unacceptable ..."*

*"ITTO 5.17.1. The umpire shall ensure that players' conduct on the court is honourable and in a sportsmanlike manner."*

*"Players Code of Conduct 4.2.17. Players are responsible for ... acting in a sportsmanlike way. Not conducting oneself in a manner that is clearly abusive or detrimental to the reputation of the sport."*

The first ITTO cited above specifically calls out two of the most common infractions around player emotion. First, a player who raises a clenched fist should direct it towards the side or rear of the court and not facing their opponent, and certainly not over the net in close proximity to the opponent.

Second, loud screaming directly towards an opponent (or otherwise) could reasonably be interpreted as attempted intimidation, in contrast to an exclamation directed in no particular direction, with low intensity, and with no particular intent other than celebration and self-motivation.

It should be pointed out that just because a player's screaming may be loud and annoying, that by itself does not warrant umpire intervention (however tempting it might be!). The umpire must make a judgement as to what constitutes "excessive screaming", and in such situations, once again umpires should use their feel for the game to try to judge the player's intent. If the display of emotion was intended wholly or in part to be intimidating, the umpire should follow the stepwise approach described above to explain to the player that they need to reign in their emotions (unless the first-time offence was sufficiently serious to merit a card in its own right).

Sometimes, it is even necessary for the umpire to talk to both sides around the need to control their emotions, when there is a risk of natural exuberance getting out of hand and threatening to become intimidating or unsportsmanlike.

[See video **UMP2V23: Umpire managing players' emotions (both sides)**]

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## 6.4 GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR ISSUING WARNINGS AND FAULTS FOR MISCONDUCT

There may, of course, be misconduct incidents in a match that are more spontaneous in nature and not cumulative like the examples around continuous play or excessive emotion described above. Less experienced umpires may wonder what kind of on-the-spot player actions would rise to the level of a yellow card and which to a red card. Table 6.1 offers some typical examples of such situations, but it is important to keep in mind that, because every incident is unique and has its own context, it is impossible to give answers that are universally applicable.

The table describes some player actions that, depending on the exact circumstances, could reasonably result in the umpire issuing a strong informal warning, a warning for misconduct (yellow card), or a fault for misconduct (red card) as indicated. Umpires should keep in mind that Table 6.1 is by no means exhaustive and that every incident must be evaluated on its own merits and in its own context when deciding on the course of action to take.

TYPE OF FIRST MISCONDUCT OFFENCE	POSSIBLE INFORMAL WARNING	POSSIBLE WARNING FOR MISCONDUCT (YELLOW CARD)	POSSIBLE FAULT FOR MISCONDUCT (RED CARD)
<b>Shuttle</b>	After a rally, not hitting the shuttle back to opponent courteously.	After a rally, hitting the shuttle towards an opponent or TO recklessly and with intent.	
	Interfering with the speed of the shuttle by manipulating feathers or using racket shaft.		
<b>Racket</b>	Throwing the racket in the air, with the racket landing on the ground not close to a TO.	Throwing the racket high in the air, with the racket landing on the ground close to a TO.	Throwing racket violently and dangerously across the court.
		Deliberately breaking the frame of the racket.	Deliberately and violently breaking the frame of the racket.
<b>Net</b>	Swishing at the net with the racket in frustration, using light force.	Swishing at the net in anger, using strong force.	
<b>Equipment</b>		Hitting with the racket, or kicking with intent and moderate force, an umpire chair, A-board, fixed-height service device, etc.	Hitting with the racket, or kicking with anger, intent and strong force, an umpire chair, A-board, fixed-height service device, etc.
			Causing damage to a backdrop by hitting it violently with racket.
<b>TO intimidation</b>	Any kind of mild and short duration interaction (either orally or through body language) with service judge or line judge following a call.	Extended interaction expressing disagreement (either orally or through body language) with service judge or line judge following a call.	

TYPE OF FIRST MISCONDUCT OFFENCE	POSSIBLE INFORMAL WARNING	POSSIBLE WARNING FOR MISCONDUCT (YELLOW CARD)	POSSIBLE FAULT FOR MISCONDUCT (RED CARD)
<b>Offensive language</b>	Mildly offensive language not loud enough to be heard by spectators and not directed at an opponent or TO.	Grossly offensive language loud enough to be heard by spectators, or any offensive language directed towards an opponent or TO.	Racist, homophobic or other discriminatory language directed towards an opponent or TO.
<b>Offensive gesture</b>	Commonly understood offensive gesture made momentarily but not directed at an opponent or TO and not held long enough to be widely seen.	Commonly understood offensive gesture made pointedly and with intent.	
<b>Disobedience</b>	Ignoring an umpire's instruction.	Blatantly and pointedly disregarding a clear umpire instruction and doing the opposite thing.	
<b>Best effort</b>	<p>Clearly not using one's best effort to win a match.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> If the umpire suspects this is occurring, it is recommended to call for the referee immediately so the referee can also observe and advise the player of the potential seriousness of this offence should it continue.</p>		
<b>Physical abuse</b>			Any kind of unwelcome physical contact with an opponent, TO, or doubles partner.
<b>Spitting</b>			<p>Spitting at an opponent or TO.</p> <p>Spitting into the hand at end of match before shaking hands with an opponent, the umpire, or the service judge.</p>

TYPE OF FIRST MISCONDUCT OFFENCE	POSSIBLE INFORMAL WARNING	POSSIBLE WARNING FOR MISCONDUCT (YELLOW CARD)	POSSIBLE FAULT FOR MISCONDUCT (RED CARD)
<b>End of match celebration</b>	<p>Delaying shaking hands with opponent and TOs due to celebrating with coach.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> A player taking off a shirt and throwing it to the crowd at the end of the match is acceptable and warrants no comment from the umpire, so long as the player leaves the court wearing a shirt.</p>		

**Table 6.1. Examples of Player Misconduct Possibly Warranting Warnings and Faults for Misconduct.** *The table is non-exhaustive. It is important to bear in mind that each specific incident must be assessed by the umpire based on its own merits and unique context.*

For more serious incidents of misconduct (for example, when a yellow card will not suffice or when an umpire needs to issue a player a second card during the match), the following points must be remembered:

- Any time the umpire issues a fault for misconduct (red card), the referee must be called onto court immediately. The umpire should concisely explain to the referee (who may not have observed the incident) what happened. In extreme circumstances, the referee may ask the umpire for an opinion as to whether the misconduct was sufficiently serious to merit consideration of disqualification of the player, although ultimately this decision belongs to the referee alone.
- There could be an incident in which both doubles partners misbehave in a manner that the umpire deems worthy of a warning for misconduct for the first time in the match (for example, both doubles partners arguing vociferously with the service judge and ignoring the umpire's instructions to resume play). In this case, by law the umpire should issue one yellow card and one red card (Law 16.7.1.2).
- If a side has previously been given a warning for misconduct (yellow card), and that side commits any kind of additional offence rising to the same level (bearing in mind that in doubles, the second offence may be committed by the original player or by the partner), then a fault for misconduct (red card) is the correct decision. In no circumstance can two yellow cards be issued to the same side during a match.

## 6.5 MISCONDUCT DURING INTERVALS

Sometimes misconduct occurs during an interval. When this happens, the same principles apply as for incidents happening while a game is in progress, and the umpire must again judge each situation based on its unique circumstances. Umpires should refresh their knowledge from time to time with the correct vocabulary to use when announcing warnings or faults for misconduct that arise during intervals.

The scenario of how to deal with a player returning tardy to court after an interval is one that causes some umpires angst, and there is a large inconsistency in umpire responses. This is a situation in which there is an obvious need for standardisation. The confusion arises because Law 16.7.1.3 specifically calls for a red card to be issued any time a player is late in returning to court after an interval and some umpires take this rigidly at face value. However, by the same token, Law 16.7.1.1 calls for a yellow card

to be issued for any instance of emotional outburst, shuttle abuse, non-continuous play, etc. (Note: These laws have not been quoted here for easy reference, as they each refer, in turn, to other laws. For further detail, please see the "Laws of Badminton" document previously cited.)

As we have seen in Section 6.3, in practice an informal warning is often the appropriate response (if the first instance of this type of misconduct is mild in nature), with the stepwise approach recommended whenever possible. Umpires should adopt the same strategy (the stepwise approach), in dealing with a player who is tardy (a few seconds late) in getting back onto court after an interval. Reaching for a red card if a player is 10 - 15 seconds late in returning to court is most likely overkill. Just as in dealing with continuous-play violations, on the first occurrence the player can be reminded to return to court quicker. If the offence is repeated later in the match, then before the first post-interval rally starts the umpire could consider calling the player back to the chair to receive a sterner informal warning. That pointed reprimand will often do the trick.

[See video **UMP2V24: Player repeatedly late on court after interval**]

A circumstance in which it would be appropriate for the umpire to issue a red card under Law 16.7.1.3 would be where a player has left the court during the 60-second or 120-second interval (as they are entitled to do) and the player is not in sight as the interval ends. This is a quite different (more serious) violation than a player who is courtside but slow in getting back onto court as the umpire announces the resumption of play.

Occasionally, player misconduct happens outside the playing of the match itself. As we saw in Section 3.7, the official start of a match is when the umpire calls "Play" after the "love all" announcement, and a match ends at the call of "Game" after the final rally has concluded. However, as ITTO 2.7 makes clear, the umpire still has authority around player misconduct outside of these time points:

*"ITTO 2.7. The umpire's jurisdiction shall exist from entering the field of play before the match until leaving the field of play after the match".*

Misconduct occurring before or after the match, but while the players are still under the umpire's authority, should be dealt with as follows:

- A player exhibiting misconduct on or at the side of the court after the match has ended (for example, berating an umpire or service judge over their performance, racket abuse, etc.) should be warned or faulted for misconduct as appropriate. The umpire should make the standard announcement, including vocabulary describing the type of misconduct, and show a yellow or red card as normal. If a red card is issued, the referee should still be called to the court, even though the match has ended (since the referee still has the potential to disqualify the player).
- A player who does not shake the hand of an opponent, umpire or service judge at the end of the match has committed a Player's Code of Conduct violation. The umpire should report the player to the referee after leaving the court.
- If misconduct occurs during the march-off (for example, offensive language directed towards an opponent or technical official), the umpire should treat it just as misconduct happening during a match. This means following the normal procedures for issuing a card (making the appropriate announcement, issuing the card, and reporting it to the referee immediately upon leaving the field of play). In the case of a red card, the umpire should call the referee immediately, as the referee has the potential to disqualify the player.
- In the rare instance that misconduct occurs before the call of "love all; play" at the start of the match, the umpire should show a yellow or red card as appropriate and make the standard misconduct announcement. If a red card is shown, under ITTO 5.17.10 a point is not awarded to the opponent; the match still starts at "love all" with the original server serving.

## 6.6 SUMMARY

This section has dealt with common types of player misconduct and provided guidelines and recommendations for how umpires should deal with them. Player misconduct during a match often arises during a period of increased tension and stress. It is important that the umpire remain calm and clear-headed without getting caught up in the emotion of the moment. We have seen that when deciding how to react to a specific incident, umpires must consider the context in which the misconduct occurred and use their feel for the game to judge the intent of the player. For example, depending on whether a player's outburst was judged to be instinctive or pre-meditated, a different course of action might be decided in each case.

Umpires should also remember that they are not alone when handling a misbehaving player. While they are required to call the referee on court anytime a fault for misconduct (red card) is issued, they also have the option to call the referee for assistance if they are struggling to defuse a misconduct-related situation and are unable to get a player to listen, calm down, or play on. . It should be noted that the referee may also choose to come on to the court proactively if it is observed that an umpire is struggling to maintain control over a dispute. The goal of the umpire when any misconduct arises should be:

- first, to explain to the player the behaviour that is expected but was lacking;
- second, to administer any penalty that is warranted;
- third, to then resume the match as quickly as possible.

At the end of the match, the umpire can debrief the referee as required. Additionally, a summary of the incident(s) must be written on the completed umpire scoresheet (a printed copy should be obtained from match control if electronic scoring was used), along with the action taken by the umpire.

Umpires need skill and a lot of experience to recognise when misconduct may be on the verge of happening and to proactively take subtle steps to prevent it. It demonstrates good control from an umpire and clear respect from a player when the umpire is successful in changing a player's behaviour through the stepwise approach, without having to rely on the use of cards. Many beginner- and lower-level umpires like to boast about how many yellow and red cards they've issued and seem to think it shows "dominance". The reality, though, is that issuing a lot of cards says more about the umpire than it does about the players. It usually reflects poor ability by an umpire to control a match, lack of respect for the umpire on the part of the players, and an umpire's subpar feel for the game.



## SECTION 7. SERVICE JUDGING

### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

This section tackles the complex topic of service judging. Ask almost any umpire at any level how they rate their service judging ability, and if they are being honest, they will likely answer that they need more practice. Hardly anyone gets enough exposure to service judging, not least because at many regional- and some national-level tournaments, there simply aren't enough technical officials to afford the luxury of assigning a service judge to every match. Only at higher-level tournaments is it possible to concentrate a bit more on service judging.

While the job is undoubtedly a difficult one, the consensus is that this has been facilitated considerably by the introduction of the fixed-height service law at the end of 2018. This law replaced the subjective service laws around both waist and racket shaft with more objective criteria of a universal fixed height below which the shuttle must be struck during the service. This has helped, but even so, the service judge still has many aspects to consider simultaneously and quickly during a service. Practice is everything, and no umpire can get too much of it when it comes to service judging.

This section offers recommendations around the philosophy that service judges should adopt, as well as some guidelines for standardisation. The other responsibilities of the service judge will also be briefly reviewed.



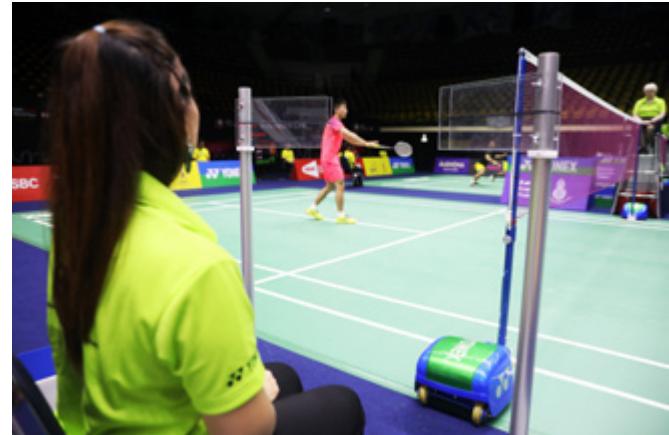
### 7.2 PHILOSOPHY OF APPROACH

At lower levels of officiating, service judges are usually consumed with asking themselves, "Was that a fault?". Some even struggle with having sufficient confidence in their decision making to follow through with the calling of "Fault". As one advances through the umpiring grades, however, to become a top national- or continental-level official, the emphasis around service judging changes. At these upper levels, umpires should have enough experience to be able to identify all types of service faults and to have the confidence to call them at any time during a match, no matter how high the pressure. Rather, the emphasis shifts to the question, "Should I call that service fault?" .

We have probably all watched matches that are completely disjointed because of the large number of service faults called – one every few points. Although it may well be that each call was technically correct, legitimate questions to ask include:

- “Should every single one of the service faults have been called?”
- “Was it in the best interest of the sport to disrupt the match by calling them all?”

In thinking about these questions, it is important to remember the big picture and the reason why we have officials at all. At the end of the day, it is to ensure fair play for both sides, with neither side gaining an advantage over the other. Badminton, like all sports, is, at some level, entertainment, and no one wants to watch a match ruined by purely technical calls by an official every few points. Thus, the prevailing thought today at the upper levels of the sport is that service judges need to demonstrate a degree of flexibility in their deliberations when deciding whether to call “Fault”. This means they should consider the context of the match and use their instincts and feel for the game when a serve is delivered which by the letter of the law could be deemed illegal.



This can be a hard point to accept for some umpires who read the Laws as black and white with no room for interpretation. In Section 6, there was another example where umpires adopt a position of flexibility over rigidity: by the letter of the law every time a player takes too long to get ready between rallies, a warning or fault for misconduct (yellow or red card) should be issued. However, no serious umpire would advocate taking such a completely rigid approach. A similar philosophy of flexibility and consideration of the context should also be applied to service judging. In general, as umpires become more experienced, the most difficult part of service judging transitions from deciding whether or not a given serve is a fault to whether or not it makes sense to call it as such.

### 7.3 BEST PRACTICES AND STANDARDISATION IN SERVICE JUDGING

Few things are as annoying to players as finding that the legality of their serves is seemingly judged quite differently from one match to another, depending on who is sitting in the service judge chair. This section offers a recap of the basic mechanics that service judges should adopt when sitting in the chair, followed by recommendations for standardisation around when and when not to call service faults.

In one of their first training classes, umpires should have been taught the following steps to apply when service judging any match:

- During the warm-up, watch each player’s practice serves to get a sense of their general serving style and any particular areas to watch out for (feet, height, etc.).
- Sit straight in the service-judge chair during the rally with hands in a natural position.
- For each serve, watch the server’s feet get into position and then align your line of sight at the correct height through the fixed-height service device.
- Once the serve is delivered, if a call of “Fault” is to be made, make it immediately, confidently and loudly. The more experienced umpires become, the more instinctive this will be and the less conscious thought will occur – the call of “Fault” will be out of their mouth before they are barely aware of it.

- In calling a Fault for feet (Law 9.1.3, 9.1.4), continuous motion (Law 9.1.7), or missed shuttle (Law 9.1.9), be sure that the serve has actually started:
 

*"Law 9.2. Once the players are ready for the service, the first forward movement of the server's racket head shall be the start of the service".*
- Make the appropriate hand signal to indicate the type of service fault called, and hold it until the umpire and server have seen it.
- If the umpire does not hear the original call of "Fault", then repeat it louder. If necessary, keep calling "Fault" and stand up in order to attract the umpire's attention.
- After a legal serve has been delivered, get into the habit of replaying it briefly in your mind, then make quick eye contact with the umpire, before following the shuttle during the rally. Do not swing your head from side to side in an exaggerated fashion, but use your peripheral vision as much as possible.
- Do not make any distracting motions during the rally. For example, only handle the tube of shuttles to get the next shuttle ready between rallies.
- Do not engage in dialogue with players about why a service fault was or was not called. This applies immediately after the call is made, as well as during an interval and after the match. The umpire should be protecting you from any such player interactions.

[See video **UMP2V25: Umpire protecting service judge #2**]



- Report to the umpire any unwarranted comments or gestures that a player makes to you that may have gone unseen by the umpire.

As umpires become more experienced and advance to higher national or continental grades, these are some of the thought processes that should be used to decide whether a "legitimate" service fault (based on the purely technical grounds in Laws 9.1.2 to 9.1.9) should actually be called:

- Some consideration should be given to the impact of the infraction. For example, in doubles a shuttle struck well above 1.15 meters (Law 9.1.6) is likely to give the serving side a significant advantage and thus should probably be called a "Fault" every time.
- In contrast, if a doubles low service is struck at or just marginally above the 1.15-meter line and is judged to have no material impact, it could be justified not to call a service fault (at least not every time).
- However, this may be different when considering flick serves in doubles, with a somewhat stricter standard applying in marginal cases because of the greater likelihood of an advantage being gained by the serving side.
- In singles, the decision making around the same kind of serves may be different again. For example, if a singles player is serving low and simply putting the shuttle in play to start the rally, the service judge should exercise more discretion around a minor breach in service height (Law 9.1.6) than if it were a doubles match.

The service judge should exercise the same "feel for the game" and common-sense considerations around applying the other service fault laws as well, with an obvious example being "feet" (Law 9.1.4). Particularly for a high serve in singles, a minor dragging of the back foot during the delivery of the service, while technically a fault, is unlikely to have any material consequence and so generally should

not be called. Indeed, in singles, it should be rare to see any service fault called for movement of the feet unless it is truly blatant and the service judge feels it cannot be ignored.

Learning to apply the above interpretation of Law 9 is difficult and comes with experience. Some umpires never reach the point at which they become comfortable in embracing the above recommendations, and this is when matches can be ruined by the unnecessary and inappropriate calling of service faults. Once again, it is the feel for the game and common-sense approach that separate the good umpires from the great ones.

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## 7.4 UNDUE DELAY DURING SERVICE

The umpire also has responsibility in monitoring a service, specifically ensuring that neither the server nor receiver causes undue delay, under Law 9.1.1:

*"Law 9.1.1. In a correct service, neither side shall cause undue delay to the delivery of the service once the server and the receiver are ready for the service".*

It is important that the umpire distinguish between this kind of undue delay (occurring once the server and receiver have taken up their positions and are ready for the next service) and the undue delay occurring between rallies with players taking too long to prepare for the next point. There are subtle differences in the possible actions the umpire can take in each scenario.

As we saw in Section 6.3, in responding to non-continuous play between rallies, the umpire should use the stepwise approach with informal warnings given first before escalating to cards if necessary. For the kind of delay in which a server or receiver repeatedly steps out after being ready for the service, the umpire should call either "fault server, undue delay" or "fault receiver, undue delay" (per Law 13.1). Depending on the blatancy of the action to disrupt play, the umpire may also treat it as misconduct, using the stepwise approach.

During a serve, it is also the umpire's responsibility to judge whether the receiver was ready, and common sense must be used here. For example, a receiver who is looking down clearly cannot be ready, and a receiver whose hand is up can be reasonably interpreted as not being ready. On another note, just because a receiver swings his or her racket after a service is struck does not necessarily imply being ready, as it might simply have been an instinctive reaction to the shuttle passing by. Similarly, when a receiver's feet remain rooted to the ground after being flick served, it does not automatically imply not being ready. In making the "ready versus not ready" decision, the umpire needs to use a combination of common sense, instincts, and experience, and then announce the decision quickly (either "Let" or the new score). The umpire must also be prepared to explain to the players the basis for the decision and, if necessary, talk to the receiver and/or server (to either get ready faster or to wait for the receiver to be ready, respectively).

[See video **UMP2V26: "Let" called (receiver not ready)**]

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## 7.5 FIXED-HEIGHT SERVICE DEVICE

Over the years, the two most difficult aspect of service judging, leading to the most commonly objected calls (or lack of calls) have been:

- first, the subjective nature of estimating where a player's waist was (defined in badminton terms as the lowest part of the lowest rib);
- second, attempting in real time to gauge the angle of the racket shaft at the moment the shuttle was struck.

The service judge was asked to perform these tasks in real time (with body, racket and shuttle in continuous motion relative to one another), while also keeping an eye on other possible service infractions, such as "feet" and "continuous motion". In particular, it is questionable whether the human eye is physically capable of making accurate decisions in most "racket shaft" judgements.

Accordingly, the 2018 change in the service law, whereby the "waist" and "racket shaft" service laws were replaced by the "fixed-height" service law, has brought relief to many umpires and has been almost universally welcomed. It is now in use at all BWF international sanctioned tournaments and in many (but not all) domestic tournaments around the world. The original "waist" and "racket shaft" laws can still be used by Member Associations for their domestic tournaments if they so wish. This may be the case if, for example, the required number of fixed-height service devices are not readily available or there are insufficient umpires to provide a service judge for every match.

When using fixed-height service devices, officials should adopt the following best practices:

- Experienced officials should mentor less experienced umpires on the crew regarding the correct use of the devices if it is the first time that some will be using them.
- The devices should be recalibrated at the start of each day of the tournament. This task is often delegated to the umpire team. In particular, the height of the lines on the two parallel plates should be measured, the plates verified that they are parallel, and the device levelled using the spirit level on its top and by adjusting the wheels and screws on the device's plates and legs. It is important to ensure that the surface on which the devices are placed is at the same level as the court mat, as the 1.15 meters is measured from the surface of the court.
- Ideally, there should be two devices provided per court (one for each end of the court). Once the devices are appropriately positioned at the start of the day to afford a good view of the server, service judges should avoid touching or moving the devices as much as possible. In less-than-ideal cases where only one device is provided per court, service judges will need to move the device to the other side of their chairs each time the serving side changes.
- Assuming the referee has no objection, it can be helpful to discreetly place a small piece of tape at 1.15 meters on one of the legs of the umpire chair or, if appropriate, on a different piece of equipment (for example, a player's box at each end of the court) as an additional alignment for the service judge to use when looking through the plates of the device.
- Once the server is in position, the service judge should adjust the position of his or her head such that when looking through the plates the two lines merge into one. In order to do this, the service judge should look across the top of the two lines on the device, starting with eyes above the lines, and then slowly move his/her eyes down until only one line is seen.
- At the instant of contact with the racket, by law the whole of the shuttle must be below the 1.15-meter line. However, the service judge should take into account the recommendations presented in Section 7.3 when deciding whether to call "Fault".
- **Remember, the fixed-height service law replaces the original service laws around "waist" AND "racket shaft".** The other service laws remain in effect.



## 7.6 OTHER SERVICE JUDGE RESPONSIBILITIES

In any match, the umpire and service judge should always work together as a team. Beyond evaluating each service, we have touched on other service judge responsibilities at various points in this manual. These tasks are collated here for convenience:

- Service judges should be active in alerting the umpire to any errors made on a point of law. If necessary, the service judge should stand up to get the umpire's attention before the next rally starts. This includes, for example, incorrect administration of the score by an umpire after the result of an IRS challenge, and (less critically) the prevention of a service-court error from occurring.
- Service judges should discreetly help the umpire in making correct decisions on points of fact. This can be done through discreet hand signals made by the service judge to the umpire, without these being noticeable to the players, coaches or spectators. Umpires and service judges who work together over time often develop their own customised signals and body language. These can help the umpire confirm or deny infractions such as a player hitting the net or a shuttle glancing off a player's racket or clothing. It is important that any such help from the service judge to the umpire on "point of fact" instances occur without delay, as if the umpire is to call "Fault" it must be done immediately.

The service judge should offer no opinion if asked by a player whether any kind of fault during a rally has occurred or whether the service judge saw a line call in the same way as made by the line judge.

[See video **UMP2V27: Player asks service judge to correct line call**

- Service judges should assist the umpire in protecting the line judges from potential influence or attempted intimidation by players (or coaches).
- Service judges should alert the umpire if they notice a player attempting to influence the speed of the shuttle between rallies (for example, by bending the feathers or placing the shaft of the racket into the shuttle). Players sometimes take such action with their back to the umpire so as to try to keep the shuttle manipulation undetected.
- Service judges should assist the umpire in checking that any electronic scoreboards are working properly throughout the match.
- Service judges should assist the umpire in monitoring the playing conditions (for example, alerting the umpire if they notice a seam on the mat court becoming detached or water/condensation dripping from the ceiling onto the court).
- Service judges should serve as a back-up to the umpire in keeping the time (for warm-ups, intervals, injuries, etc.), in case the umpire's stopwatch fails or the umpire forgets to monitor the time.



## 7.7 SUMMARY

This section has presented a standardised approach to advanced service judging. The emphasis is on a common-sense application of the service laws rather than taking a rigid approach. Just as in umpiring, instincts and a feel for the game play a role in successful service judging. The best top-level umpires have honed these skills through their years of experience, whereas umpires who brag about the large number of service faults they have called are probably inadvertently revealing a deficiency in this area or a certain resistance to the standardisation approach that is expected at the elite level of the sport.

The introduction of the fixed-height service law and the accompanying fixed-height service devices has undoubtedly made the job of the service judge easier. The implementation of the more objective fixed-height criteria (over the subjective interpretation of a player's waist and the angle of the racket shaft) has resulted in a dramatic reduction in complaints from players. Nevertheless, with multiple types of service infractions to look out for, as well as the need to exercise good judgement and consideration of context when deciding whether to call "Fault", the service judge's role is still a challenging one. This is not made any easier by the fact that, from tournament to tournament, umpires may receive widely varying guidance from the referee with regards to service judging, suggesting that this may also be an area that could benefit from improved standardisation. Additionally, when umpires are being assessed or appraised at a tournament, that too can lead to an undesired shift, conscious or not, in how they approach their service-judge duties as compared with their normal decision-making standards.

Finally, it is recommended that off-court umpires refrain from discussing the service styles of particular players in any great detail. This is because of the need for every service judge to go into a match with an untainted opinion of each player, without a preconceived notion of what to look out for around a certain player's serve. There is a risk that any such off-court discussion among umpires might lead to instances of confirmation bias, a well-known subconscious phenomenon. For the same reason, top referees will usually refrain from saying too much about service judging at umpire briefings, unless there is a specific need. This is to avoid unduly influencing the umpires' approach towards being either too lax or too rigid when they are sitting in the service judge chair.



## SECTION 8. MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS

### 8.1 INTRODUCTION

In this section, special topics are presented that are relevant when umpiring at international tournaments, and in some cases at lower-level tournaments, but which do not fit neatly into any of the previous sections.

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### 8.2 PLAYER CLOTHING

At the outset, it should be noted that for national or international play, the exact clothing regulations in force for a given tournament will vary depending on:

- the tournament type (individual or team play);
- the level of the tournament;
- whether the tournament is under the auspices of BWF, a Continental Confederation, or a Member Association.

Accordingly, the discussion will be generic in places, but the principles will be illustrated with the clothing regulations appearing in BWF's General Competition Regulations (GCR). These are also available in the "Statutes" section of the BWF website, and international umpires should make an effort to keep up to date on the latest version. For world-level tournaments, BWF maintains and updates a database with examples of acceptable clothing and of violations with respect to each of the criteria outlined below. This database can be a useful resource for umpires to consult ahead of time when preparing to officiate at BWF Grade 1-3 tournaments, as it provides a refresher around general standards to apply when making clothing-related decisions.

Umpires should note that there are no restrictions on the clothing that a player may wear during the warm-up period. Umpires should always follow the instructions of the referee when inspecting players' clothing and deciding whether action is required.

a) General Approach:

When inspecting players' clothing at the assembly point, the enforcing of requirements around lettering and advertisements is yet another example where umpires (and referees) need to apply some common sense and consider the level of the tournament and its TV exposure. For example, a match in the latter stages of the World Championships with millions of TV viewers expected is hardly the same as the first round of a Grade 3 continental circuit tournament with minimal spectators and no livestreaming or TV. It should always be remembered that the intent of the regulations in this area is to have:

- a professional presentation of the match for spectators,
- with players wearing smart and clean badminton clothing, and
- with lettering and advertising conforming to (or nearly so) the clothing regulations in effect for the tournament.

b) Lettering on Shirt:

Many tournaments require the **player's last name** (family name) to be printed on the back of the shirt. Typically, the following requirements must be met:

- The name must match the official last name (family name) of the player that is shown in Tournament Planner and on the umpire's scoresheet/electronic scoreboard.
- Optionally, the initial(s) of the player's first name can be included as well.
- The lettering must be in capital letters in the Roman alphabet.
- The height of the lettering must be from 6 to 10 centimetres.
- The name must be near the top of the shirt and as close to horizontal as possible.
- The lettering must be in a single colour, contrasting to that of the rest of the shirt, so that it is easily readable from a distance.

When considering the dimensions of any lettering or advertising on clothing, such as the height of the player's name in this case, the umpire should be looking for instances which are blatantly outside of the requirements and which will clearly detract from the professional and standardised presentation that is being sought. Examples that should prompt an umpire's intervention include:

- a shirt that doesn't have a player's name on it at all;
- a name that is only half the required size;
- a name with the letters in different colours;
- a name that is unreadable because it is nearly the same tone as the background colour on which it appears.

In such cases, the umpire should ask, at the assembly point, whether the player has a compliant shirt to change into. In contrast, if the only infraction is that the player's name is a half centimetre too large or too small, no action should generally be taken.

In other words, umpires should use some common sense and ask themselves whether the *intent* of the regulation – smart and professional presentation – is being significantly compromised. In this regard, although umpires may have been provided with calibrated plastic devices for measuring the dimensions of lettering and advertisements on player's clothing, these should be used sparingly to avoid the perception of being intrusive and petty over minor infractions. Rather, umpires should concentrate on looking for the major violations that are obvious just by looking, without the need of a measuring tool.

Some tournaments, particularly team tournaments, may require the **country name** on the back of the shirt in place of or in addition to the player's name. The same lettering criteria apply for the country name as for the player name, except that the height of the country name should be five centimetres. If both the player name and country name are included, the country name must be below the player name.

c) Advertising on Shirt:

At most world-level tournaments, advertising on a player's shirt is usually permitted as follows:

- Up to five advertisements on the front of the shirt, with each being 20 square centimetres or less.
- The permitted locations are left sleeve, right sleeve, left shoulder, right shoulder, left collar, right collar, left chest, centre chest, right chest. There can be no more than one advertisement in each of these locations.
- In addition to the above, one BWF mark (such as a BWF logo, integrity campaign logo, or other), not exceeding 20 square centimetres, can appear on any of the nine locations not already used.

- If a player is wearing a sleeveless shirt or dress, advertisements that might otherwise appear on the sleeves can be placed higher up nearer the shoulder area.
- Additionally, the front of the shirt can contain one advertisement in a band of no more than 10 centimetres in height. This band can be placed at any angle but must be of uniform width.
- The back of the shirt may contain a similar band of advertising of no more than 5 centimetres in height. This advertising must be placed below the player name and country name (if included).
- No advertising (or lettering) can appear above the player's name on the back of the shirt.

Regarding advertising on shirts and other clothing items, the umpire must again use common sense when considering the size of the advertisements relative to the above limits. If an advertisement is, by any reasonable standards, offensive, political or religious in nature, or promotes any tobacco company or its products, the umpire should ask the player to change the offending clothing item. The same restrictions apply to any tattoos that the player may be displaying.

d) Advertising on Socks and Compression Socks:

The standard BWF advertising regulations permit each sock of a player to display a maximum of two advertisements, each of which must be 20 square centimetres or less. If the player is wearing compression socks, the two-advertisement limit applies to each leg (in other words, the normal sock and compression sock combined may have up to two advertisements in total).

e) Advertising on Shoes, Shorts/Skirts, and Compression Stockings:

- Shoes may carry advertising as long as these are commercially available.
- Shorts and skirts (or lower parts of dresses) may contain one advertisement of 20 centimetres or less.
- Additionally, on shorts and skirts (or lower parts of dresses), at BWF tournaments, Member Association advertising not exceeding 50 square centimetres is allowed if permission has been granted ahead of time by BWF.
- Compression stockings (as distinct from compression socks) are considered underclothing (see below) and so no advertising is permitted on them.

f) Advertising on Underclothing:

At world-level tournaments, if player underclothing is visible during play (for example, undershorts), it must not contain any advertising.

g) Advertising on Bandages, Knee Braces, Medical Tape, Wristbands and Headbands:

These items, along with any other item not covered above that is worn by a player during play, are also subject to advertising restrictions. Each is permitted to display a single advertisement of 20 square centimetres or less. Regarding medical tape, this means in practice that tape with continuous lettering along its length will be in violation and should not be permitted.

h) Advertising on Coaches' Clothing:

As noted in Section 5.4, at some BWF tournaments there may also be advertising restrictions on coaches' clothing when they are sitting in the coaches' chairs at the back of the court. When this is the case, the same restrictions that apply to players' shirts apply to coaches' shirts and jackets, and advertising limits on players shorts also apply to coaches' trousers. If umpires notice non-compliance in coaches' clothing, they should alert the referee at the next regular interval in the match (at 11 points or at the end of the game).

i) Colour of Clothing:

At lower-level tournaments, there may be no restrictions on the colour of clothing worn by players during a match. However, at higher-level tournaments this, along with the player name requirement discussed above, are among the more important clothing regulations for umpires to check at the assembly point. The following are typical specifications around colour of clothing, but the details will vary depending on the level of tournament, so umpires should always pay attention to the details provided by the referees at the initial umpire briefing.

- If a player **changes a shirt** (or dress) during a match, the new shirt (or dress) must be the same colour as the original item of clothing.
- It is common that doubles partners are required to wear shirts and shorts (or skirts) of similar colour. Some discretion is appropriate if slightly different shades of the same colour are worn, particularly if the players are from different Member Associations or have different sponsors. In the case of a mixed doubles pair where the female player wears a dress, the colour of the dress can align with the colour of either the male player's shirt or shorts.
- Opposing sides may be required to wear **significantly different coloured clothing** once a certain stage of the tournament is reached (for example, from quarterfinals onwards of the main draw). This requirement causes difficulty for some umpires at the assembly point, perhaps requiring a judgement around how to interpret the word "significantly". Once again, umpires should think about the *intent* of this requirement, which is there so that players on opposing sides are readily distinguishable to spectators in the arena and to viewers watching on TV or through livestreaming. In deciding whether action should be taken, umpires must remember to think about:
  - The profile of the match (for example, a televised final or a first-round match in a near-empty arena).
  - The colours on both the front and back of each side's shirts. Where one or both sides have different predominant colours on the front and back of their shirts, there should be no clash of colours in any possible combination between the two sides.
  - Whether the lighting on court may cause a different perception of colour from that at the assembly point.
  - Any specific directions received from the referee at the umpire briefing regarding the degree of enforcement to apply at a particular stage of the tournament.

In practice, when applying this regulation umpires usually focus only on the colours of *shirts* worn by the opposing sides. However, it should be noted that the precise wording of the regulation allows for other items of clothing to be considered, such as significantly different colours of shorts, in the case that all players are wearing shirts of the same colour.

If both sides are wearing clothing of similar colour, the umpire should ask the side that is ranked lower in the latest M & Q Report (or equivalent ranking document in lower-level tournaments) to change to a different colour. The referee will make this report available to the umpires or indicate which side is ranked higher/lower on the scoresheet given to the umpire.

- Occasionally when there is TV coverage, broadcasters may request that green clothing be avoided based on technical considerations around virtual advertising used with the TV production.
- In team tournaments, all players of a given team in a tie are usually required to play in the same colours (and design) of shirts and shorts. The umpires working the second and subsequent matches in a tie, therefore, need to be alert as to which colours each team's players wore in the first match of the tie, so that this consistency can be enforced.

j) Designs on Clothing:

In BWF tournaments, the designs on a player's clothing must be abstract and cannot be commercial in nature or contain advertising. An abstract design means that pictorial representations, such as an animal or a countryside scene, are not permissible. However, objects can be present if they are represented within the context of an overall abstract design. The BWF clothing database cited earlier contains examples of designs that are and are not acceptable.

At BWF tournaments, doubles partners may be required to wear shirts and shorts (or equivalent items) of similar designs, depending on the stage of the tournament. BWF materials can be consulted for guidance on what constitutes "similar" in this context.

In summary, umpires must be aware of the clothing requirements for the particular tournament they are officiating at – both by reviewing the relevant regulations ahead of time and by paying attention to the referee instructions at the initial umpire briefing. A degree of common sense is expected from umpires when conducting clothing inspections at the assembly point (for example, bearing in mind the level and visibility of the tournament in general, as well as the stage of the match within the tournament in particular). This also means respecting players' personal space and refraining from touching them during clothing inspections. Umpires should not become "clothing police", but instead mainly focus on obvious transgressions that would have a visible negative impact on the professional image of the tournament that the organisers are trying to project.

When supervising a player's change of clothing to comply with advertising restrictions, umpires should be aware that taping over or using pins to cover up offending advertisements is generally not acceptable, as this often looks less professional and more out of place than the original violation.

Finally, the referees are there to help, and if there is any question at the assembly point about whether a clothing item is in violation or not, the umpire should not hesitate to call for a referee. Also, umpires must remember that any clothing violation that could not be corrected should be documented on the scoresheet at the end of the match and reported to the referee so that follow-up action can be taken after the tournament by the referee as appropriate.

### 8.3 INSTANT REVIEW SYSTEM

The introduction of an Instant Review System (IRS) into badminton some years ago placed the sport in the same forward-looking category as tennis, football, cricket, baseball and others in utilising 21st century technology to reduce the frequency of officiating errors. IRS is currently limited to line calls, and due to its high cost and labour-intensive set-up, it is presently only used at the Olympic Games, BWF Grade 1 and World Tour tournaments, and some Continental Championships. Furthermore, it is usually only used on one court, with the exception of the Olympic Games and the BWF World Tour Finals, where IRS is used on all courts. Because of this, umpires do not get to use IRS frequently – just a few matches a year at most.

When a player challenges a line call during an IRS match, the procedure for the umpire to follow is precisely defined and the process is highly visible to the entire arena, as the result is typically shown on a giant screen. Moreover, challenges sometimes occur at pivotal points in matches and can change the momentum in favour of one side to the other. Because of this high visibility, any mistake by an umpire in administering IRS can have a negative impact on the match in particular, and on the perception of the competency of technical officials in general. However, the unique procedure that an umpire must follow when using IRS, along with the umpires' infrequent exposure to the system, means that its usage is not ingrained into an umpire's memory as well as many other aspects of umpiring are. High-profile IRS mistakes do happen. This section will review the guidelines around the correct usage of IRS, along with recommendations for best practices.

- If you are umpiring at a tournament where IRS will be used, be prepared. Reread Section 4.1.8 of the BWF Statutes, which gives an overview of the IRS regulations, and refresh your memory as to

the correct vocabulary to use when announcing the result of a challenge. Because an umpire will typically need to use this vocabulary only a few times a year, it is harder to memorise, and IRS announcement mistakes are heard from time to time even by some of the very top umpires in the world.

- Be sure that you are clear about which court(s) are covered by IRS. The referee should communicate this information in the umpire briefing, so be sure to pay attention.
- Know how the result of an IRS challenge will be conveyed to you in the umpire chair, as well as what the back-up system(s) is. In addition to the normal LiveScore monitor (which is usually not linked to the IRS replay booth), a small side-monitor (which is linked) is commonly affixed to the umpire chair on IRS courts, with the small monitor being on a different electrical circuit to the arena's giant screen. In the case of disruption of the connections from the IRS replay booth to both the giant screen and the umpire's small IRS monitor, the referee should have arranged a manual method for the result to be communicated to you – make sure you know what it is.
- Remember, a side is permitted two unsuccessful IRS challenges **per game**. If a side's challenge is successful, they do not lose a challenge. In other words, a side may make an unlimited number of challenges per game until they have been unsuccessful twice.
- After every line call in an IRS match, pause, look at the players and make sure a challenge is not forthcoming before turning to enter the outcome of the rally on the LiveScore pad.
- The use of IRS does not preclude an umpire from correcting a line judge's call in the usual way. If, on an IRS court, you are certain that a line judge's call is incorrect, you should correct the call as normal (Section 4.11) without relying on a player challenging to reach the right decision. The disadvantaged player(s) may not have had as clear a line of sight as you or may be out of challenges.
- Remember that if a line judge is unsighted and you as the umpire are unable to make the call, you should call for IRS to make the decision.

[See video **UMP2V28: IRS support when line judge and umpire unsighted**]

Use the correct vocabulary in making this announcement. However, if a line judge is unsighted and the call is obvious, you should go ahead and make the line call rather than wasting time calling for IRS.

- Any IRS challenge by a player must be raised **immediately** after the player has observed the call made by the umpire or the line judge. In particular, you should not accept a player's challenge if the player has first looked towards a coach for guidance as to whether a challenge should be made.

[See video **UMP2V29: Player refused IRS challenge (request too late)**]

However, in deciding whether to refuse a challenge due to a delay on the part of the player in raising his or her hand or stating "challenge", the umpire should use some common sense regarding two possible circumstances. First, if a line judge changes the original call (for example,



originally signalling and calling “Out”, and then changing the call after a pause to “In”), the umpire should make sure that the players are aware of the new call. The side now disadvantaged may only have heard the original call of “Out”, and it is reasonable to inform them of what the final call is so they have an opportunity to challenge if they wish. And second, an umpire correcting a line judge’s call should ensure that the players, who may have turned away after the original call, are aware of the changed call so they have the correct information in case they wish to challenge.

- In accepting a challenge from a player, check to make sure that the side in question does indeed have at least one challenge remaining in that game.
- Do **not** advance the score using LiveScore until **after** the result of IRS is shown. High-profile mistakes have occurred when an umpire has not gotten into this habit and instead advanced the score at the time the challenge was made and then again after the result was communicated.
- While waiting for the result of the challenge to appear on the screen(s), continually remind yourself what the original call was and which side has challenged so there is no danger of being confused once the result appears.
- Once the IRS decision appears, make the entry correctly on LiveScore and communicate the result and associated announcement using the correct vocabulary. If applicable, be aware of the reduced number of challenges that the side in question now has left.

Finally, the role of the service judge during an IRS challenge should not be overlooked. Mistakes in correctly administering the result of a challenge can occur if an umpire is not used to working with IRS or is feeling the pressure of the situation. For example, an umpire may award the point to the wrong side, or deduct a point instead of adding it, or award two points if the score was erroneously advanced at the time of the initial line call as well as after the IRS result. The service judge is another pair of eyes to make sure that such mistakes do not happen. While a challenge is proceeding, the service judge should mentally take note of the current score, which side challenged, and what the line call was. Once the result appears, the service judge should check that the umpire has administered it correctly. If not, the service judge must intervene before the next rally starts by drawing the umpire’s attention to the mistake. If necessary, the service judge should stand up and walk across the court to the umpire in order to make sure that this error on a point of law is corrected immediately.

[See video **UMP2V30: Service judge assisting to prevent IRS mistake**]

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## 8.4 ELECTRONIC SCORING

Almost all international tournaments use some form of electronic scoring – most commonly the LiveScore system. A continental-level umpire is expected to be familiar with its use, including the less commonly used features such as how to:

- capture when a referee is called on court for an injury or other incident;
- record warnings and faults for misconduct (yellow and red cards);
- use the scorepad in conjunction with IRS challenges;
- correct a service court error;
- note a suspension of play.

Other points for umpires to keep in mind around electronic scoring are as follows:

- If it is the first time you will be using a particular form of electronic scoring or you need a refresher, make sure the referee knows this and request practice time on it before the tournament starts.
- The stopwatch built into most such systems is not compatible with the exact timing requirements

that an umpire needs for the warm-up period and intervals. These should therefore be timed with the umpire's personal stopwatch (which should be kept on the wrist and not around the neck).

- Remember that the correct time to press "Play" at the start of the match is during the small pause that the umpire should incorporate into the pre-match announcement between the words "love all" and "play" (see Section 3.7).
- Just as when using a manual scoresheet, try to minimise the amount of time spent looking at the scorepad. When appropriate, at the end of each rally keep focused for a short while longer on the players or towards a line judge if you feel that there may be a player-player or player-line judge interaction about to occur. Only when you are satisfied that no such issue is forthcoming should you turn towards the scorepad and enter the outcome of the rally (and when doing so use your peripheral vision as much as possible).

[See video **UMP2V31: Attention around net after rally for any player gesture**]

- Don't look at the scorepad when announcing the score – hold your head up and look straight ahead.
  - If the scorepad stops working, call for the referee. Be prepared at least temporarily to continue the match using the paper scoresheet you have with you until the IT personnel can fix the scorepad issue.
  - Get into the habit after each rally of checking that any electronic scoreboards in use are displaying the correct score. If they turn blank or freeze, call for the referee and alert the players if needed.
  - Don't forget to hit the appropriate button on the scorepad at the end of the match to send the result to match control.
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## 8.5 USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Nowadays everything one writes online is at risk of being reposted on a blog or discussion board, and possibly taken out of context. Maintaining the reputation of technical officials as professional, scrupulous, and unbiased arbiters of the game is essential. For these reasons, umpires and other technical officials need to be careful about what they post on social media. At the BWF level, there are mandatory guidelines for all technical officials to follow regarding the use of social media, and it is recommended that umpires at all levels adopt the recommendations shown in Table 8.1.

<b>DO</b>	<b>DON'T</b>
Post status updates that you are in XYZ city and enjoying your visit.	Post comments about the officiating at the tournament.
Post tourist-type photos not related to the tournament.	Post photos of internal operation areas, back-of-house locations and so on.
If in doubt – DON'T post it.	Post photos or text around any specific incident or situation related to your participation in the tournament.
	Post photos of yourself with players.
	Post match assignment lists for umpires or service judges at the tournament.
	Post comments about a player's appearance, clothing, or injuries.

DO	DON'T
	Engage in any public online discussions about officiating, decisions made by officials, or anything else about your own match(es) or someone else's matches. This includes, but is not limited to, message boards, blogs, and other social media.

**Table 8.1. Umpire Guidelines for Use of Social Media**

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## SECTION 9. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

### 9.1 INTRODUCTION

A wide array of content has been covered in this Level 2 manual, ranging from highly technical material to presentation skills, teamwork and personality attributes. An elite umpire needs to be proficient and well-rounded in all of the areas discussed in the previous sections, and this can be a daunting prospect. Moreover, as one aspires to progress through the umpiring grades from national- to continental- to BWF-level, increasing degrees of ability are expected (and assessed) in each of these competencies.

The truth is that there is no such thing as a perfect umpire. Every umpire has strengths and weaknesses, and all umpires who have reached the highest levels have navigated a multi-step journey in which they have identified areas in need of development in order for them to improve and advance to the next grade. How much umpires are able to improve their proficiency depends on their willingness to embrace this path of continuous improvement, which is an arduous journey full of difficult self-truths and false starts. It requires courage and humility, along with the commitment to recognise shortcomings and to accept and embrace difficult feedback. For those who have accepted the challenge, however, reaching the goal of joining the umpiring elite (with the opportunity to officiate the toughest matches, in the biggest tournaments the sport has to offer) is a reward that each would say was well worth the hardship and effort.

This short section offers some suggestions for umpires who are committed to further developing their skills through a continuous improvement strategy. Umpires who are serious about improving are encouraged to at least consider adopting some of the approaches outlined here. Since the specifics of an improvement plan will depend on the precise skills that the umpire is looking to develop, the content here is generic. The focus is on presenting a general strategy for continuous improvement that can be applied to any aspect of umpiring. The tips are valid no matter the current level of the umpire and are relevant for enhancing both technical and non-technical skills. The underlying theme is that only a process that identifies problems and diagnoses their root causes can bring about continuous improvement.

### 9.2 SELF-REFLECTION

The first step in enhancing overall umpiring ability is to identify what areas in particular could benefit from an improvement plan. This can be achieved through a combination of self-reflection and feedback. Triggers for these might include:

- a specific controversial or embarrassing incident on the court that exposed a gap in knowledge or judgement,
- a more general self-realisation over time of chronic difficulty in a certain area, especially combined with
- a perception that this weakness might represent a barrier to umpiring development and progression.

When done honestly, and sincerely, self-reflection can sometimes be a painful and unpleasant activity, as it involves facing up to mistakes made and acknowledging skills that are currently lacking. However, self-reflection is an essential exercise to undertake in continuous improvement, as only by understanding your current state can you formulate a plan to achieve a desired future condition. When performing self-reflection, it is important to remember the following:

- Realise that you have nothing to fear from knowing the truth about your strengths and weaknesses. It is much better to know your shortcomings than to ignore them or pretend they do not exist. Being aware of them allows you to plan actions to improve them. Indeed, difficult

experiences coupled with healthy self-reflection provide some of the most effective learning opportunities.

- Regard every mistake you make on the court as an opportunity rather than a failure. Put your ego aside – if you cannot tolerate being wrong as an umpire, then you have no chance to grow.
- Embrace and acknowledge your mistakes and weaknesses openly and learn from the mental pain they may induce in you. Never shy away from the truth or delude yourself about your current level of knowledge and skills. It is essential to recognise any gap between your actual level and the standard expected for an umpire at your current grade or at the grade to which you aspire.
- If you have suffered through a specific on-court incident that exposed a lapse in skill, judgment, or knowledge, try to reflect on the experience as soon as you are off court and able to spend some quiet time alone. Replaying the circumstances as close in time to the actual incident as possible will be more painful, but more valuable for your learning. Get into the habit of using the discomfort you experience when you fail or make a mistake in public during a match as a trigger for conducting quality self-reflection that same day.
- Remember, things reflected on “in the moment” often seem more important than they really are.
- Once you have identified a shortcoming, never tolerate it as is. Continuous improvement is as much about willpower as anything else; be determined to find a way to overcome the deficiencies your self-reflection has revealed.

Self-reflection is a valuable first tool when embarking on a continuous improvement initiative. During their careers all umpires will make mistakes, sometimes including highly visible ones that may directly affect the outcome of a match. One characteristic that distinguishes umpires who have reached the highest levels is that after a setback they are able to change in ways that allow them to continue to take advantage of their strengths while adjusting for their weaknesses. Unsuccessful umpires do not have this ability.



### 9.3 FEEDBACK

As valuable as self-reflection is, it can usually take an umpire only so far in the preparation of a continuous improvement plan. The complementary piece needed is *feedback*. This is invaluable when coming from trusted and knowledgeable colleagues who can, based on a combination of peer observation and their own experiences, see what is needed in order to improve an umpire's skills.

Those who are truly interested in growth should never underestimate feedback and should savour it whenever they receive it. During a tournament is the most obvious time when umpires will have the opportunity to hear others' opinions of their work. Assuming the referee team are embracing their leadership responsibilities, umpires should receive some individual feedback on the quality of their work as the tournament progresses. This may include any specific adjustments they need to make in the very short term (for the rest of the tournament) to standardise their umpiring relative to the rest of the umpire crew. Umpires should also listen carefully and act on any of the generic feedback that the referees communicate at the daily umpire briefings.

More enduring, though, is to develop a network of umpire colleagues who can provide feedback and coaching away from tournaments throughout the year. This can be either through dialogue (in person or electronically) in response to specific topics, or, at the higher levels of umpiring, after observation of matches on YouTube or in person at a tournament.

Feedback is only helpful if it is open, authentic, offered with the right intentions (in other words, for personal development rather than just about trying to make the umpire feel good), and coming from qualified individuals. Therefore, when selecting a network of "continuous improvement" advisors, it is vital to make sure the people giving feedback are competent to deliver it. In particular, they must be:

- *informed* (in other words, knowledgeable about the qualities required for the desired state), and
- *proven* (in other words, having demonstrated some expertise themselves in the relevant areas).

Accordingly, when asking for feedback in specific areas (such as presentation skills, or handling players firmly but politely), it is important to find colleagues who are obviously strong in those attributes, as they have the most to teach. In other words, umpires should recognise their weak spots and engage with those who are strong in those areas.

The most important thing about feedback is being *open* to receiving it. This is difficult for most people because the hard truths that are contained in honest feedback may be in conflict with their own perceptions and ego. When preparing for and receiving feedback therefore, umpires should always keep the following points at the front of their mind:

- Encourage others to point out what in your umpiring style and technique you might be missing, and be open-minded enough to thoughtfully consider their feedback. Do not make your need to be right more important than the need to find out what is true.
- Ask for feedback on your perceived weaknesses. This is much more valuable than receiving reinforcing praise on areas that you already know you are good at.
- In cases where the feedback differs from your own perceptions, be curious enough to try to understand where these different opinions came from. Instead of thinking "this feedback is just plain wrong", ask yourself, "What is it about my style or what I do that gave this impression to this



person?". All feedback has at least some element of truth to it, so be open to seeing a different side of yourself.

- Suspend judgement when hearing different perspectives. In feedback conversations, rather than worrying about looking good, let go of your attachment to your own ideas. Be open to the possibility of being wrong and encourage your conversation partner to tell you so.
  - Feedback is about looking for the best answers, whatever the source, about where you are lacking and what is needed to improve, as opposed to just about coming up with the best answer yourself.
  - Remember not to mistake opinions for facts.
  - Assess the feedback you receive from one person in the context of what you learn through the feedback of others, as well as in your own self-reflection. Do not over-emphasise a potentially unique opinion from one person over the consensus emerging from multiple feedback conversations.
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## 9.4 MAKING AND IMPLEMENTING A DEVELOPMENT PLAN

With the self-reflection and feedback steps complete, it is now time to put them together to get a complete picture – including strengths and weaknesses – and to make a development plan with emphasis on those areas of umpiring where there is clear room for improvement.

Whenever people face their shortcomings and plan to improve them (no matter whether this relates to badminton umpiring, their careers, or their personal relationships), there are two obstacles that everyone will encounter and have to overcome: their ego and their blind spots.

The ego exerts its influence subconsciously, making people defensive, reluctant to admit their mistakes and weaknesses, and resistant to embracing constructive criticism. Its influence over the more logical-thinking part of the brain is amplified when people are tired, which is often the case during the long days at a tournament. This is why developing a continuous improvement plan is best done in a quiet setting away from the hustle and bustle of a tournament.

And of course, everyone has blind spots that cause them to be closed-minded and not consider other perspectives. That is why seeking feedback before embarking on a plan of action is so important. Blind spots tend to make us think that there is only one right way of doing things (for example, one best umpiring style), whereas the reality is, within a set of parameters, there is still plenty of scope for individuality.

Having recognised your blind spots and having chosen not to allow your ego to emotionally derail you, you are now ready to take action. You have four choices when deciding what to do about the gaps you have uncovered between your current state of umpiring and the desired/required level of performance. The four choices are:

- a) Deny that the gap exists, or at least delude yourself that it is smaller than it really is.
- b) Accept that the gap exists and find a way around it without really tackling it head on.
- c) Accept that the gap exists and work to convert it to a strength.
- d) Decide that the gap is too large to be solved and satisfy yourself with umpiring at your current performance level.

First, if (d) is your honest assessment, there is nothing wrong with that. After all, there are far more important things in life than badminton umpiring, and there can also be enormous pleasure in contributing to the sport through umpiring at the regional and national levels of competition. But if you

decide that pursuing a higher level of umpiring is a priority, then having made it this far in this manual you will hopefully choose the third option out of the remaining ones.

The details of the actual development plan will, of course, be driven by the umpiring attribute you are looking to improve (for example, voice characteristics, announcement style, management of players, court awareness). Whatever the specifics of the situation, though, consider adopting the following five-step process when putting together and executing the plan:

1. Set a clear goal, for example, passing an assessment for the umpiring level you are aspiring to reach.
2. Identify problems standing in the way of achieving the goal (for example, which specific areas of your current performance are falling short of the expected standard).
3. Understand the root causes of the problem(s) through self-reflection and feedback, as discussed in the previous sections.
4. Design a plan to address the root causes.
5. Execute the plan. Repeat steps 2-5 as many times as are needed until you have achieved your goal.

Specific elements of umpire development plans might include the following:

- Seeking out opportunities to officiate in as many tournaments as possible, especially at higher-level tournaments.
- Finding opportunities to watch umpires (either live or on video) who excel in the particular area you are looking to improve on (for example, enforcing continuous play).
- Recording yourself experimenting with different voice tones and cadences and asking others for feedback on the results.
- Conducting an in-depth analysis of the Laws and ITTO if you detect a gap in your technical knowledge and then asking a colleague to quiz you.
- Setting up a discussion group with colleagues to analyse approaches to specific incidents you see from watching badminton content on YouTube or other media outlets.
- Making an effort to use English more in everyday conversations, if English isn't your first language and you need to improve your proficiency (since English is the language used in all international badminton tournaments).
- Hiring a voice coach if you acknowledge that substantial changes in your voice are needed for effective presentation.



When putting together the plan, be sure to specify the expected duration and how you will measure your success. For the latter, draw again on your network of colleagues who have given you feedback already, and ask those you especially value if they will give you additional open and honest feedback

as you carry out your plan. This will help in monitoring the results of your efforts. As you assess your results, good or bad, make further rounds of adjustments until the goal you have set has been achieved.

The journey of continuous improvement is not always a smooth one. Be prepared for setbacks along the way and don't get discouraged when these occur. And, of course, don't forget to celebrate your successes!

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## 9.5 SUMMARY

Undertaking a path of continuous improvement as a badminton umpire is not for everyone. Making meaningful progress requires a degree of commitment, self-examination, humility, and the willingness to embrace change as shown in the preceding sections.

For those who embark on this path, never forget the goal that you are striving for. And as you progress, take pleasure in the progress you see in yourself and in the feedback you get from others. For many, there is as much happiness to be derived from the learnings and struggles during the process as there is in actually reaching the ultimate end goal. And finally, the continuous improvement strategies outlined in this chapter are relevant not just for badminton umpiring, but for life skills in general.

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## SECTION 10. SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1	Which of the following are important ways for umpires to prepare before a tournament? (Tick all that apply.)	Review the latest documentation (Laws, ITTO, etc.).  Post on social media that you will be attending.  Get enough rest leading up to the tournament.  Make sure your full attention is on the tournament.	
2	Which of these behaviours does NOT help an umpire project confidence on court?	Making prompt decisions.  Communicating decisions clearly.  Making jokes with the players.  Sitting up straight in the chair.	
3	Are any of these acceptable behaviours in the chair? (Tick any that apply.)	Slouching or leaning backwards.  Using exaggerated head movements to follow the shuttle.  Tapping one's fingers on one's legs.  Adjusting one's glasses repeatedly.	
4	Which of the following aspects of the voice can help an umpire sound professional?	Speaking slowly and clearly.  Projecting the voice from the diaphragm.  Varying the intonation according to the message.  All of the above.	
5	When conducting the coin toss, the umpire should...	...stand on the sideline of the court.  ...stand with his/her back to the umpire chair.  ...catch the coin on the back of his/her hand.  ...extend his/her hand parallel to the floor.	

6	The two-minute warm-up time starts...	...when the umpire sits down in the chair.	
		...as soon as the toss is done.	
		...when the players receive the shuttle(s) from the service judge.	
		...when the umpire says "Ready to play".	
7	Which of the following can the players do with the umpire's permission?	Test the shuttle.	
		Change the shuttle.	
		Alter the speed of the shuttle.	
		All of the above.	
8	Which of the following cases at the net constitutes obstruction by Player X?	Player X holds up her racket near the net.	
		Player X bounces Player Y's shot off her racket and back into Player Y's court.	
		Player Y makes a legal shot and hits Player X's racket on Player X's side of the net.	
		Player Y invades Player X's side of the net and their rackets clash.	
9	Which of the following are coaches allowed to do when sitting in the coaches' chairs at the back of the court?	Discuss a call with the nearest line judge.	
		Shout instructions to a player during a rally.	
		Use an electronic device to record part of the match.	
		None of the above.	
10	Umpires can best keep control of a match by...	...being friendly with the players.	
		...issuing a lot of cards.	
		...handling situations before they escalate.	
		...memorising the Laws and ITTO.	

11	Put the following actions from a stepwise approach to court management in the correct order from 1 to 4.	Use the player's name in a more formal warning.	
		Issue the player a yellow card.	
		Give the player a friendly warning.	
		Call the player to the chair for a stern and final warning.	
12	Service judges should...	...help protect line judges from any intimidation.	
		...keep a tube of shuttles in their hands at all times.	
		...explain service fault calls to players if they ask.	
		None of the above.	
13	How many challenges is each side permitted in an IRS match?	2 challenges per match.	
		2 unsuccessful challenges per match.	
		2 challenges per game.	
		2 unsuccessful challenges per game.	
14	Which of the following should umpires incorporate in their ongoing development?	Honest self-assessment.	
		Feedback from colleagues.	
		A concrete plan with clear steps to improve.	
		All of the above.	

**BWF**

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