



USA PICKLEBALL **OFFICIAL REFEREE** **CASEBOOK**

2023 USA Pickleball Official Referee Casebook

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1. Revised Case 4-23 to delete Scenario Two.
2. Revised the title of Case 5-23.
3. Added revised Case 7-23.
4. Added new Cases 11-23 and 12-23.

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FOREWORD

The 2023 USA Pickleball Official Referee Casebook is the official supplement to the USA Pickleball and IFP Official Rulebook. The Casebook is intended for those who officiate the sport, those who are learning to officiate and those players and fans that desire a better understanding of the rules of pickleball.

The Casebook contains accounts of actual scenarios where there was a question as to what rules apply to the situation and the appropriate ruling. Players, referees and fans can contribute scenarios for possible inclusion in the Casebook. Those scenarios appropriate for the Casebook will then be submitted to the USA Pickleball Rules Committee for consideration. Only those scenarios whose rulings and interpretations have been approved by the Rules Committee will be included in the Casebook.

Proposed scenarios may be submitted at any time via email to the USA Pickleball Director of Officiating.

Format

The Casebook is divided into two Sections. Section I, 2023 Casebook Topics, contains new topics that have been approved since the previous Casebook edition. Section II contains existing topics from the previous edition. The existing topics have been edited where necessary to reflect the 2022 rules and rule numbers.

Each Casebook item is uniquely numbered by year (e.g., Case 1-23 the first case in 2023, Case 2-23 is the second case in 2023, Case 1-21 was the first case in 2021, etc.) Each is labeled by topic in order to identify the essential topic. All applicable rule numbers are then identified. There is no attempt to arrange the cases numerically by rule number, as there are often multiple rules related to the scenario. The description of the topic is intended to be the primary identifier for the reader to navigate the Casebook.

Each scenario is described in detail followed by the appropriate ruling. Some topics will have a 'Comment' paragraph, which is intended to give additional information related to the scenario or insight into the spirit and intent of the rules.

Scenarios will always consist of teams playing doubles unless otherwise noted. In doubles, Team A will have A1 and A2 as partners while Team B will consist of B1 and B2 as partners. Any scenario action by the referee or players that is not specifically mentioned as being illegal can be assumed to be legal. For example, if the scenario begins with "Player A2 served....", and nothing more was noted about the serve or server, the assumption is that the score was correctly called, the server and receiver were both correct and ready, and the serve was legal.

Navigation Tools

Each entry in the Table of Contents is a hyperlink. Clicking anywhere on the topic name takes the reader to that specific case. The referenced rule number in each case is a hyperlink to the [2023 USA Pickleball/IFP Official Rulebook](#).

The index lists rule numbers in numerical order and the cases to which the rule is applicable for those who wish to search for all cases that relate to a specific rule.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section I – 2023 Casebook Topics

CASE 1-23: AM I THE CORRECT RECEIVER?	1
CASE 2-23: BALL ROLLS DOWN THE SURFACE OF A DEFLECTING NET	1
CASE 3-23: CHANGE OF STARTING SERVER.....	2
CASE 4-23: COIN FLIP TO DETERMINE MATCH WINNER	3
CASE 5-23: RESCINDING A REQUESTED MEDICAL TIME-OUT.....	3
CASE 6-23: PADDLE TOSS OR THROW	4
CASE 7-23: PLAYER ACTIONS AFTER THE SCORE IS CALLED	5
CASE 8-23: RE-ESTABLISHING AFTER CONTACTING THE NON-VOLLEY ZONE	6
CASE 9-23: QUESTIONABLE SERVE, SERVED BALL LANDS OUT	7
CASE 10-23: END CHANGE WHEN GAME ONE IS A FORFEIT.....	7
CASE 11-23: TIMING A MEDICAL TIME-OUT.....	8
CASE 12-23: INCORRECT SERVER(S) AFTER A SIDE OUT	8

Section II – Existing Casebook Topics

CASE 1-22: DEFLECTING NET CONTACTS A PLAYER.....	10
CASE 2-22: BALL CONTACTS A PLAYER'S HAT	10
CASE 3-22: CALLING TIME-OUT TO GET THE REFEREE'S ATTENTION	10
CASE 4-22: FAULT DISCOVERED BETWEEN GAMES	11
CASE 5-22: BALL TRAVELS BETWEEN THE NET AND NET POST AFTER LANDING	11
CASE 6-22: RECORDING THE PENALTY FOR A TECHNICAL FOUL.....	12
CASE 1-21: MULTIPLE SIMULTANEOUS FAULTS	13
CASE 2-21: DELAYED RECOGNITION OF INCORRECT SERVER	13
CASE 3-21: FAILURE TO CHANGE ENDS AT 6, 8 OR 11.....	14
Index of Cases by Rule Number	15

SECTION 1 – 2023 CASEBOOK TOPICS

CASE 1-23: AM I THE CORRECT RECEIVER?

Applicable Rule(s): [4.B.8](#); [4.B.1](#); [4.B.6.b](#)

SCENARIO: The correct server is lined up on the incorrect side. The receivers are positioned correctly based on their score. The receiver positioned diagonally across from the server asks if they are the correct receiver.

RULING: The referee should answer “Yes”, without any additional statement about the receivers being in the correct position.

COMMENT: Referee responses should be concise and only answer the question being asked. There are two goals:

- 1) To not create confusion for the receivers. If the referee answers “No”, the receivers may switch their positions (now incorrect) based on the referee’s answer. While a service fault will be called when the correct server serves from the incorrect position, if the receivers remain in the incorrect position, the receivers will incur a fault on the next rally. Answering “Yes” avoids the possibility of the receivers moving to the incorrect position.
 - 2) To not tip off the servers that they are in the wrong position. If the referee answers “No”, follow-up questions by the receivers may lead the servers to realize they are in the wrong position. Similarly, the servers may be tipped off to a problem if the referee attempts to avoid confusing the receivers by answering “No, but you are in the correct position”. The referee was not asked about the server’s position so the referee’s response should not include any information about the server’s position. Answering “Yes” will not lead to follow-up questions that could alert the servers to their error.
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CASE 2-23: BALL ROLLS DOWN THE SURFACE OF A DEFLECTING NET

NOTE: This scenario is a variation of Case 1-22 and examines what happens when a ball, after going over the net, contacts the billowing net.

Applicable Rule(s): [11.L.5.d](#); [11.K.1](#)

SCENARIO: A player hits a shot that contacts the top of the net but dribbles over to the opponent’s side. The net is billowing due to heavy wind. As the ball drops, it rolls down the surface of the billowing net before it bounces.

RULING: Because the net moved and flexed to the point it affected the normal flight of the ball as it dropped to the ground, this should be considered a hinder in accordance with Rule 11.L.5.d (net malfunction). A replay should be granted.

COMMENT: Players should have a reasonable expectation that court equipment will function as designed and that the equipment will not move or flex excessively during play. Players cannot be expected to anticipate how much a net can flex from an independent, transient

action. Such transient actions include the wind blowing hard enough that the net billows out. Normally, a ball that contacts the net as it drops to the ground is a live ball and play must continue, but if the net malfunctions to the point that it affects the flight of the ball, then a replay should be granted.

CASE 3-23: CHANGE OF STARTING SERVER

Applicable Rule(s): [5.A.2](#)

SCENARIO: Player B begins Game 1 of a match as the starting server. Between games, the team decides to change starting server but did not remember to move the starting server identification to Player A and did not notify the referee (or their opponents in non-officiated matches). Player A serves the ball to start Game 2 and the referee calls a fault for incorrect server and incorrect position because player B is still wearing the starting server identification. They tell the referee they intended to make the change for the second game. Are they allowed to change the starting server now (before the second rally of the game) and have Player A be the starting server, or must they finish the game with Player B as the starting server?

RULING: The team will be allowed to make the change to Player A as the starting server.

COMMENT: First, the fault call will stand. The referee appropriately assumed that Player B was the starting server since the team did not notify the referee of their intent to change and Player B was still wearing the starting server identification. The fault would also stand if the players had notified the referee (or their opponents in non-officiated matches) of their intent to change starting server but failed to exchange the starting server identification.

The error was discovered on the first rally of the game. The team indicated it was their intent to change per Rule 5.A.2 and have now been penalized for their error. It is reasonable to allow the players to change starting server but the decision must be made at this point only (i.e., before the second rally) and cannot be changed thereafter.

In this case, the referee would make the appropriate annotation on the scoresheet, the players would exchange starting server identification and switch positions, and the side out would have their opponent serving the second rally of the game at 0-0-1.

NOTE: The outcome would effectively be the same if this team was receiving to start the second game. The team would be faulted for incorrect receiver and would be allowed to make the change before the second rally of the game. The players and the referee would make the appropriate changes and the game would resume with the opponents continuing to serve at 1-0-2.

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CASE 4-23: COIN FLIP TO DETERMINE MATCH WINNER

Applicable Rule(s): [13.H.4](#); [13.A.1](#)

SCENARIO: In a doubles match, 2 out of 3 games, only one of the four players is present at the 10 minute mark. All of the appropriate notifications were made for second and/or final call. At 10 minutes, both teams are assessed a game forfeit. At 15 minutes, three of the four players have not reported, so both teams are assessed a match forfeit. How is the match winner determined?

RULING: The Tournament Director, or the Tournament Director's designee, will conduct a coin toss to determine the match winner.

COMMENT: The rules do not provide a formal tiebreaker method for this rare situation. Since a winner must be determined, a coin toss is a fair and equitable way to determine the winner.

NOTE: The scenario would be the same if none of the players reported in time, if only one player reported in time, or if only one player from each team reported in time.

CASE 5-23: RESCINDING A REQUESTED MEDICAL TIME-OUT

Applicable Rule(s): [10.B](#); [10.H.2.a](#)

SCENARIO: A player requests a medical time-out and the referee summons the medical personnel. After several minutes, and before medical personnel have arrived, the player declares she can resume play. The player claims that a medical time-out should not be assessed because medical personnel have not arrived yet. The opponent claims that the medical time-out should be assessed or, at the very least, a regular time-out should be assessed.

RULING: If the referee determines that it is safe for the player to resume play per Rule 10.H.2.a, then play is resumed per Rule 10.A.5. It is now considered a referee time-out and neither a medical time-out, a regular time-out nor a penalty (technical warning or technical foul) is assessed against the player.

COMMENT: A medical time-out does not officially begin until medical personnel arrive at the court. There could be any number of reasons why it might take longer than expected, the most obvious being they are already at a court attending to another player. The player has no control over how long it takes for medical personnel to arrive, so it is not appropriate to assess the medical time-out.

A regular time-out is assessed only when medical personnel determine that a valid medical condition does not exist. Medical personnel were not available to make that determination and the referee cannot make that determination, so it is not appropriate to assess a regular time-out.

While it may seem that the player is getting a "free" time-out, the reason the medical time-out did not officially start and a determination could not be made whether a valid medical condition existed were beyond the control of the player.

CASE 6-23: PADDLE TOSS OR THROW

NOTE: The purpose of this casebook entry is to provide better consistency on how the referee addresses paddle tosses, throws or drops. It is reasonable and appropriate to allow players to vent a certain level of frustration without penalty, which can include some paddle tosses, even mildly aggressive ones. The referee is still authorized to determine whether the paddle toss was unsportsmanlike or, combined with other circumstances, warrants an appropriate penalty.

Applicable Rule(s): [13.G.1](#), [13.G.1.i](#), [13.G.2.a](#)

13.G.1 authorizes the referee to issue a verbal warning for behavior that could escalate to a level that calls for a more severe penalty, or behavior that should not be repeated.

13.G.1.i authorizes the referee to issue a technical warning for minor unsportsmanlike behavior.

13.G.2.a authorizes the referee to issue a technical foul for an aggressive or reckless paddle throw that shows disregard for consequences but which does not strike another person or damage property.

SCENARIO ONE: After a timeout has been called, a player at the NVZ casually tosses their paddle to the baseline to mark their position for the next rally.

RULING: This is allowed. **No penalty is assessed.**

SCENARIO TWO: After losing a rally, the player yells 'Timeout!'. Clearly frustrated, they toss the paddle with some aggression from the NVZ to the baseline to mark their position for the next rally, then they storm off the court. The paddle may bounce, but it lands at the baseline and does not come close to any players or court fixtures.

RULING: No penalty is assessed, unless the referee determines that the action rises to the level of 'minor unsportsmanlike' behavior and **assesses a verbal warning or technical warning.**

SCENARIO THREE: After losing a rally, the player throws their paddle with some force at their feet directly in front of them. The paddle bounces loudly once or twice but stays in the general location of the player. No other players are around. The court is not damaged.

RULING: Since the paddle was thrown with some force, it is appropriate in this situation **to assess a verbal warning** for minor unsportsmanlike behavior, **or a technical warning** if the referee determines that the extent of force of the throw and the player's body language rises to the level that warrants the more severe penalty.

SCENARIO FOUR: After losing a rally, the player yells 'timeout' then throws their paddle with some force against the fence by their towel or water bottle, hard enough to be easily seen and heard. Spectators are on the other side of the fence. The paddle lands by their towel or water bottle.

RULING: It is appropriate in this situation **to assess a technical warning** for minor unsportsmanlike behavior **or a technical foul** if the referee determines that the extent of force

of the throw and the player's body language rises to the level that warrants the more severe penalty.

SCENARIO FIVE: After losing a rally, the player throws their paddle with some force against a wall, fence, or the net. The paddle rebounds in an obvious random direction.

RULING: It is appropriate in this situation **to assess a technical foul** for throwing the paddle with negligent disregard for the consequences.

CASE 7-23: PLAYER ACTIONS AFTER THE SCORE IS CALLED

Applicable Rule(s): [4.B.8](#), [4.C](#)

SCENARIO ONE: After the referee has called the score and before the ball is served, one of the receivers says "Wait, wait" and the receivers move to switch their positions without saying anything else. Nothing occurred that would constitute a hinder. What should the referee do?

RULING: The referee will stop play, allow the receivers to become ready in their new positions, and re-call the score to start play.

COMMENT: Players are allowed to ask the referee one of several questions before the ball is served and may say almost anything to get the referee's attention. The referee must acknowledge the play stoppage and deal with the reason, such as by asking the player why they stopped play. While the players did not immediately say anything other than "wait", their actions clearly indicate that they believe they are in the wrong position. The referee should treat this as though they asked about correct receiver or position and allow them to complete the position change.

NOTE: If this play stoppage ("wait, wait") occurred after the ball was served and before the return of serve, the referee would call a fault because the only allowable reason for play stoppage would be to question or clarify the score call.

SCENARIO TWO: With the correct receiver in the incorrect position, the referee calls the correct score. As the server starts their service motion but before the serve is hit, the receiver says "Wait, wait" and says they did not hear the score and therefore did not know if the correct score was called. The server claims that a distraction should be called because they were about to hit the ball to make the serve. What should the referee do?

RULING: The referee will stop play and tell the players their score, allow the receivers to change positions and become ready, and re-call the score to start play.

COMMENT: As in Scenario One, the referee must first acknowledge the play stoppage and deal with the reason. Once the receivers realize they are in the wrong position the referee should treat this as though they asked about correct receiver or position and allow them to complete the position change, since that would have been an allowable question before the serve is hit. Second, a distraction call is not appropriate since the ball was dead when play was stopped, which occurred before the ball was hit.

SCENARIO THREE: Same as Scenario Two, except the receiver says, "Wait, wait, we aren't ready - I need to move into the correct receiver position." The server claims that either (or

both) a distraction should be called or the receiver should be faulted for becoming not ready after the score call started. What should the referee do?

RULING: The referee will stop play, allow the receivers to become ready in their new positions, and re-call the score to start play.

COMMENT: This is essentially the same as Scenario Two. A distraction call is not appropriate for the same reason (i.e., the ball was dead the moment play was stopped). The receivers were clearly stopping play because they believed they were in the wrong position, so the referee should also treat this as though they asked about correct receiver or position. The receiver's inclusion of the words "not ready" does not make this a simple 'not ready' signal that would be ignored under Rule 4.C.2.

NOTE: Similar to Scenario One, if this play stoppage occurred after the ball was served and before the return of serve, the referee would call a fault because asking about one's own teams' correct player or position must be made before the serve. The receiving team can challenge the serving team's correct positions (and vice versa) at any time but run the risk of a fault if they are incorrect.

SCENARIO FOUR: After the referee has called the score and before the ball is served, one of the receivers says "Wait, wait" and the receivers begin talking to each other without saying anything else to the referee. The referee stops play and asks why they said, "Wait, wait" and is told they needed to talk to each other. Nothing occurred that would constitute a hinder. What should the referee do?

RULING: The referee will stop play, charge the players a time-out and go through the timeout procedure. If the receivers do not have any timeouts available, the referee will assess a technical warning for delay of game and re-call the score to start play.

COMMENT: As in Scenario One, the referee must acknowledge the play stoppage and deal with the reason. In this case, the player's actions clearly indicate that they were taking a timeout, which is permitted before the serve occurs. The referee should treat this as though they desired a timeout and complete the timeout procedure.

NOTE: Similar to Scenarios One and Three, if this play stoppage occurred after the ball was served and before the return of serve, the referee would call a fault because the only allowable reason to stop play after the serve is hit is to question or clarify the score call.

CASE 8-23: RE-ESTABLISHING AFTER CONTACTING THE NON-VOLLEY ZONE

Applicable Rule(s): [9.D](#)

SCENARIO: All four players are dinking at the NVZ. Player A1 attempts a high lob causing Player B1 to hit a volley in return. During the execution of the volley, Player B1 has her right foot on the ground outside the NVZ while the left foot is still touching the NVZ. Her left foot pushes off from the NVZ line back and away from the NVZ and the edge of her left heel touches the ground outside of the NVZ before hitting the volley. No other portion of either foot is now touching the NVZ.

RULING: There is no NVZ fault. The volley shot was legal.

COMMENT: After a player contacts the NVZ, Rule 9.D states that a volley shot cannot be made until “*both feet have made contact with the playing surface completely outside the non-volley zone.*” In this case, which is a typical push-off from the NVZ, once the entire foot is clear of the NVZ and any part of the player’s second foot touched the ground outside the NVZ before the volley was struck, the volley shot was legal. The rule does not require that the entire foot be placed on the ground in order to satisfy Rule 9.D.

CASE 9-23: QUESTIONABLE SERVE, SERVED BALL LANDS OUT

Applicable Rule(s): [4.A.9](#)

SCENARIO: A player makes a serve that the referee deems questionable and intends to call for a replay under Rule 4.A.9. The served ball lands outside the receiver’s service court. Which action takes precedence, the replay or a service fault for serving out of bounds?

RULING: The action that the referee observes as the basis for a replay under Rule 9.D occurred before the ball landed out of bounds. Therefore, calling for the replay takes precedence.

COMMENT: This is same as would apply if the player made a serve that the referee is certain was illegal and warrants a service fault call. In both cases, the referee must not wait for the serve to land before making the call. It is expected that the referee’s call, whether it is a replay or a fault, will be made promptly and decisively before the served ball lands.

CASE 10-23: END CHANGE WHEN GAME ONE IS A FORFEIT

Applicable Rule(s): [5.B.1](#); [5.B.3](#)

SCENARIO: Team A forfeits the first game in a 2 out of 3 to 11 match due to late arrival per Rule 13.H.4. Team A wins the next game. In Game 3, do the teams change ends at 6 points?

RULING: No, the teams do not switch ends in Game 3.

COMMENT: The intent of Rules 5.B.1 and 5.B.3 is to balance the amount of play that each team has on each end of the court. In this scenario, only two games will actually be played. Each team should play one full game from each end. If the teams change ends in Game 3, each team would play three-fourths of the two games from the same end. When there are conditions that make one end of the court more favorable (i.e., sun, wind, backdrop, etc.), changing ends would result in an unfair advantage or disadvantage to one of the teams.

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CASE 11-23: TIMING A MEDICAL TIME-OUT

Applicable Rule(s): [10.B.1.a](#); [10.B.2.a](#)

SCENARIO: A player is injured and requests a medical time-out or, in some cases, the referee determines medical attention is needed (Rule 10.H.2.a). Upon arrival at the court by medical personnel (or the Tournament Director in the absence of medical personnel), the referee starts their timer to begin the 15-minute period. Medical personnel determine it is necessary to provide treatment off court at another location in the venue (e.g., a dedicated medical tent). What should the referee do?

RULING: Pause the timer, accompany the player and medical personnel to the new location, and resume the timer when medical personnel resume treatment. If the player is able to resume play after treatment, pause the timer again to allow untimed transport back to the court.

COMMENT: The intent of a medical time-out is to provide a reasonable period of time for an injured player to receive medical attention. The 15-minute period is not solely intended to regulate the time that play is interrupted. Rather, it is intended to be the period of time that medical assistance is rendered to the player. The rule changed several years ago from starting the timer when the time-out was requested to starting the timer when medical personnel arrive at the court for this very reason. As such, it is appropriate to pause the timer when a player is moved to another location for treatment so that the time in transit between locations is not counted.

CASE 12-23: INCORRECT SERVER(S) AFTER A SIDE OUT

Applicable Rule: [4.B.10](#)

SCENARIO ONE: In a doubles match after a side-out, Team A is ahead at 5-4-1. Player A1 serves the ball and loses the rally. It is now 5-4-2. Player A2, who is the second server, serves and wins two rallies. The score is now 7-4-2. Player A2 loses the third rally. It should be side out but, Player A1 serves a second time and wins the rally while no one recognized the error. The score is now 8-4-2. Player A1 serves again and it is during this rally that the referee stops play and calls a fault because Player A1 had previously served as the first server. What is the correct ruling at that point?

RULING: All points that were scored count, including the eighth point scored during Player A1's second time serving, because the serve for the next rally (at 8-4-2) had occurred. It is now side-out, with Team B serving at 4-8-1.

COMMENT: The referee, Team A and Team B, each had the opportunity to correct the mistake as soon as Player A1 served at 7-4-2. The fault can be enforced and the error corrected before the next serve occurs. After the next serve occurs, all previous points scored stand. The same outcome would be true if the side out went to Team B, and Team B happened to fault due to an incorrect first server. They might try to claim that since they were called for incorrect server, Team A should be faulted for their previous service error. But, once Team B served, previous errors are not corrected.

NOTE: This scenario highlights a firm principle; once the next serve occurs, players and referees do not go back in time to correct an error.

SCENARIO TWO: In a doubles match after a side-out, Player A1 serves at 5-4-1 and wins four rallies. At 9-4-1, Team A loses the next rally but Player A1 thinks they are actually the second server and that it should be a side-out to Team B. Player A2 does not remember whether or not they have served either, and does not question it when Player A1 tosses the ball to Team B. Player B1 serves the ball at 4-9-1. Before either player on Team A returns the ball, they catch the ball and say they are now certain that Player A2 never served. What is the ruling?

RULING: If all players (and the referee if there is one) agree that Team A did not get their second serve, the serve goes back to Player A2 to serve at 9-4-2.

COMMENT: Team A is effectively stopping play to identify (challenge) that player B1 is the not correct server. Rule 4.B.10 allows an incorrect server error to be corrected up to the time the ball is served for next rally. In this case, the correct server was supposed to be player A2 on second serve. Team B should not be called for a fault since all four players in good faith thought it was a legitimate side out. In officiated play, it would be a referee correction for incorrectly starting Team B's first server rally.

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SECTION II – EXISTING CASEBOOK TOPICS

CASE 1-22: DEFLECTING NET CONTACTS A PLAYER

Applicable Rule(s): [11.L.5.d](#); [7.G](#)

SCENARIO: Player A1 is dinking with Player B1. Player A1 hits a dink that takes them into the non-volley zone very close to the net. Player B1 goes to return the ball but hits it hard into the net, causing the net to stretch and touch Player A1's paddle. The ball drops on Player B1's side without going over the net.

RULING: Because the net moved and flexed to the point it contacted Player A1, this should be considered a hinder in accordance with Rule 11.L.5.d (net malfunction). A replay should be granted.

COMMENT: Players should have a reasonable expectation that court equipment will function as designed and that the equipment will not move or flex excessively during play. Players cannot be expected to anticipate how much a net can flex from an independent, transient action. Such transient actions include a ball hitting the net or the wind blowing hard enough that the net billows out. Play should normally continue, but if the net malfunctions to the point that it contacts a player, then a replay should be granted. Replays are also granted for other transient, unexpected net malfunctions, such as when a temporary net moves from its normal position on the court due to wind or the ball hits the center pole if it protrudes up through the top of the net.

CASE 2-22: BALL CONTACTS A PLAYER'S HAT

Applicable Rule(s): [7.H](#); [11.H](#)

SCENARIO: A player makes a quick move to make a play on the ball. In the process, the player's hat slips off her head. The ball hits the hat before the hat lands on the court.

RULING: Because the hat has not yet landed on the court, the hat is still considered part of the player, even though it is not on the head. Accordingly, it is a fault on the player whose hat was hit by the ball. (*Rule 7.H*) If the hat lands on the court before being hit by the ball, the hat becomes part of the court and the ball remains in play. (*Rule 11.H*)

CASE 3-22: CALLING TIME-OUT TO GET THE REFEREE'S ATTENTION

Applicable Rule(s): [4.B.8](#); [10.A](#)

SCENARIO: A player wants to get the referee's attention quickly to ask a question and says "time-out". The referee hears the time out call and starts to follow standard time-out procedures. The player tells the referee that he just wanted to ask a question before the serve and not take an official time-out.

RULING: Since the player was just trying to get the referee's attention, the referee should answer the player's question and recall the score to resume play.

COMMENT: In this scenario, the phrase "time-out" is just being used to get the referee's attention and not to call for an official time-out. While other phrases are preferred to get the referee's attention, the referee should not charge a time-out to the player when their intention is to simply ask a question or make an appeal.

CASE 4-22: FAULT DISCOVERED BETWEEN GAMES

Applicable Rule(s): [4.B.10](#); [10.A.4](#)

SCENARIO: The referee calls "time in" to start game number 2 in a multi-game match. Player A1 gets ready to serve. Before the serve occurs, Player B1 calls a "time out" and correctly brings to the referee's attention that there was an incorrect server fault that occurred in the last point of Game 1 and that Team A should not be awarded the win. The referee agrees.

RULING: The referee should announce "correction" and apply an incorrect server fault to Game 1, negating Team A's win. Since the first serve of Game 2 has not occurred yet, play resumes at the last score of Game 1 before the incorrect server fault. (*Rule 4.B.10*)

COMMENT: While Player B1 called "time out" to get the referee's attention, the referee should discuss with Team B if they actually intend to call an official time-out. If they were just trying to get the referee's attention in order to make the appeal, the referee should not enforce the time-out rule (see related Case 3-22). If Team B wishes to use a time-out, the referee should announce the time-out and charge Team B with a time-out in Game 1. If Team B has no time-outs remaining in Game 1, the referee resumes play with no penalty to Team B for calling a time-out with none remaining. The time-out is not charged in Game 2. (*Rule 10.A.4*)

CASE 5-22: BALL TRAVELS BETWEEN THE NET AND NET POST AFTER LANDING

Applicable Rule(s): [7.C](#); [11.I.1](#)

NOTE: Rule 7.C establishes a fault for hitting the ball under the net or between the net and the net post. The question arises what happens after a shot hits the opponent's court with enough backspin to travel back between the net post and net. Is it fault on the striking player? This case answers the question.

SCENARIO: Team A hits a ball across the net. The ball lands in bounds on Team B's court but with enough backspin (or due to the wind) that the ball travels back through the gap between the net and the net post.

RULING: Team A has executed a legal shot by hitting the ball across the net and in bounds. Team B must make a play on the ball before the ball either hits a permanent object, bounces twice, or otherwise becomes dead. In this scenario, Team B did not make a play before the ball traveled through the gap between the net and net post. Team B may, however, reach over, under or around the net to make a play on the ball as provided for in Rule 11.I.1.

CASE 6-22: RECORDING THE PENALTY FOR A TECHNICAL FOUL

NOTE: These scenarios examine what happens when a technical foul and a fault happen in close proximity to one another. They describe how to record the penalty based on the timing of the technical foul in relation to the fault. The timing is important because of the impact on which player serves and from what position.

Applicable Rule(s): [13.G.2.a](#); [13.G.2.b](#); [13.G.3.e](#); [3.A.41](#)

SCENARIO ONE: Player A1 is serving with the score 0-8-2 and serves the ball into the net. The ball hits the ground and the referee announces “side out”. Player A1 then turns and aggressively throws the paddle in frustration causing it to break. The referee appropriately announces “technical foul, unsportsmanlike conduct.” (*Rule 13.G.2.a*)

RULING: The service fault results in a side out, so the referee must determine which event to record first, the technical foul penalty or the side out. In this case, the rally ended before Player A threw the paddle, so the proper sequence is to record the side out first and then record the technical foul penalty. The moment the rally ended, the status of play immediately became Player B1 (who is Team B’s starting server) serving from the right service area with the score 8-0-1. Since Team A had a score of zero, one point is awarded to Team B. (*Rule 3.A.40*) The serve still belongs to Player B1, but since the point was awarded to them after the side out occurred, the score is now 9-0-1 and Player B1 must serve from the left service area. This breaks with the convention that the first server after a side out always serves from the right service area, but it is consistent with how a technical foul that occurs at any other point in a game would be recorded. A point added to or subtracted from a serving team’s score does not affect who the server is. The serving team simply reacts to the change in points by adjusting the server’s position. The same holds true in this case. Player B1 was the correct server after the side out (before the technical foul), so B1 remains the server after the technical foul is recorded and serves from the left service area.

SCENARIO TWO: Player A1 serves with the score 0-8-2. Team B returns the serve. Player A2 then mishits a very high third shot lob that is clearly going to be out of bounds. While the ball is in the air, Player A2 in frustration screams an extremely objectionable profanity. By rule, the referee must always wait until the rally ends to call a technical foul. (*Rule 13.G.3.e*) So here, after Team B makes the “out” call the referee announces “technical foul” first and then “side out”. (*Rule 13.G.2.b*)

RULING: As with Scenario One, the referee must determine which event to record first, the technical foul penalty first or the side out. In this case, the Player A2 uttered the profanity before the rally ended, so the proper sequence is to record the technical foul penalty first and then record the side out. One point is added to Team B, giving them nine points. The side out is then recorded, which means the serve goes over to Team B with the score 9-0-1. Player B1 is Team B’s starting server, so the next rally begins with Player B2 serving from the right service area at 9-0-1.

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CASE 1-21: MULTIPLE SIMULTANEOUS FAULTS

Applicable Rule(s): [4.B.9](#); [4.B.10](#)

SCENARIO: After a side out, Player A2 is the correct first server but Player A1 readies to serve from the right court. The score is called and Player A1 serves with an illegal service motion.

RULING: When the ball is hit to make the serve, the referee immediately calls *“Service fault; wrong server, wrong player position and illegal service motion; second server.”* This approach informs both teams of all infractions and that, although three faults occurred, only one fault is charged to Team A for scoring purposes. The referee adjusts the scoresheet by changing the clip to second serve over Player A1 and makes a mental note that Player A1 should now be serving as the second server from the left court. Team A may be confused as to what adjustments they need to make but the referee will not offer any additional information unless asked. It is Team A’s responsibility before the next rally to ask, if necessary, if they now have the correct server and are in the correct position.

COMMENT: The guiding principle is that the referee shall identify all violations as soon as they are realized. If only one or two of the three faults are identified by the referee, Team A could inadvertently commit another fault, either by A2 incorrectly serving the second serve, by A2 serving from the left court (incorrect player position), or by A1 using another illegal service motion.

CASE 2-21: DELAYED RECOGNITION OF INCORRECT SERVER

Applicable Rule(s): [4.B.10](#)

SCENARIO ONE: Player A1 readies to serve from the left court after a side out although A2 is the correct server. A1 serves and loses the rally. The referee does not recognize the incorrect server fault and calls the score to start the rally on second serve. A2 then serves, although A1 is now the correct server, and loses that rally. The referee declares a side out. The referee realizes the error after the side out and before Team B makes the first serve of the side out.

RULING: By rule, only the most recently played rally can be corrected, if necessary. In this case, there is no score to be corrected as Team A lost the rally on second serve resulting in a side out. The referee will inform both teams that the last serve by Player A2 should have resulted in an incorrect server and an incorrect player position fault.

SCENARIO TWO: Same as Scenario One, except the referee realizes the error after the score is called and Team B hits the ball to make the first serve of the side out.

RULING: In this case, the most recent rally served by Team A cannot be corrected and the referee will not inform the teams of Team A’s missed incorrect server and incorrect player position faults because those rallies are in the books and cannot be corrected. Call a receiver fault if A1 returns the serve as A2 is the correct receiver. Otherwise, no action is necessary as both teams have the correct server, correct receiver and are in the correct position.

CASE 3-21: FAILURE TO CHANGE ENDS AT 6, 8 OR 11

Applicable Rule(s): [5.B.3](#); [5.B.4](#); [5.B.5](#)

NOTE: How should the referee rule if the required change of ends did not occur when the end change point (6, 8 or 11) was scored? This scenario answers the question.

SCENARIO: In the third game of a match, Team B, with Player B2 as first server, scores a point to go ahead 6 - 5 but the referee and the players fail to switch ends. Player B2 continues serving and Team B scores two more points when it is realized that the required end change at point 6 was not done.

RULING: As all points were played in good faith and neither the referee nor the players noticed that the end change was not done after point 6, the teams change ends at 8-5 and Player B2 continues as first server.

Index of Cases by Rule Number

This index lists rule numbers in numerical order and the cases to which the rule is applicable.

Rule	Case	Rule	Case
3.A.41	6-22	9.D	8-23
4.A.9	9-23	10.A	3-22
4.B.1	1-23	10.A.4	4-22
4.B.10	1-21 , 2-21 , 4-22	10.B	5-23
4.B.6.b	1-23	10.B.1.a	11-23
4.B.8	3-22 , 1-23 , 7-23	10.B.2.a	11-23
4.B.9	1-21	10.H.2.a	5-23
4.B.10	12-23	11.H	2-22
4.C	7-23	11.I.1	5-22
5.A.2	3-23	11.K.1	2-23
5.B.1	10-23	11.L.5.d	1-22 , 2-23
5.B.3	10-23	13.A.1	4-23
5.B.3	3-21	13.G.1	6-23
5.B.4	3-21	13.G.1.i	6-23
5.B.5	3-21	13.G.2.a	6-22 , 6-23
7.C	5-22	13.G.2.b	6-22
7.G	1-22	13.G.3.e	6-22
7.H	2-22	13.H.4	4-23

