

WSF Referees' Review December 2006



Editor: Rod Symington

Since the last issue of the *Referees' Review* WSF Referees have been busy, as the table of assignments later in this Newsletter reveals. New Zealand, Hong Kong, Belfast, Cairo, Cape Town, Sheffield, Karachi, etc. We are fortunate that some of the WSF Referees who were assigned to those venues have been willing to enlighten us about their experiences. It is clearly not true that WSF Referees can only count to eleven (if that); some of them can write as well! My thanks go to all those contributors who have made this edition of the *Referees' Review* so ample and so interesting!

Whilst all this exotic travel has been taking place, those of us who stayed home have been busy as well; attempting to complete the comprehensive revision of the WSF International Referee Programme. The Working Group with the task that has turned out to be the most burdensome, was that charged with developing explicit criteria ("competencies" in the contemporary jargon) for the achievement of International and World Referee status. Those criteria have now been finalised and, if approved by the WSF Management Committee, they will be distributed as soon as they have been approved. Once that happens, all International Referees and all those who want to become International Referees will be able to see clearly what they have to do to achieve and maintain the WSF standard.



**WORLD SQUASH
FEDERATION**

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In addition, the Group is also attempting to refine the appointment process, in order to ensure fairness and due process throughout.

This same Working Group has also been developing criteria for every level of refereeing (from Basic up through National and Regional to World), and it has also been working on a set of training programmes for every category of referee. Standard WSF written examinations are also in the works. As you can see, this Working Group (Jennifer Birch-Jones, Chris Sinclair, John Small [Chair], and Rod Symington) has been working very hard indeed! However, the completion of its work will take a little while longer.

In the meantime, the eleven Working Groups that were established by the WSF following the comprehensive review of the International Referee Programme have almost all completed their work, and their recommendations have been largely adopted by the WSF.

Another of those Groups delivered its Report recently – and that is the subject of the next item. (Ed.)

The Position of the Referee

One of the eleven Working Groups was given the task of examining the problem of the location of the officials at major squash events where a glass court is being used. We all know the problem: Because seating the two officials in the recommended position (over the back-wall) would impede the spectators' view of the action and spoil the television or video image, the officials are banished to a less-than-ideal location somewhere in the gallery – whereby "somewhere" can be anywhere where there happens to be a free seat. (It even happens that the event organiser forgets to allow for seating

for the officials and that the seats that they should occupy have been sold!)

The Working Group examining this problem has recommended a radical solution: that the two officials should be seated behind the *front* wall.

Among the points made in the Working Group's Report were the following (the content has been slightly edited). (Ed.)

A. History:

Since the arrival of Squash on TV in the 1980s there has been a trade-off between the referee's position and the ability of TV to film using an unobstructed central master shot.

When the match runs smoothly, the position of the Marker and Referee is not an issue.

Referee positioning at the back wall has, however, become a crucial issue in regard to good judgment and the accuracy of referee's decisions.

B. Resulting issues:

In any trial to amend the Referee & Marker positions around all-glass courts, we have to contend with the TV people who generally win out as they claim that their position is vital for the TV broadcast.

Clearly, there will be resistance to putting the Marker and Referee over the glass back-wall, as this will affect TV and thus sponsorship.

The current Referee's position will always cause blind areas and increase the number of arguments between players and officials.

There are two major challenges dictating the change of the current referee positioning on an all-glass-court:

-- The referee's decisions are often disputed because of the referee's inability to see all of the court all of the time, if the referee is seated at some distance behind the court..

-- The TV people and sponsors complain if the referee is seated above the back-wall.

C. Recommendations:

The Referee Positioning Working Group had several debates and discussions:

We recommend the use of a "tin marker", an official sitting close to the side wall near the front with two lights, one for when a ball hits the tin, the other for double bounce.

Only the referee sees the light but it provides great back-up in these areas leaving the referee to deal with interpretative decisions. (This was tested in the British Open 2005) [*Note: "Tin men" were used as long ago as the Men's World Championship in Toulouse in 1987 – Ed.*]

Referees have asked us to rectify the fact that they are seated among the spectators.

We recommend that the Referee be provided with an instant replay on his or her own personal screen, a system that could easily work and not delay the match. The Referee could see the replay from either the main camera position, from above or behind the front wall and the replay would automatically be displayed with a delay of 5 seconds. In discussion with PSA Players, they have said that they would be happy for the referee to wait a few seconds and view the automatic replay if the decision was going to be correct. Referees have said that they would only use this facility in a handful of situations.

The TV crew needs to understand and try to work out a way that they do get their cameras into an acceptable position for top TV coverage. Extensive discussion by the promoters with the TV crews could possibly help.

D. Conclusion:

Referees have to move to the side- or front-wall of the court and find a way to make judgments from a new but close perspective.

The new proposed Referee Positioning [behind the front-wall] should provide the WSF and accordingly the sport as a whole with:

Better referee position that allows follow-up on all the calls during the

match and hence give affirmative non-disputed decisions

The proposed new referee position considers the goals and objectives of the WSF to promote the sport and its related programs.

Accordingly the new referee positioning should take camera positions into account and give maximum room for TV coverage, in order to maximize the return from WSF events.

It is undoubted that the need for technology in all Squash events becomes mandatory. Therefore, any new position should include the physical relocation of referees outside the court, combined with technological support in the form of communication, replay and recording technologies

We believe that the proposed new refereeing position will dramatically enhance the line of sight for referees and will result in far fewer disputed decisions.

Additionally, the proposed position will not contradict the requirements of TV coverage and sponsors of the game.

Editor's note: Needless to say, this proposal from the Working Group has already caused a lot of discussion and debate! Comments on the proposal from various leading referees and assessors were assembled by the Director of Referees, Graham Waters, and forwarded to the WSF ManCom.

Video Replay

"I felt impatient and annoyed at the events that had affected the outcome of the game. I would like to see the powers that be bring in an appeals referee or at least use the "TV ref" technology that even old fashioned cricket uses now, where a third official sits in the tv booth, gets the incident replayed in slow motion and makes a decision. It works beautifully: We had Horizon giving slo-mos after each point in the marquee – why were they not used?" (Martin Bronstein on Super Series Final)

The respected squash journalist Martin Bronstein has been recommending the use of video replay for a number of years. (He has also argued for the use of the three referee system, but that is another issue!)

At the Hong Kong Open (see report below) video replays were used – but only to let the spectators see the situation again.

But the video replay as an aid for the Referee may be employed soon in an upcoming PSA event. According to the guidelines, the following will be the procedure. (Ed.)

"The Referee and Marker will occupy their normal (not correct, but normal) position some 10 or so rows back in the gallery behind the back wall. There will also be a monitor, within easy viewing of the Referee that will be showing the squash match with a 7-8 second delay. If, and only if, the Referee wishes to consult it, he or she can watch the last few seconds of the rally again before rendering a decision. If the Referee chooses to consult the monitor, he or she should simply hold up a hand to indicate to the players "hold on for a second while I double-check". If the critical point in the rally has passed, the Referee can ask (over a separate microphone or radio link) for a replay. If available, great, otherwise, the Referee gives the first instinctive decision.

A few points to note:

- the players do not have the right to request that the Referee consult the replay. Only the Referee may decide to do so.

- if there is any technical glitch and the video feed is unavailable, the Referee simply gives the first instinctive decision and play proceeds

- the Referee is not required to be involved in any way with the operation of the equipment

- the position of the (only) camera will be as close to the same vantage point as the Referee's seat as possible

The following are not currently possible, but might become future enhancements as technology becomes more sophisticated and less expensive:

- a review from a camera with a different view (e.g. a replay of a dubious pickup of a drop shot from a camera looking through the front wall)

- a request to have a second look at, say, the 38th shot of a 100 shot rally, that might have been out on the side wall

- slo-mo replay is not yet available, all replays are at full speed.”

Editorial

(Note: The opinions expressed in this Editorial are the responsibility solely of the Editor and in no way reflect the official position of the World Squash Federation).

The issue of refereeing – and in particular the location of the referee – continues to be a hot topic of discussion in the media and on Internet websites following major events, particularly PSA events. The Report of the WSF Working Group on the Position of the Referee has proposed a solution that at first blush seems a little too radical (placing the officials behind the *front* wall), but it could have one very welcome outcome: to force us all to look at the location of the referee once again with unbiased and more critical eyes. It also invites us to re-think the wider question of how many officials there should be and where they should be located.

Players seem to think that the referees should be perfect, no matter where they are seated. As we all know, this is both unrealistic and unfair: at one event the referees may be placed ten feet behind the court, at the next twenty feet, and at a third event thirty or more feet. (In each case we must add another 30 feet to get the distance from their location to the front wall.) And in each case the elevation of the referee may be different – or there may be no elevation at all, as at the recent U.S. Open where the referees were seated with their heads at floor-level!

In an article I wrote some time ago (and published elsewhere) I likened the typical location of the squash referee to placing a football referee in the stands, or a diving judge on the bottom of the pool with scuba gear. This was, of course, intended to be satire, but given the persistent habit of locating the referees at a squash event in locations that guarantee their performance cannot possibly be optimum, reality often exceeds fiction. The standard line of WSF Referees travelling to an event is: “I wonder if we’ll be seated in the same postal code as the players?” But this problem has long since proceeded beyond a joke: for far too long it has been an impediment to the sport and

has caused an unfair blot on the reputations of referees.

At the highest levels this is a professional sport, with an increasing number of events and prize money. The players deserve the best refereeing possible – and the highly qualified WSF Referees want to give it to them. Clearly, what is required is a major effort by all the parties involved to resolve this major issue. What is needed is not only an agreement on a standard refereeing system and a standard location for the referees, but for these two provisions to become *mandatory* for every major event. For far too long squash has been held back by an “it’ll do” attitude (just look at the lack of professional production values at most events) – and the indifference to the location of the referees is another of the lackadaisical factors that mar the sport. Is there any other sport in the world that behaves this way? Is there any other sport that leaves it up to the whim or indifference of local organisers to decide from where the matches shall be officiated? Would this happen in tennis, rugby, any kind of football?

Squash will not have matured until the issue of officiating and the location of the officials is settled once and for all. Until that day squash will remain a minor sport – and if it continues to refuse to solve the officiating problem, it will deserve to remain a minor sport.

Another Opinion on this subject from Martin Bronstein:



Time For A Change

Come on WSF, PSA WISPA, wake up, it’s time for action! It’s time to change our outmoded refereeing system. Four times in the last few months I have seen results affected by outrageously bad decisions at critical junctures of the match, made by referees

sitting 30 yards from the action at the front wall. Each time I got angry – and I was just a writer...just think how the player felt, with his livelihood at stake.

These are not bad referees, just humans who make mistakes. It is time to do something about it, time to change the system so there is an appeal procedure so that very bad decisions can be reversed or nullified.

SUGGESTION ONE: Use the American system of a referee and two linesmen. The referee sits at the back in the middle with one linesman by the back wall, left side, and the second on the right wall. The objections usually are a) it's American and nothing good is American, and 2) the players will appeal every decision. So what? How long does it take to appeal? Maybe 30 seconds at the most. Let us remember in tennis and badminton, they have at least six line judges to assist the main official. Surely squash can handle three? And let us make the marker redundant. The main advantage of the three-man system is that it prevents a player getting into a head on collision with the referee. If the referee and two linesmen agree on a decision, it is very difficult for a player to argue with three officials all of whom had different views of the action.

SUGGESTION TWO: Retain the present system, but have the match (chief) referee sitting in a booth with the Horizon people who are putting out closed circuit TV with monitors for the audience. Adrian Battersby is getting good at instant replays – he does it after almost every rally and you can see the audience looking at the replays to see what really happened. Simply have walkie-talkie communication between Referee and match referee, and if a player appeals, the decision is left to the booth where the match referee can watch the replay as many times as necessary to come to a conclusion. If there is still doubt that the referee was wrong, then stay with the initial decision.

**(Reprinted with permission from Martin Bronstein's Global Gallery May 2006
http://www.squashtalk.com/html/news/may06/globalgallery06_5.htm)**

See also Martin Bronstein's latest Global Gallery (December 2006) which he devotes entirely to the issue of refereeing

http://www.squashtalk.com/html/news/dec06/globalgallery06_5.htm.

From the Director



Graham Waters

What? – another *Referees' Review* and Rod is demanding another column "From the Director". Where does the time go?

There continues to be a demand for WSF Referees, for which I am sure we are all grateful. The second half of 2006 saw WSF Referees assigned to 12 events, including both World Opens. Please refer to the chart showing the specific assignments for this period. In addition, there were two events postponed: the Hedonism WISPA event in Jamaica because of a scheduling conflict; and the Qatar Classic because the construction of a new facility was behind schedule and would not be available for their planned October dates. This tournament has been rescheduled for April 2007 and the 2007 event will go ahead as planned next November. No word yet for a possible new date for the Jamaican event.

The first two months of 2007 are shaping up to be very busy in North America, with the usual PSA Super Series events in Toronto, Chicago, and New York. Additionally, there is a host of one- and two-star PSA events in such places as Dayton, Ohio; Vancouver, British Columbia; Winnipeg, Manitoba; Portland, Oregon; San Francisco, California; and Halifax, Nova Scotia. Of course, there are the long-standing WISPA events in Rye, New York and Greenwich, Connecticut. And that's just in January and February.

March looks not so busy at this point, with the Canary Wharf Classic in London being the only major PSA event and the Burning River Classic in Ohio the largest WISPA tournament. There are of course many satellite and smaller events on both calendars. April has three

major events offering both PSA and WISPA draws - the Kuwait Open, the Qatar Classic (rescheduled from October 2006), and the Irish Open in Dublin. These are followed quickly by the European Team Championships, this year in Italy. May offers us the Texas Open (WISPA) in Dallas and the Liverpool Open PSA event before the ever-shortening "off-season break"!

I would like to thank all of the WSF Referees and Assessors who responded to my request for comments on the report from the Working Group looking a new Referees' Position. I have written to that Working Group and pointed out that we all agreed on the problem and we would welcome the use of a "tin marker" and/or replay technology, but we did take issue with the recommended position behind the front wall. I amalgamated all of the comments received into a single document, and have sent it back to that Working Group with a request that they reconsider their proposed new position in light of the comments that you all contributed. I will update you all on future developments.

Partly as a result of this paper, and partly because of ongoing conversations with Adrian Battersby, we are currently in discussion with Horizon about setting up a trial for using a replay to assist the referees in making decisions. If those discussions come to fruition, the trial will probably take place at an event early in 2007. I cannot tell you which event yet, as we want to ensure the support and cooperation of the promoter, and that has not been done yet.

A continuing concern is the all too frequent case of a WSF Referee pulling out of an event after having accepted the assignment. This cause many problems, firstly for the event promoters, who are now one referee short of what they requested, and secondly for the WSF, who must now scramble around in an attempt to find a replacement. This is not always possible at the last minute, or of it is possible, costs are much higher for last-minute travel arrangements. So, please, when you are invited to referee by the WSF, please check with your family, check with your employer, make sure there won't be any last minute problems. I fully understand that emergencies can happen at any time, but the most recent occurrences have not been of that nature at all.

I am sure you will all join me in wishing Lorraine our very best wishes in her future career. She has been a tower of strength in the WSF Office and has been a huge help to me in coordinating the Referees and Rules Committee activities. When she walks out of the Hastings office on December 22nd, she will leave a gaping void that will be very difficult to fill. Lorraine, don't be a stranger and come and visit the squash crowd whenever you can. We will miss you!

As 2006 draws to a close, I would like to wish you all my best wishes for the holiday season, and peace, prosperity, and successful assessments for 2007.



Schedule of WSF Refereeing Assignments, July – December, 2006

Month	2006	Site	#	Referees Assigned
July	Junior Men's World Championships	Palmerston North, NZ	4	Jack Allen, Damien Green, Chris Sinclair, Mike Collins
Aug	English Open	Sheffield	1	Wendy Danzey
Sept	Men's World Open	Cairo	3	Nasser Zahran, John Massarella, Fahim Gul Khan
Sept	British Open	Nottingham	1	Dean Clayton
Sept	PanAm Champs	Medillin		Assessor requested – none available
Sept	Women's World Teams	Edmonton	4	Roy Gingell, Wendy Danzey, Dean Clayton, Paul Ansdell Tony Parker (Assessor)
Oct	Hong Kong Open	Hong Kong	4	Chris Sinclair, Jamshed Gul Khan, Harvey Bowlt, Yogi Singh
Oct.	Hedonism Open	Negril, Jamaica	1	Postponed to new date
Oct.	World Masters	Cape Town	2	Munir Shah, Damien Green
Nov	Qatar Classic	Doha	6	Postponed to new date
Nov	Pakistan Open	Karachi	1	Ayaz Khan
Nov	US Open	Boston	1	Paul Ansdell
Nov	Women's World Open	Belfast	3	Jack Allen, Ian Allanach, Nasser Zahran
Dec	Saudi Int.	Al Khobar	3	Jamshed Gul Khan, Ayaz Khan, Mohammad Fayyaz, possibly 1 more

The Lexus of Edmonton 2006 Women's World Team Squash Championships – (from now on to be known as Wendy's Canadian Experience [WCE]!)

Wendy Danzey

I couldn't believe it when I received an email earlier in the year from Lorraine at WSF headquarters in Hastings inviting me to officiate at the WCE in Edmonton. This was a dream come true; Geography was one of my favourite subjects at school and Canada such a vast country has always fascinated me especially the Rockies, with stories of cowboys and Indians and big grizzly bears!

Three other UK WSF Referees were invited Roy Gingell, Dean Clayton and Tony Parker as the assessor. As I had semi-retired at the end of April I was keen to stay on and do the 'Rockies', Tony on hearing this said, "if you can do it I can do it"!

The Tournament was held at the prestigious Royal Glenora Club in Edmonton which has unbelievable facilities – 10 tennis courts, 8 squash courts (plus all glass court for the event), 5 badminton courts, fitness centre, outdoor pool, indoor ice arena, bowling lanes, games room, bridge club, pro's shop, affiliation with 3 golf courses, gymnastics room, table tennis; not to mention childcare, lounges, bars, restaurants, meeting and banqueting rooms!

We had eighteen referees, 5 WSF (4 UK and Paul Ansdell USA), Wendy Ansdell USA, Karen Anderson Jamaica and 11 Canadians including Wes Barlow the TR who did an excellent job and looked after us all very well. It was a six day tournament with three sessions per day, starting on Sunday, day off Wednesday, finishing on Saturday. The tournament was a huge success, running smoothly without any hitches or complaints, with the most exceptional unexpected beautiful warm sunny days. Unfortunately, Dean had an accident on the first day and was unable to referee during the event, we hope that he is soon back on the scene.

Tony Parker organised assessments for those who required/wanted them, Roy and I assisted, a total of 92 assessments were done – must be a six day record! It was a pleasure to carry out these assessments as the candidates were very keen for help and feedback and it was good to see improvement as the week progressed.

On Wednesday, our day off, the female referees were invited to attend a complimentary ‘Women in Leadership Conference’, followed by an excellent lunch. This conference was held at the club in the Glenrose Room, there were three interesting speakers, and surprisingly one or two men attended too! In the afternoon there was a trip to the West Edmonton Mall, the largest shopping centre in the world – Tony and I seemed to walk for miles around this impressive mall buying souvenirs. In the evening Chris Yap invited us to a BBQ, a great time was had by all – thanks again Chris for your generous hospitality.

Sunday 1st October time for Tony and I to leave for the Rockies! We picked our hire car up at 11am and headed off – 5 hours later we arrived in Jasper. It was amazing the traffic was so light on the dual carriageways, I soon realised why when I saw a goods train and Tony informed me it was probably over a mile long! How right Tony was, we later met an engine driver who said they could be up to two and quarter miles in length! I loved the huge signpost at Hinton, indicating a right turn: – ‘Scenic Route to Alaska’ – must do that one next time! We stayed two nights in Jasper at the historical Athabasca Hotel going back to the days of cowboys and Indians.

Tuesday night we stayed at Lake Louise Inn and Wednesday we met up with Adeline and Co., for a farewell dinner in Calgary, even Gerry who was on his travels managed to join us. It was the perfect way to finish our adventure – thanks again Adeline.

Tony and I just about managed to visit the many places suggested by Chris, my favourites were Mount Edith Cavell, walking on the Athabasca Glacier on the Columbia Icefield, swimming in the Miette Hotsprings and of course the amazing Lake Louise.

Thursday morning Tony and I left Calgary, a three hour drive to Edmonton Airport. We were rather shocked to find our direct flight to

Manchester from Toronto had been cancelled (summer service only) and eventually found that we should have been at the airport two hours earlier for a flight to Heathrow via Toronto! I eventually arrived home in Nottingham 33 hours after leaving Calgary. Not complaining, it was all very worthwhile and I would recommend the ‘WCE’ without hesitation, especially with Tony as chauffeur – my jobs were navigator and hotel rate negotiator! Only one disappointment, I didn’t meet a bear, perhaps next time!

Editor’s Note:

Wendy’s mention of Dean Clayton’s accident at the Women World Team Championships in September caused me to follow up and ask Dean how he was doing. This was his reply:

“I’m much better now than immediately after I banged my head, in fact it’s been several weeks now since I had a headache or felt giddy when I lie down so I’m hopeful that the scan I’m due to have on Monday fortnight will show that the blood clot has gone. With any luck, I’ll also be cleared to drive again, which I haven’t been able to do since I returned from Edmonton on October 3rd. It’ll be especially useful if I can because my wife Vera broke her ankle very badly a couple of weeks ago and is likely to be on crutches until at least the end of the year so she’s tied to the house more or less permanently for the time being. [...]

The neurosurgeon in Edmonton advised me not to referee any more during the Women’s Teams, which I wouldn’t have been able to do anyway, I felt so awful, but he also suggested giving up altogether in case the stress caused another bleed, which I wasn’t too keen to hear. I hope the people here have a different opinion because I’d love to continue refereeing, for a while yet at least. I pulled out of the Qatar event before they pulled out themselves and I’ve also declined the first few of an England Squash Premier League set of fixtures in Bristol because I’m not driving (about an hour and a half up the motorway), and a junior event a few miles from home, though that’s because I don’t think it would be a good idea to leave Vera on her own for a day at the moment, rather than because I felt it would be a bad idea from a health point of view, even assuming I could have made arrangements to get there without my car. I’m quite hopeful anyway

because we have a builder in at the moment strengthening the floor in the loft and I've been helping him with some of the lifting. I took 20 lengths of 7" x 2" timber each about 18 feet long up the scaffolding at the back of the house and I didn't pop anything then, so I don't see why a little thing like a squash match should do it. One of the consistent comments about me has always been that I don't let the pressure get to me and I'm not a good actor at the best of times so perhaps it's true."

It's good to see that Dean has maintained his good sense of humour (or has it improved with the knock on the head?), and I am sure we all wish him all the best for a full recovery and hope that he will be refereeing again soon. (And let's hope the players agree with that, too!) (Ed.)

Cathay Pacific Swiss Privilege Hong Kong Open (October 16th - 22nd, 2006)

Chris Sinclair

Other WSF Referees were: Harvey Bowlt (Australia), Mohammad Fayyaz (Hong Kong), Jamshed Gul Khan (Pakistan) and Yogi Singh (India). I was the only Assessor so I was busy assessing 10 matches as well as refereeing alternate matches. I arrived a day early to conduct a Refereeing Clinic which was well organised but unfortunately poorly attended as it was not compulsory.

Cathay provided our airfares and HK Squash repaid expenses promptly as well as paying an adequate daily allowance and vouchers for food and drink at the courts. Referees were included in all functions and looked after very well with some dinners provided after matches too.

Unfortunately the men players were at one Hotel and the women players and referees were at another Hotel - in a great shopping and food area, but it was not a glamorous Hotel. Don't even wonder if you can pick up dropped soap when in the small showers.

All the top men and women players attended this popular event with Nicol David defeating Tania Bailey and Amr Shabana defeating

Ramy Ashour in the finals. I saw Ramy win the World Juniors a few months earlier and it certainly didn't take him long to break into PSA's top 10.

Early rounds were at the HK Squash Centre on traditional glass-back courts and the newly revamped 3-glass wall centre court. Semis and finals were on HK's new glass court inside Hollywood Plaza Shopping Centre - one of Hong Kong's biggest centres - and this was an innovation for HK Squash called "taking it to the people" and it was a huge success. The new court (HK\$1.12m donated by the HK Jockey Club Charities Trust) has a floor of 16 glass panels with anti-slip rubber dots embedded on the surface of the glass but at the same time the logos placed beneath it can be seen from the top.

Semis and finals were telecast live with Peter Nicol commentating and matches have already been shown on pay-TV around the world. The instant replay screen was over the official's heads - quite disconcerting to see the players look up at the screen before they launched into a discussion, but good when it showed the decisions were correct. I sure wish one of my decisions had not been replayed! It was not a valuable refereeing tool though as the replays were shown from the front wall - the completely opposite view to that of the referee.

Only one situation warrants mentioning. One player was adamant that if a player slips over and there is a wet patch on the floor either the referee should stop play for a let, or a player should be permitted to stop play for a let. He was advised by the Referee that this is not covered in the rules and this was confirmed by the Tournament Referee (the delightful Bob Lloyd) and also confirmed by Gawain Briars between games in a semi-final. While we all apply Rule 21 (Common Sense) at times, we have to ensure that one player is not disadvantaged by any stoppages and, at the same time, we have to ensure player safety. This will come up at Rules-revision time I am sure.

It was a pleasure to be at this event and thanks to Karl Mak and his team. Hong Kong Squash always does events well and to arrive each day to be greeted by the new WSF Vice-President Heather Deayton and the Tournament Director Tony Choi, starts the session well for players and referees. I was first appointed to Hong

Kong in 1992 and I think I have been there >12 times for squash. Because of my residence in Australia if it was not for the Hong Kong Open there is no way I would have been able to retain my WSF refereeing accreditation and for this I am very grateful.

World Masters Squash Championships Cape Town, South Africa. October 16 – 21, 2006

Damien Green

This was my first real look at the World Masters tournament. I had been to the tournament once previously in 2001 when it was in my home town of Melbourne, but my wife decided to have our first child near the beginning of the tournament and I didn't see much of it at all.

The South African's certainly turned on a big event. There were approximately 670 players from 33 different nations. Five separate venues were used with up to 25 courts in action at any one time. A triple plate system was used in most events so that all players were involved in quite a few matches.

How the organisers pulled this event off I'll never know, but apart for some minor complaints about being sent to the wrong venue most of the players seemed to be very tolerant of any scheduling issues as they fully understood the huge number of matches to be organised.

From the WSF, both Munir Shah and myself were assigned as the International Refereeing representatives, Mike Collins was appointed Tournament Referee in his hometown and George Meiras handled the WSF Technical Director's job. Squash South Africa provided many volunteers to assist with the organisation and general running of the tournament. There were also quite a few willing local referees and a number of players with refereeing qualifications that assisted as well.

Mike had a challenging job to organise referees for all the venues. I would hate to have seen his cell phone bill at the end of the tournament. Generally all the first round

matches in the morning had to be covered by a referee but then the winning players of each match would referee the next match (if we could find them of course). Because of the large number of matches, our day started at around 7:30am and finished up at 6:00pm, long days indeed!!.

The tournament appeared to be played in a very good spirit and there were very few conduct incidents of note. I was enlightened to the spirit early on when I announced 'Stroke to Mr Smith' at the conclusion of a rally only to hear back, 'what's this surname business, just call me Bob will you'. The standard of play in this tournament is obviously not quite up to that of a professional tournament, but by quarter final time in the 'younger' age groups the standard did pick up quite a bit.

The main venue for the tournament was the Western Province Cricket Club. The building housed five glass backed courts with a small drawback being that there was only a very limited viewing area for the finals, and it was a bit of a squeeze to get in and see the matches, even for the refs. The club had a fantastic bar and balcony area looking out onto Table Mountain and the club's cricket grounds.

As International referees we get the chance to work with local referees from many different nations as we travel to tournaments, and in my limited experience the local referees here were in general of a very good standard and with some more experience and some mentoring there were a number of them that could progress further if that is something they wished to pursue.

Overall, the tournament was a great experience. The organising committee and local volunteers were always very helpful and looked after us in anyway they could. The accommodation and meals were first rate. For a relative newcomer like myself, the chance to work with George, Munir and Mike and learn a little bit more about how the WSF operates was of great benefit. Once I worked out that anything to be done 'Just Now' in South African terms, means it will be done sometime in the next few days, and that 'Robots' on the street corners are the traffic lights and not machines waiting to accost you, the better I got on.

A huge thanks to Squash SA for their hospitality at this tournament.

Women's World Open- Belfast – November 2006

Ian Allanach

Wet, Wet, Wet : The weather may have been wet but it did nothing to dampen the enthusiasm of the Irish squash fraternity in organising and supporting an extremely successful event. The WSF had literally trawled through their A-Z of referees and appointed Messrs Allanach, Allen and Zahran to the event. The Tournament referee was the highly experienced Dorothy Armstrong, the local girl. And speaking of locals, great planning had gone into the officiating at this event. For some time Dorothy had worked with a number of local officials to create a team of highly skilled markers. As all referees know, have a good marker and you have the making of a good team.

On the Ball Training : There was no complacency. Every marker in every match from the qualifying first round on was assessed by the referee officiating. Not only were these assessments on paper, the markers were given verbal debriefs and tips. Their performances were discussed with Dorothy and those for the later stages were selected. All criticism was constructively given and constructively received. Without hesitation local markers were used for the semis and finals. Their presence and performances were greatly appreciated by the crowd and each night their introductions brought healthy applause. No one really cared who the referee was, but the marker was a local boy or girl. David Williams and Richard Clement came through for the semis and were as good as it gets and we hope that their refereeing skills will soon match their marking skills. They just need the experience and we hope that working with WSF referees has given them clarity, not confusion.

The Boat Club : Qualifying and first round ties were held at Belfast Boat club, a lovely, friendly venue with superb catering. The assistance of the Irish Brian referees, Williams and McNally was greatly appreciated. Rumour has it that it was because they were

enthusiastically putting the foot down to get to their matches that their car broke down on the motorway, forcing them to bus it the rest of the way. Brian is an anagram of "brain" – comments to Irish Squash please. Competition was hotting up and in the first round proper, one match featured a warning for unfair warm up, one conduct stroke and two conduct warnings. Another match lasted 36 minutes, 14 of which were allocated to blood injury and subsequent ball re warming.

The Ulster Hall : From the second round on we were based in the stunning Ulster hall. This venue was only five minutes from the tournament hotel and right in the centre of Belfast. Referees had their own room and appropriately in this concert hall, it was labelled the Conductor's Room. Most important, the referees' officiating position was superb. A seven tier row of seating occupied the area behind the back wall and the refs were assigned four seats in the back row of that unit. But even better the seating behind that position was the higher natural balcony of the venue and it was here that cameras were positioned. So not only did we have a great view, but the refs who duck and weave for a better view (who mentioned Ian Allanach?) were able to stand without interference (good phrase!). In fairness a number of the markers decided that standing was better as it gave them a less interrupted view of the court and less awareness of the spectators in front of them.

The Clock Ticks On : The event caused the referees to age, literally. Ian Allanach had already had a November birthday but both Jack and Nasser celebrated birthdays during the event. What is it about referees and November? The Irish are known for the crack and no one is spared. When one of us joked that there was little chance the players would see us as the 3 wise men, one said that they might, if we made it "the 3 whys men."

Farewell: This was Jack Allen's last WSF tournament and appropriately it was in his home country and he had used his local knowledge to drive colleagues around the Antrim coast. Unfortunately due to family circumstances he had to leave ahead of the final. So his last competitive assignment was

the ladies semi, Ian did the other and Nasser polished off the final. Assessments were carried out on the semis and final.

On the morning of the semis, two Irish teams met in the final of the Corporate Challenge. They were faced with the glass show court and three world referees. They coped well with both scenarios never daunted by reputations when turning to ask "Are you sure that was a let?"

The Final : One of the great ladies matches graced the final with Natalie Grinham and Nicol David taking 96 minutes to complete the match. Both girls were at the top of their games, tactically and physically. The audience gasped and applauded rally after rally. It was the perfect climax to a wonderful event.

The Memories : The Irish combined efficiency with friendliness, organisation with humour. The tournament was extremely well run and the camaraderie among the referees and markers was a real feature. It was a learning experience for all of us but it was also great fun.

Well done, Ireland, and well done, Dorothy.

The World Junior Men's Championships (Palmerston, New Zealand)

Mike Collins

The WSF appointees were Chris Sinclair, Damien Green, Jack Allen and myself. We were ably assisted by several New Zealand national referees from all over the islands and a few National referees from across the pond in Australia. The Champs were held in Palmerston North which I had never heard of before my trip but which apparently was where squash in New Zealand really got started. The courts certainly had many old pictures of some very early Test Matches and some of the Squash Greats from yesteryear.

What made it particularly interesting for me as a South African Rugby supporter was that the referees were based at the Massey University Institute of Sport (formerly of Rugby) which is where the All Blacks were stationed and

trained for several years. The timing was perfect as well because New Zealand, Australia and South Africa were in the middle of the Tri-Nations when the Springboks were playing in Australia on the first Saturday of my trip and in New Zealand on the second! The only problem was that I dropped the gauntlet and claimed bravely that the Springboks were going to make a meal of the Kangaroo and Kiwi bird, only to watch my team getting thumped. I then had to return to my room every day where some kind person had stuck on the door a huge newspaper headline reminding me how pathetic the Springboks had performed.

But apart from the rugby the squash was excellent and all the referees and markers were fantastic. I made some great Kiwi friends and managed to meet up again with Chas Evans who treated me to a game of golf at his local course in Upper Hutt.

The World Open, Cairo

John Massarella

I was appointed to the World Open in Cairo, my first visit to the Pyramids. The first three nights at the awesome venue passed without incident, apart from the problem of the distant refereeing position.

On the fourth evening, semi-finals night, a large crowd was anticipated, as Shabana, on his home soil, was to play Gaultier.

I arrived with Fahim Gul on the coach a good half hour before start time. The first semi was between Palmer and Lincou. Fahim was to mark, Nasser to referee. I agreed with Fahim that I would assess the match and we proceeded to the entrance below the seating, someway behind the back wall. There was a large noisy Egyptian crowd milling outside, and a big security presence at the entrance.

Fahim went through without problem. I followed credentials in place, and was refused entry by two large gentlemen. Apparently Nasser was already inside, and I was told there were only two seats available for referees, no seat for the assessor. I was told I had to assess

from the sidewall, definitely no negotiation. I searched for help for some time to no avail.

On our journey there Fahim and I were quite jubilant, because after days of pleading, tonight we were to officiate within the same postcode (as I have heard it described) as the players.

So I went, deflated and angry to my position on the sidewall. Very quickly I collected myself and decided to give it my best in the line of duty. I spotted a seat close to the two referees, and then assessment board in hand climbed over a large security barrier just as a security man turned his back, and scampered over and plonked myself in this seat.

Ah well, it has to be said, where there's will, there's a way!!

Dealing with Stress

Rod Symington

WSF squash referees are not paid for their service (yet) – they are amateurs, but what distinguishes them is their professional attitude towards their refereeing activity. Squash refereeing is a stressful activity, and squash referees are constantly searching for ways to manage stress and thus to improve their professionalism. Here below are some thoughts about stress and how to deal with it.

Stress: Your brain and body

What is stress and can it be good for you? How does your brain perceive a stressful situation and prepare your body to deal with it?

Your body's stress response kicks in when you perceive you are under threat. Mammals have evolved this superb mechanism to ensure we have the best possible chance of survival when faced with a life-threatening situation.

At times like this you'd want every muscle in your body to work to the peak of its ability – and your brain to be super-alert.

Evolution has obliged, and given you the stress response.

What happens in your body?

Putting energy into digesting your lunch, optimising your immune system or ensuring you are fertile all become rather unimportant in life-threatening situations. All these non-essential body functions cease and you divert all energy to your muscles and brain.

Your heart beats faster, your blood pressure increases and you breathe faster pumping maximum oxygen and energy-rich blood to your muscles. Your liver releases more sugar into your blood ready for action.

In evolutionary terms, this is a remarkable system that has helped our species survive.

Perceiving threats?

Encounters with lions, muggers in dark alleys or the loss of a loved one are fairly universal in eliciting the stress response.

Most other situations are subjective. Life-events, examinations, or certain types of work can be hugely stressful to one person yet easier to cope with by others. Squash refereeing falls into this category.

As with many forms of perception, scientists don't know the actual neural mechanisms that allow you to combine your prior experience with information coming in through your senses, and produce your brain's judgement that a situation is threatening.

There are three main parts of you that control your stress response – your hypothalamus and your pituitary (both in your brain) and your adrenal glands by your kidneys.

What happens in your brain?

Once your brain has decided there's a danger, it sends immediate nerve-signals down your spinal cord to your adrenal glands telling them to release the hormone adrenaline. Once released, adrenaline increases the amount of sugar in your blood, increases your heart rate and raises your blood pressure (and has many other actions).

Your brain's hypothalamus also sends signals to your pituitary gland at the bottom of your brain, telling it to release factors that within a few minutes have travelled through your blood

stream and stimulated your adrenal cortex to produce a stress-hormone – cortisol.

Cortisol is very important in your stress response - keeping your blood sugar and blood pressure up to help you deal with danger.

The optimal level of stress

The optimal level of stress challenges you but still allows you to succeed (for example, feeling a little anxious before a match may help you prepare better). It may allow you to perform better, work more quickly or efficiently and think more clearly. You may not *feel* stressed at this point.

When we say we are “stressed”, we generally mean that our stress levels feel out of balance. This includes time when you are feeling overwhelmed by the task at hand, but also times when you are bored. Slight imbalances of stress force you to adapt, making you stronger and allowing you to grow, but larger imbalances can be very overwhelming.

The aim is not to eliminate stress altogether, but to use stress to your best advantage by maintaining a balance between stress and your coping techniques.

Stress, Anxiety and Energy

Too much stress and anxiety can seriously affect your ability to focus on your skills and flow in a performance.

It is important that you recognise that you are responsible for your own stress levels. Very often they are a product of the way that you think. Learn to monitor your stress levels, and adjust them up if you need more arousal, or down if you are feeling too stressed.

A certain level of stress is needed for optimum performance. If you are under too little stress, then you will find it difficult to motivate yourself to give a good performance. Too little stress expresses itself in feelings of boredom and not being stretched.

At an optimum level of stress you will get the benefits of alertness and activation that a good level of stress brings. Excessive levels of stress damage performance and damage your enjoyment of your activity.

Symptoms

Mental symptoms include persistent negative thoughts, indecisiveness, poor memory, worrying, impaired judgement, loss of concentration, and hasty decisions.

Physical symptoms include excessive sweating, indigestion, nausea, racing heart, teeth-grinding, headaches, clenched muscles, breathlessness, fatigue.

Emotional symptoms include irritability, anxiety, mood swings, tension, lack of enthusiasm, cynicism, feelings of alienation, loss of confidence and a sense of dissatisfaction.

How Can I Manage Stress?

Change Your Mindset

Develop hardiness—an appreciation for challenge, a commitment to living and a belief that you have control over your life.

Evaluate your coping responses. Replace those that are negative (e.g. excessive drinking, smoking, procrastination) with positive responses (e.g. planning ahead, taking care of your body, facing problems).

Look for the positive aspects of each stress factor.

Laugh—it's good for body and soul!

Take Care of Your Body and Mind

Find out how much sleep your body needs—and rearrange your schedule to get it!

Eat a balanced diet including a variety of fruits, vegetables and grains.

Exercise—even a ten-minute walk provides great stress relief.

Take deep breaths. Learn deep breathing and other relaxation techniques.

Limit caffeine intake. Excess caffeine can add to anxiety-related feelings such as nervousness, irritability, sweating and tremors.

Avoid using alcohol and other drugs to relieve stress. Drink in moderation or not at all.

Beat the Heat

Compete only with yourself. You have no control over how other people perform, only how you perform.

Ask for help when you need it! Advisors and mentors are there to help you!

Prepare for the stressful activity well ahead of time so that you don't have to feel rushed.

Farewell to Lorraine Harding

By the time you receive this issue of the WSF Referees' Review, Lorraine Harding will have left her position with the World Squash Federation. For many years Lorraine has administered all the refereeing matters on behalf of the WSF – a responsibility that encompasses an enormous amount of work, most of it “behind the scenes”. Throughout Lorraine has behaved with impeccable diplomacy and tact, but most of all with unparalleled efficiency. The WSF refereeing programme could not have survived without her dedication. She will leave very big shoes to fill (figuratively speaking). I'm sure I can speak for all WSF Referees and Assessors in thanking her for all her work on our behalf and wishing her all the best in her new position.

Marian Kramer

The WSF received a nice Christmas Card from Mrs Marian Kramer. It was addressed to all WSF Referees who knew Peter, and thanked them all for their support and wished them all best wishes for the New Year. She also stated "we have managed to raise nearly £600 for the Liver Trust. Thank you for your donation; sorry it has taken so long to respond. Many thanks."

Envoi

The next issue of the WSF Referees' Review will appear in May 2007. All contributions will be gratefully received. As you can see from the contributors to this edition, fame (but not fortune) awaits you!