

## WSF Referees' Review

May 2007



Since the last edition of the *WSF Referees' Review* two major developments have taken place in the world of international refereeing. The first of these is the re-introduction of the 3-Referee System. While the system has been used only in a handful of tournaments – and thus it is still too early to conclude that this is the final answer to all of squash's officiating problems – it does seem to be the way forward at this time, as is noted in the next article.

When the 3-Referee System was tried in the mid-1990's, it was fated to be a short-lived experiment – for three major reasons: 1. There was an instinctive resistance from many referees who were strongly attached to the Marker/Referee system (and the fact that the 3-referee system was viewed by some as “American” – and therefore by definition “inferior” -- was another nail in its coffin). 2. The referees who used it were, by and large, never trained *how* to use it: there was a tacit assumption that a qualified referee could step in and use the 3-referee system without any training. 3. The players exploited the system, by appealing almost every



## WORLD SQUASH FEDERATION

decision – thereby giving the sport a poor image. (A properly trained referee could stop this abuse by invoking (or threatening to invoke) Rule 17; however, because of the lack of training very few did.)

This issue of the *WSF Referees' Review* contains several items that discuss different aspects of the 3-Referee System. I hope that this material will give all its readers cause for thought and reflection: the issue is not at all settled, because much work needs still to be done in respect of the details. And the issue of the training of referees in the proper use of this system has not yet been addressed. Let the debate continue!

The second major development has been the approval by the WSF of a comprehensive programme of training and assessment for referees at all levels. The Working Group that developed this programme began its work in January 2005, so the process has taken almost two and a half years. The programme sets explicit standards for the achievement of the various levels of referee certification, and outlines in considerable detail how those standards are to be assessed in each individual case. The aim of this programme is to provide referees with a clear idea of what knowledge and skills they require at each level, and to give assessors the tools to assess each of those criteria. Since this programme will now be in effect for WSF appointments, all of us – referees and assessors – are going to have to study

the new programme and familiarize ourselves with its provisions.

You will also find in this issue articles reporting on all the major tournaments of the past six months. Once again the Editor thanks all the contributors to this issue: the WSF referees have once again proven to be both cooperative and reliable.

*Red Symington*

### **The 3 Referee System – an Update**

**by Graham Waters**

My first report documented the background to, and trial of, the 3 Referee System at the Windy City Open in Chicago in January. Since that time, the system has been used at several Super Series events, sometimes with minor variations, but all with the approval of the promoters and all with generally the same positive results. The events at which the system has been used since Chicago have been:

- Tournament of Champions, New York
- ISS Canary Wharf Classic, London
- Shaika Al Saad Kuwait Open, Kuwait City
- Qatar Classic (06), Doha

The latter two events also had WISPA draws, so the top women players have also had some experience with the system. All but one of the WSF World Referees have now used the system and several WSF International Referees have also used it. I have had feedback from all of the referees, several of the promoters, and some players and administrators. It is clear

to me that the 3-Referee System is the way forward, but there are still several challenges to overcome.

What needs to happen now is for the 3 governing bodies of squash to decide on the future of the 3-Referee System. Should it be formally adopted; at what events and in what rounds is it realistic to use it; who must bear the cost of increasing the number of referees required to run this system at each event?

The current timing provides us with a small window to reach a decision on this, as there are no major PSA or WISPA events on the calendar until August. In July we have the Pan-American Games in Rio de Janeiro and the Junior Women's World Championships in Hong Kong, but they will be using the traditional Marker/Referee System.

It should be noted that players were used as one of the Side Referees in London and for one round only in Kuwait, but players were not used in New York or Qatar. The following sections describe the results from each of the 4 subsequent events and reactions from participants.

#### **New York**

The system was used in an identical manner to the initial trial in Chicago, with similar results. Again, there were fewer confrontations between players and referees, the final decisions were better accepted, the referees felt less stress, and the promoter was happier with the overall caliber of refereeing. Comments received from New York:

- At the ToC we sat in a line on the aisle a fair distance apart. This made communication awkward.

- At ToC we did not use any players – but the use of lesser-experienced referees did cause a lot of discomfort – and we just got through.
- At the ToC and Kuwait events we did get decisions wrong – even with 3 of us – but I believe that the percentage of wrong decisions was decreased compared to the one-official system
- At both events – partly because of the inexperience of some of the referees involved and partly because of the view of the referees – blocking went without punishment because one or two of the officials failed to see a “block” and thus did not penalise it appropriately. This placed extra pressure on the central referee who wanted to deal with the problem – but on occasions the decision of the central referee was not supported by the other two.
- A few of the player/refs admitted that they did not always know what decision to give, either because they could not make the decision or they were unsighted.
- From discussions during and at the end of the event we all agreed that the new system worked.

### **Kuwait**

Here, the referees sat 15 feet back from the court on a 2-foot high purpose-built “referee area” platform just less than the width of the court, in front of the high main seating stand. This worked quite well, but we sat apart with side referees along both walls. The general public was seated in the main stand above our platform. They could not see our hand signals. There was not any side seating. Specific comments received:

- Because of the scheduling we used some players for the second round. I had a slight problem in recruiting players to referee - but the “players’ rep” for the event quickly took over and all turned up on time. For quarterfinals and on we used assigned WSF referees only.
- Where possible, I believe players should not referee – I spoke to numerous players at the event – all were uncomfortable with getting involved – and many it seemed were being pushed by the more senior players (those still in the event!!) into helping out
- Alex Gough, who left Kuwait immediately after losing, was insistent that the players were willing to participate. I beg to differ and so did Robert Edwards who was TD at the event

### **Canary Wharf**

The position of the referees was the same as in Chicago, and the results were the same. Specific comments received:

- We liked the position of our three referees. The central referee high at the back with his two side referees within his vision and in front of him (triangular formation). We think that this can only work on glass courts and it should be noted that the players always wished to sit in the front row (I guess this is where they normally watch matches from when coaching, etc).

## **Qatar**

In Doha, because they were running both a men's and women's draw, the organizers were using four courts simultaneously right through the second round. This made the use of the 3-Referee System impossible until the quarterfinals, when all matches were played on the glass court. There were two slight differences this time:

- We employed a marker as well as 3 Referees, further reducing the onus on the Central Referee, and also eliminating the need for the Left Referee to keep score. We were able to do this because we had three very competent local markers whom we could employ in this role.
- We asked the Side Referees to indicate with a thumbs down signal any ball they considered to be down, not up, or out during a rally. In this way, if both Side Referees indicated a ball was not good, the rally could be stopped and awarded appropriately.

Comments received:

- It happened quite often that the Side Referee on the opposite side of the court made a different decision from the other two Referees on crossing-the-flight situations. This supports the old criticism from the original 3-Judge System that the person with

- the worst view cast the deciding vote. At least with this system, the "correct" decision was reached, and nobody knew that it was not unanimous.
- The very serious issue for both players and referees coming out of this system is the inability of the central referee to set a standard line of thinking and stick to it, especially when the players are not playing totally within the spirit of the game. The system works quite well when both players are behaving, but when the referee really needs to take action (in blocking, fishing, playing the body situations), it can break down.

## **Overall Reaction**

- It takes away the real "clanger" or "rogue" decisions that come out from time to time, and may, in time, lead to more consistent decision-making as referees work closely together.
- The players' perception that there are three officials making the decision has improved, in the main, their attitude. This results in far fewer "confrontations".
- Considering we are still in the early stages, both the players and the referees are adapting to it well. The players, without exception, prefer it and, after all, it is their game.

## **Announcement of New WSF Programme for the Training and Assessment of Referees**

**by John Small**

As part of the WSF Programme to improve International Refereeing, WSF is implementing a comprehensive programme called “Competency-Based Training and Assessment (CBTA) for World and International Referees”. The WSF also recommends that Regional Federations and Member Nations implement similar CBTA programmes at Regional, National and lower refereeing levels.

The documents that describe this new initiative are as follows:

- CBTA Programmes for the training and accreditation of World, International, Regional and National referees;
- New Assessment Sheets for World, International and Regional and National Referees, which meet the requirements of the CBTA Programmes at each level; and
- Guidelines for WSF Assessors and Regional and National Assessors, which are aimed at greatly improving the standard and consistency of assessments at each level.

The Programmes, Assessment Sheets and Guidelines for Regional and National levels are intended to be recommendations only; in the first instance they are recommended for those Regional Federations and Member Nations that do not already have their own programmes. They are not intended to replace any existing programmes. However, the requirements of these Programmes are pre-requisites for the International Referee Programme. Therefore, nominations

for International Referee will now be accepted only from candidates who meet the requirements of either the Regional or National CBTA Programmes, as outlined in those documents.

All of the requirements for each level of referee are contained in the CBTA Programme for that level. The Programmes have been kept as simple as possible, however it must be recognised that the training of referees to WSF standards requires comprehensive coverage of a number of areas. These areas include:

- The pre-requisites for entering a programme (i.e. what previous referee qualifications are needed before starting);
- The competencies required. Competencies can be put more simply as knowledge and skills, or what referees need to know and what they must be able to do;
- The training required to achieve the competencies;
- The assessments needed to check that the competencies have been achieved – including the number and standard of these assessments;
- The number of matches a candidate must referee before achieving qualification under the programme, including the standard of these matches; and
- The requirements for retaining the qualification, once it has been achieved.

The assessment sheets are used to record the assessment of candidates when refereeing matches. The assessment guidelines give comprehensive instructions on the use of the assessment sheets so that consistent results can be achieved. When assessing a

candidate for a particular level, only the assessment sheet for that level can be used as the sheet contains the competencies and standards that apply to that level. However, an assessor may carry out assessments for more than one level from one match (e.g. an assessor assesses a candidate for the International level but concludes that the candidate has not passed at that level. The assessor can then fill in the sheets for the Regional level and determine whether the candidate has passed at Regional level).

Because of the extent of this initiative, WSF intends to conduct seminars for candidates for the International level and training in the new system for WSF assessors. These will be offered when opportunities arise. One of the first opportunities is likely to be at the International Refereeing Conference in Chennai India (December 4 & 5, 2007), before the World Men's Teams Championships.

### **WSF Referee Assignments – 1<sup>st</sup> half 2007**

<b>Month</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>Site</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Referees Assigned</b>
January	Pace Canadian Classic	Toronto	1	<b>Graham Waters</b>
January	Windy City Open	Chicago	3	<b>Barry Faguy, Graham Waters, John Massarella</b>
February	Tournament of Champions	New York	1	<b>Roy Gingell</b>
March	Fajr International	Iran	1	<b>Tahir Khanzhada</b>
March	Canary Wharf	London	0	*
April	Kuwait Open	Kuwait	4	<b>Wendy Danzey, Ian Allanach, Roy Gingell, Dean Clayton</b>
April	Qatar Classic (2006) (postponed from Nov. 2006)	Doha	5	<b>Wendy Danzey, John Massarella, Graham Waters, Damien Green, Chris Sinclair</b>
April	Seoul Open	Seoul	2	<b>Tahir Khanzhada, Mohammad Fayyaz</b>
May	European Team Championships (2 Assessors)	Riccione, Italy	2	<b>Dorothy Armstrong, Tony Parker (A)</b>
May	Canadian Nationals (Assessor)	Calgary	1	<b>Jack Flynn (A)</b>
August	World Junior Women	Hong Kong	4	<b>Wendy Danzey, Chris Sinclair, Mohammad Fayyaz, Tahir Khanzhada</b>

## **WSF Appointments and Re-Appointments 2007**

### **1. Reappointments**

#### **a) World Referee**

Roy Gingell  
Fahim Khan  
Nasser Zahran

#### **b) International Referee**

Harvey Bowlt  
Dean Clayton  
Michael Collins  
Wendy Danzey  
Barry Faguy  
Munir Shah  
Yogendra Singh

### **2. New Appointments (International Referee)**

Jos Aarts  
David Atkins  
Jason Foster

## **New Deadline for Applications**

There is now a new deadline for submitting applications for appointment or re-appointment as a WSF-referee: May 31 of each calendar year. Thus the next deadline for applications will be May 31, 2008. The following is an extract from a letter sent by Graham Waters:

“As a result of the implementation of this new [CBTA] programme, I am announcing a change to the cycle for the nomination and re-nomination of candidates for WSF WR/IR recognition. Starting with the next (2008) cycle, the WSF will invite nominations by the end of March with a deadline for submissions of May 31<sup>st</sup>. It is hoped that the process of reviewing the candidates and announcing the results can be completed by the end of July in each year. This is being done for several reasons:

- To more closely mirror the squash “season” (there are very few major events in the May, June, July period);
- To avoid the Christmas holiday period that can cause some delays in completing the paperwork; To allow a full year of assessments using the new criteria to be used in next year’s review, and
- To give all existing WSF Referees whose terms expire in 2008 a full year to fulfill the requirements to retain their designation.”

## 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 success of the 3-Referee System in PSA and WISPA events over the past six months is encouraging. A number of details have still to be worked out, before the system is refined into its final form – but they are only details. At least we seem finally to have come upon a refereeing system that drastically reduces player dissatisfaction and that improves the image of squash worldwide.

Over the years I have heard a number of referees claim that they “like to be in the hot seat” – and not doubt some referees who think this way will regret that the new refereeing system has gained a solid foothold. This is the wrong attitude. The chief consideration should not be personal ego-gratification, but what is good for the players and the game as a whole. Only one question is relevant: Which refereeing system produces, over time, the highest percentage of correct decisions? All other considerations are secondary.

With the re-introduction of the 3-Referee System squash has taken a major step forward. But much work has still to be done – and it would be fatal to believe that we have found the Promised Land.

Because the very essence of squash refereeing depends on good judgement, no refereeing system will ever be perfect: there will always be a subjective factor in decisions relating to interference (of all kinds). “Three heads are better than one” will only be

true on the squash court when all three heads apply a similar standard. Thus it will be incumbent on all referees to collaborate and strive to achieve the next step: the application of a similar standard for interference by all referees. Without this, the 3-Referee System cannot function properly.

If the 3-Referee System is really to become the universally accepted method of officiating, then all referees have to commit themselves to ensuring that they are all on the same page. We cannot rest on our laurels or assume tacitly that all the top referees think the same way. It is essential that those referees engage in open, constructive debate and discussion about the standards to be applied

This will require that all referees (but especially at the elite level) undertake to reach a consensus about the standards to be applied in any tournament. It will not do, for example, that the assigned referees (from wherever they are coming) simply arrive the day before the event and then proceed to referee the next day without any discussion of the standards to be applied by all. A seminar the day before the event, and regular referee meetings during the event are necessary to keep referees alerted to the issues and to ensure that all are aware of their responsibilities with respect to standards of interpretation.

To use a 3-Referee System in all major tournaments, and to bring the referees together for a daylong seminar before the tournament begins, will entail an extra (modest) cost. But the only relevant question for the promoter is: Do you want the best refereeing or not? The 3-Referee System by itself

will not be a universal panacea. We also need a clearly stated policy on *how* it is to be used and how the officials are to be trained to use it.

A final point: One of the obvious weaknesses of the 3-Referee System is the inability of the three referees to agree during the course of a match on a course of action to penalise inappropriate tactics (e.g. blocking). In other sports where several officials are employed, those officials can and do communicate with each other to ensure a fair outcome. Why not in squash?

**Rod Symington**

**From the Director .....**



First of all, I would like to extend a warm welcome to the WSF Referee ranks to Jos Aarts, David Atkins, and Jason Foster, all of whom were recently appointed as IR's by ManCom, upon the recommendation of the WSF Review Board. Unfortunately, we must also say goodbye to Paul Ansdell, who chose not to be re-nominated because of the increasing difficulty of juggling referee assignments with his work as a club professional in Massachusetts. Thank

you, Paul, for your contributions over the past few years.

The most significant happening during the first half of 2007 has been the initial trial and subsequent use of the 3-Referee System. I have reported earlier on the initial trial in Chicago at the PSA Windy City Open event in January. Since that time, it has been used at the Tournament of Champions in New York, Canary Wharf in London, the Kuwait Open and the Qatar Classic, the latter two events also having WISPA draws. Each time, there were minor enhancements made to the system, all designed to improve the overall result. Now, the three governing bodies for the sport must decide on the future of this system, and plan for the increased requirement of the number of referees necessary to operate the system smoothly. An update to my original report was published earlier in this Newsletter.

WSF Referees and Assessors were placed at 9 events in the first half of 2007, including the inaugural WISPA event in Seoul. Additionally, the referees for the World Junior Women's Championships in Hong Kong have already been assigned. Please refer to the chart showing the specific assignments for this period. It is very disappointing that the promoters of events held in England still choose not to utilize the services of WSF Referees. The only event in the first half was the Canary Wharf Classic, but there are several scheduled for later this year, including the recently salvaged Super Series Finals, the British Open, the English Open, and an English Grand Prix event. I will be writing to the promoters of these events (Eventis and Paul Walters) to see if we can rectify this situation. The second half (which doesn't really start until late August) looks to be very busy

with a newly revitalized Dutch Open, the four events in England mentioned above, World Opens in Madrid and Bermuda, the Men's Team Championships in Chennai, India, as well as the usual events that traditionally request WSF Referees in Budapest, Boston, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Hong Kong.

You may have heard about the upcoming Referees Conference, which will be held just prior to the Men's World Team Championships in early December in Chennai, India. Chris Sinclair and Rod Symington are the co-conveners of this Conference and they are hard at work designing some useful, educational, and entertaining topics for inclusion on the program. I would urge as many of you as possible to attend this conference. Further details on the Conference as well as refereeing opportunities during the Men's Team Championships will be forthcoming shortly.

The eagerly anticipated Competency Based Training and Assessment report has been accepted by ManCom, and will be implemented over the coming few months. Complete details will be available very soon. I would like to take this opportunity to express the gratitude of the WSF for all the very hard work put in by the Working Group who have produced this very complete program. The Group included Chris Sinclair, Rod Symington, Jennifer Birch-Jones, and was led by John Small

I am sure you will all join me in wishing Carol Clements our very best wishes in her future career. She had the unenviable task of filling Lorraine's shoes, but she accomplished that challenge admirably and has been huge help to me in coordinating the

Referees and Rules Committee activities.

As always, your comments and suggestions on any aspect of our program are always welcome. I look forward to catching up with many of you during the year.

**Graham Waters**

**Windy City Open (18 – 23 January 2007)**

**by Barry Faguy**

...and we mean *windy*! Chicago is always windy, but in mid-January, in the dead of winter, it takes on new meaning. We thank the gods of sport that squash is played indoors.

What follows is the one-week odyssey of John Massarella, Graham Waters, & Barry Faguy – a trio of three blind mi...er... officials who were unwittingly about to make officiating history.

**The life of luxury**

We were very well treated. Our accommodations, literally around the corner from the host venue (the University Club of Chicago), were in the penthouse at the Chicago Athletic Association. OK – OK – it wasn't exactly the penthouse, but it was pretty high up. And, my view was of the alley – but it was a really nice alley. Gastronomic feasts were featured at every meal and .....OK – OK – they weren't exactly sumptuous, but you know the old saying: "Hungry dogs will eat dirty puddings!" Of course, the evening meals were a different story - out in the neighboring local establishments because, well, we 'needed a change'.

### **The tourist thing**

Chicago has plenty to offer, and for the most part, each of us went off and did his own thing with his time off – getting ‘cultured’ while visiting things such as the Frank Lloyd Wright Museum, the Chicago Museum of Architecture & Design, the Chicago Public Library, taking long walks, etc. But on one particular day, we combined forces to take an enlightening 2-hour bus tour of the city. Needing more, we then we taxied over to Navy Pier, a huge entertainment complex where among other things, we spent an hour or so strolling through what is probably the world's’ largest, seemingly unending, permanent stained-glass exhibit – a truly inspiring and memorable experience. But to top it all off, Graham convinced John & me to sign up for a ride on a plutonium T141-residue-powered intergalactic time-warp cruiser with multi-dimensional capability and black-hole resistance – and we lived to referee again!



### **The main event**

These trips are not all fun and games – and there was serious work to do, in a cathedral to boot! Well, maybe not exactly in a cathedral, but in the UCC’s 9<sup>th</sup> floor “Cathedral Hall” – a gorgeous space created to be an exceptional dining room – enclosed by yet more wondrous stained glass works depicting the various university disciplines. Unfortunately, seating capacity is far less than the matches

can attract, so people have to book early. They say that good things come in small packages.

Interestingly, our event crossed paths with the Super Bowl – the big daddy of all American football games, and this year Chicago was a protagonist. There was a palpable energy that was obvious as we walked through the city in the preceding days with people everywhere wearing Chicago Bears’ paraphernalia, although the game was to be played thousands of miles away in Miami.

PSA LIVE was in attendance at the UCC, live streaming every match, including some qualifiers. When not on duty, the three of us did stints as guest commentators for the matches. And no – none of us made any nasty comments about the decisions of the Referee on duty!

### **Dramatic innovation**

On the first day of matches, Alex Gough, PSA board member & player, had a proposal for us. Apparently, the PSA board had recently endorsed a trial of a modification to the old 3-Referee System (WSF-tested between 1992 & 1997) – a trial designed to see if we could reduce the amount of unpleasant referee-player exchanges. That original system allowed an appeal of the Central Referee’s (CR) decision to the two others – whereupon the majority ruled. In this case, they wanted us to try out what I like to call ‘*Synchronized Officiating*’ – wherein all three decisions would be given instantly – with the CR then reporting the verdict. It is not an appeal system. You’ve probably already read the formal WSF report of this trial by Graham Waters found at the start of this newsletter - so, I’ll just finish off with some personal impressions here.

Firstly, I feel this system could be good for the sport because it significantly reduces the opportunities for unpleasant confrontations – both because it pretty much eliminates those ‘off the wall’ decisions – and because there’s little opportunity for a player to argue with a consensus. On a more personal level, I lament the lessening of the challenge and tension that exists when there’s no one else to depend on – but of course, any such grumbling by an official is entirely unimportant. Nonetheless, I suspect it will be a reality for others as well.

Here, in no particular order, are some other observations:

§ Polling – Originally, the intention was that the players should be able to see each official’s decision – and so each official (including the CR) would keep his hand up. Bad idea! Firstly, it proved impractical for the CR to keep his hand up, as he was busy verifying the other referees’ hand signals, recording the score, making the announcements, and dealing with player reactions. Players rarely turned around to look anyway. Secondly, it was this option to poll the three officials that led to the event’s only, and very unpleasant occurrence. Polling allows a singling out of a specific official for abuse – a policy that can have no positive benefit.

§ Speed – As the report mentions, there is a small delay at the start, but afterwards, once the Central Referee gets the hang of remembering to check the others – it works smoothly. Of course, if the CR sees that the first auxiliary Referee agrees with his decision, then of course, there’s no need to

go to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Referee - and things are that much faster.

§ Honesty – I’ll admit that a couple of times, I (as Central Referee) forgot to check what the others signaled – and a couple of times, situations were so obvious that it seemed useless to consult them. It’s also possible for the CR to purposely ignore the other two and report only his or her own decision. All of these could potentially backfire however, and a CR should take great care to always be able to claim that the given decision is indeed the consensus – because things are not always as straightforward as they seem. Another possibility is that the CR might make a habit of not making a personal decision – simply getting into the habit of reporting the other’s decisions – and if needed, breaking the tie. No one would be the wiser.

§ Clarity – Sometimes things can get confusing when, after a decision has been rendered, an appeal is made about something else. In those cases, the CR needs to take control and make clear to all what exactly is now under appeal – then look for the signals and relate that decision.

§ Explanations –It becomes virtually impossible for the Central Referee to speak for the others and give an explanation. There is little use in relating just the CR’s reason – and it’s likely that that could open a can of worms. Therein lies what to me is a significant drawback – the inability of a player to adjust his play to match an explanation of a decision. The Central Referee cannot, for example, establish by himself, a standard for effort, or a

standard for how much swing interference is considered prevented, and so on. Spectators remain in the dark as well.

- Questions – There are times when a Referee needs to ask questions of a player. Of course, “Are you asking for a let?” does not pose a problem with synchronized officiating – but “Did his racket hit you?” is often a crucial piece of information needed before a decision can be made when the striker does indeed claim it. To not get this information before proceeding to the decision sequence is not ensuring fairness. The CR needs to clarify such matters before allowing the decision sequence.

§ Advisory – It should be made clear to all the players that the system is in use – and that a slight delay should be expected. As well, the issue of the inability to give explanation should be well understood by the players beforehand – so that when the CR states ‘This is the consensus’ – everyone will know that no explanation will be forthcoming.

§ Marker-call appeals – In a slight twist over what conventional officiating allows; it’s still worth it for a player to make an appeal on a Marker call or non-call. Typically, with Marker and Referee, if a rally ends in a let, there is usually no appeal, since at best it would only lead to another let anyway if the Referee had a doubt. With this system, things are different, because the appellant might have an outcome reversed in his favor if only he has the presence of mind to make that appeal. Maybe both the

auxiliary Referees did see the ball hit the line while the CR wasn’t sure and said nothing. A rally of a hundred shots can have its natural result overturned by such an appeal. This feature escaped quite a few players in the course of our event. In fact, while watching the PSA LIVE streaming of the TOC from New York a month later, several such opportunities were missed by players.

- Referee placement – For this trial, the officials were placed about three feet lower and three feet away from the CR – thus allowing the CR to easily see the signals within a relatively narrow field of vision – thus avoiding the need to move the head and thus reducing delay and need to re-focus. It also allowed all three to essentially get the same view and avoid a critical problem of the original system – the fact that the auxiliary officials were placed level with the side walls. This often gave the third, and often deciding Referee, a very skewed view.

- Player participation – I’ve written strong opinions in the past objecting to having professional players involved in officiating. I’m glad to see that the report to the WSF is consistent with that opinion – and it can’t be emphasized enough. There are just too many potential repercussions & conflicts in having players involved in the decision-making process. It’s a delusion to think that they have some kind of special gift that an experienced official doesn’t

have. Finally, it quite simply looks unprofessional.

- Electronic option – The report to the WSF claims that we can't give wrong hand signals – but I disagree. It's exactly such a mistakenly-interpreted hand signal that led to the unpleasant confrontation in Chicago referred to above. It's easy to imagine a simple device with five buttons – three on the horizontal plane across the top of the device, specifically shaped to represent each possible decision – and the other two ('good' & 'not good') placed in a perpendicular plane to eliminate confusion. The device is obvious invisible to all, and with the absence of hand displays, no one gets to see who decided what – and thus the potential for confrontation just about vanishes. The CR's unit alone – or a public display – will register the consensus. Time for the tech folks to give it some thought?

Well, there you have it – a report of an adventure and commentary to boot!

**A Welshman in New York  
(Tournament of Champions, 24  
February – 2 March 2007)**

**by Roy Gingell**

A first-time experience for me in “the big apple” and also my first time using the infamous “3-Referee System” provided for an entertaining trip in late February/early March to the world-famous Tournament of Champions at Grand Central Station.

Accommodation in the Grand Hyatt in downtown Manhattan proved to be an ideal base both for the squash and some sightseeing later in the week

My roommate, Mike Riley, an ex-pat now living in Boston, lived up to the English tradition of hospitality in making me more than welcome both on and off the court.

The 3-Referee System – Look Left Look Right Look Left again – reminded me of being back in school and learning the Green Cross Code (all about how to cross the road carefully). Some very interesting conversations took place after play about the various hand signals, both legal and banned, that we were supposed to be using

The WSF-appointed referees were ably supported by, amongst others, the perennial visiting referees to the TOC – Madge, Hunt, Mo, Jennifer and Grant. It was great to see Madge again – especially after the last time (at the Women's World Junior event in Cairo) where he had vanished with a degree of mystery and left Michael Collins with a hefty room bill!

Sorry Mike – I still couldn't get him to buy a beer!

As for the Squash, there was keen qualifying at the New York Athletic Club, followed by a mixture of intense and humorous squash at Grand Central Station – all watched by excellent crowds

It was interesting to meet up with some “old” friends – Clive Leach. John Russell, Martin Heath and my best mate Paul Johnson (PJ) – who once again told me how I had cost him victory against Peter Nicol in the first round of the British Open in Cardiff 1999, with a call that on a UK Radio Station in 2003 was voted the fourth worst refereeing decision of *all* time in British Sport!

The ToC benefited from great venues expertly run by John Nimick and his team. Mike Riley did his reputation no harm at all by looking after me superbly – I only hope he can make it to Wales so that I can repay the compliment.

### **Sheika Al Saad Kuwait Open (5 –11 April 2007)**

**Wendy Danzey**



This was the third Kuwait Open named after Sheika Al Saad to celebrate the life of the princess who died four years ago at the age of 38. I felt most honoured to be allocated to this tournament for a second time, since it is a sporting memorial to such a remarkable princess who herself was a talented first-class squash player.

Roy Gingell (Wales), Ian Allanach (Scotland), Dean Clayton (England) and Nasser Zahran (Egypt) were the other nominated WSF referees. We were also assisted by Khalid Ali and several other local referees who were a great help.

On the day of departure I got up at 3 a.m., moaning and groaning to my sister Hilary who had volunteered to stay overnight and drive me to Nottingham to catch the 4am coach to Heathrow Airport. I continued my sleep on the four-hour coach ride to Heathrow.

As I was leaving the coach, the driver nearly ruptured himself throwing my case off, then as the next case was obviously light compared with mine, he threw it so hard, it knocked me for six and I went head over heels into the next coach-bay, grazing both shins badly. I eventually got to my feet when I realised I hadn't broken both legs and met Roy, Ian and Dean, with blood running down my shins – it didn't take much persuasion that we all needed a drink before departure, even though it was only 9am.

Three hotels were used for the tournament, one for the organisers, one for the players and one for qualifiers and referees. The New Park Hotel was a small business hotel that was comfortable and friendly. Unfortunately, the pool was covered over, as it was still considered to be winter, with temperatures reaching 25C at times during the day, though we did have rain too. Dean and I managed the odd hour some days chasing the last rays of sun around the garden of the hotel. We also had the use of the exclusive Al Corniche Leisure Club with panoramic views over the Gulf, we took advantage of this on semis and finals days.

The tournament was played at the spectacular newly built Al Qadsia Club, boasting sumptuous red-carpet runners on marble floors. On the same site there were three international swimming pools on top of each other (three storeys), football pitches, and

there was also an international water polo competition on at the same time. The all-glass court had been erected in a large impressive hall nearby.

We were made to feel most welcome by Dr Mahmoud Al Razouki, TD Mr Hussein Maqseed (Kuwait Squash Federation Chairman), and Robert Edwards, with excellent hospitality. The tournament dinner was held at the grand Salma Sabah El Hamed Hall; local costumes were presented to all the players and officials present – and worn by all!

On the eve of the event Sheika Fadiyah Al Sabah (the sister of the princess who died) announced the total prize money would be raised by \$25,000 to a record breaking \$250,000, helping to raise the profile of professional squash.

There was a spectacular sound- and laser-effect opening ceremony and indoor pyrotechnics (similar to indoor fireworks) for the close.

We used the new “3-Referee System” – me for the first time – under the guidance of Roy, and I was pleasantly surprised how slick it was and that the majority of players have accepted and adapted to it well. A little fine-tuning is needed – I managed to call a ball down that was out, after watching Roy, my left-side referee, point up and then do a ‘thumbs down’ signal!

Ramy Ashour blitzed Amr Shabana in 33 minutes, in stark contrast to the ladies’ marathon between Nicol David and Natalie Grinham which David won 3-1 in 93 minutes – a whole hour longer than the men’s match!

A moment to remember for me was on finals night when we were all lined up at the back of the court for the presentations and the Crown Prince on

entering the court made a bee-line straight for us saying: “Referees”, followed by Sheika Fadiyah, and both shaking our hands and speaking to us individually.

On finals night Khalid suggested that I take a camel ride for the short trip from the club to the glass court, but on seeing the camel refusing to bend its legs to let Khalid’s son off, I declined, as I really didn’t fancy refereeing the ladies’ final perched on top of a camel’s hump – maybe it’s something I’ll live to regret!

Before leaving the Al Qadsia Club for the last time the Kuwait lady members presented me with a beautiful local costume.

Many thanks to Nasser for arranging tea with honey to be served while we were refereeing!

### **Qatar Classic (11th – 17th April 2007)**

**by Chris Sinclair**

This was the 2006 WISPA and PSA Classic rescheduled. Graham Waters was TR. Also present were Wendy Danzey, Damien Green, Pete Lawrence, John Massarella and Chris Sinclair.

As Qatar Airlines does not fly into Australia or Canada, Mr Alaa Eldeen Allouba of the Qatar Squash Federation did a superb job getting Graham, Damien and myself there – just in time. It will be good when QA does fly into Australia soon, as it took Damien and me 26 hours travelling, with Damien spending 9 hours at KL airport.

We used 3 glass-back courts for qualifying, then two plus the all-glass court until quarters, then only the all-glass court. Early in the week the organisers feared they could not get the centre court cool enough – but they sure succeeded. We absolutely froze every day; thanks John for taking your WSF jumper for me to wear! Once when I called "Half time" a player came off court and brought me his jacket as he said he'd heard my teeth chattering – true story! Our referees' room was superb – just for us, good chairs and tables, kitchen, bathroom, with fruit, drinks, tea and coffee supplied, as was internet access.

We used standard marker/refereeing until the quarters; thereafter the 3-Referee System with a marker. I am sure Graham will report further on this. Obviously the intent is to get the best result for the players, and it does take pressure off referees knowing a "clanger" will be over-ruled by the others. In the main the players were happy, though the usual grumblers still grumbled.

The four local markers were very good, and I am sure one of them will make an excellent referee if he gets opportunities and assessments. The other referees want me to particularly thank one of the markers for bringing cans of beer to the hotel rooms. Prior to that the referees each had a beer with dinner – on one night only. The look on Pete's face when he had to pay £4.75 for a half-pint was priceless. I find more and more advantages in being a non-drinker.

We were individually welcomed and presented with a gift at the official Dinner. We all laughed as Mr Daaahmeeyan Grin and Mr Windy Denzy were introduced. We had even more of a laugh when reporter Ian

McKenzie was getting his food at the buffet and almost missed the first occasion when anyone had ever presented him with anything – his speed to the dais was a wonder to behold.

We shared rooms at the high-class Marriott Hotel. Unfortunately Windy Denzy was often confused with Wendy Danzey and was locked out of our room almost daily. As always Wendy and John worshipped the sun by the pool from early till late. We all ate too much at the hotel's constant sumptuous buffets, so John didn't have any guilt smuggling rolls, butter, cheese and cakes out of the dining-room daily for our snacks at the courts. We really enjoyed these until we discovered that the bag he used for the unwrapped food was the same bag he used for his sweaty gym clothes!

Transportation was excellent, with drivers available at any time. Some of the drivers were obviously training for the Daytona races, and we soon learned which drivers would get us to our destination quickly and which ones would get us there safely.

We all agonised over Pete's quest for gold. Never has more thought been put into a jewellery purchase. Day-after-day Pete haunted the gold markets looking and comparing prices. How Graham could go home with his head held high I don't know, as all the other men took diamond rings home. However Graham did buy a prayer-mat (on which to do penance if Louise discovers this perhaps?) John St Laurent went back to "his usual tailor" for more trousers and jackets, all of which now have deeper pockets as John regularly lost his phone ...and his papers ... and his pens ... and....

Nice to have seen Andrew Shelley in his cameo appearance. He arrived with the players from Kuwait at midday on the 12th and left on the flight they had booked him on at 5am on the 13th. It was good to meet up with Geoff Hunt again and to learn about his coaching at the "Aspire Sports Academy" – and to get his shopping tips.

I said goodbye to Pete Lawrence in March 2006 at the Melbourne Commonwealth Games – his last WSF appointment. Then I said goodbye to him in July 2006 at the World Junior Men's in NZ – his last World Championships. So I again said goodbye to him in Doha – his last overseas refereeing venture. I believe others will have the opportunity to say goodbye at his last Wales-appointed event soon. It has been a pleasure Pete and we'll miss you.

Oh who won? Ramy beat David Palmer 3/1 in 66 minutes, and Nicol defeated Natalie Grinham 3/1 in 69 minutes.

### **Canadian National Championship, Calgary (May 2 – 5, 2007)**

**by Jack Flynn**

When the call came: "Was I willing and able to assess at The Canadian Nationals?" there was only one answer. I had formed many friendships over the years and the opportunity to meet up again could not be missed. In spite of a squash weekend in Aberdeen early March and a golf week in Portugal late March I got clearance from home – I will pay later – and set about making arrangements. I went out two days early to acclimatise and to spend some time with Dave and Adeline Clements, who

had hosted me in the past. Dave collected me at the airport in his brand new Acura 4X4 – he had taken delivery earlier in the day. I was very impressed, and I spent a very pleasant 2 days with them recovering from jet lag and even getting to meet tournament referee Grant Currie for a pre-tournament lunch. And so to the Nationals.

This year's event was held at the Glencoe Club, Calgary, Alberta May 2nd – 5th and was preceded by a well-attended Referees' Symposium on May 1st at the same venue. Squash Canada has an excellent refereeing programme in place and the standard at these championships was very high. In attendance were both a current World and International Referee as well as a retired World and Ex-International, together with several others who have the potential to attain these grades. I have worked with this group in the past and without exception everybody is willing to listen and eager to learn, including those who have already reached the top. One thing that impressed me was the willingness of players, particularly juniors and the younger age-bracket, to try and play the ball at all times. It was refreshing to see the game played properly or as it was meant to be played. Nobody fishing or seeking easy strokes or trying to gain an advantage. This led to fewer decisions and as a consequence not easy to get valid assessments. The relationship between players and referees was good, very few instances of bad behaviour. When it occurred it was immediately punished by using Rule 17 to good effect. The camaraderie amongst the group and their support for each other is in my opinion second to none. Newcomers are made very welcome, encouragement and support is given freely. Two recent additions, Alan

Tole and Rod McDougall stood out. Both have very good basic skills – using the correct terminology, giving decisions quickly and clearly – and I am confident that given the necessary experience in the coming years they will achieve high grading in the discipline. Squash Canada’s refereeing corps sets a fine example and is a credit to the game.

Tournament Referee, Grant Currie, did an excellent job, chairing a referees’ meeting every morning, constantly overseeing referees on duty and arranging schedules for following days late at night. For the latter, he wisely involved senior officials in this task.

After the finals, the tournament ended with a lavish banquet at the splendid Glencoe Club where among others, I met Ian Paton, a friend of over 20 years, resplendent in Hawaiian shirt holding a pint glass – typical Australian. Sunday morning the referees said their goodbyes and headed off to their respective homes. Dave picked me up at the hotel for a quick shopping trip – mainly to Golf Town – the dedicated Adeline was attending a Squash Alberta meeting! And we met again for an afternoon barbeque at their home before leaving

me at the airport for my overnight flight. I had just settled into seat 31C for the long journey to Heathrow, which I was not looking forward to, when a familiar voice interrupted my thoughts. It was my nephew, whom I had not seen for some time and who was working as a purser for BA. “Follow me, Mr. Flynn“ – an upgrade – Happy Days! The food and drink (the latter lost on me) and turbulence so much better in first class as I slept, snoozed with names like Ranchridge, Country Hills, Nose Hill Park, the Shagnappi Trail and The Bow Rider coursing through my mind. The long flight followed by a short hop to Dublin and I was home but something was different – the decorators had been in – payback time!– but well worth it.

My thanks to Squash Canada for the hospitality afforded to me during my stay, WSF for the assignment and most of all the Canadian referees who once again made me very welcome.

### **Envoi**

The next issue of the *WSF Referees’ Review* will be in November 2007. As usual, all feedback is welcome. Please send comments and contributions to me at [symingto@uvic.ca](mailto:symingto@uvic.ca).