

# Referees' Review

WORLD  
SQUASH

June 2015

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WSF

## From the Desk of the WSF Director of Referees



This month will see the publication of my eagerly awaited Strategic plan for Refereeing 2015-2018 entitled "Moving Forward". The purpose of this WSF Refereeing Strategic Plan is

to put forward refereeing aspirations and set the direction for refereeing for the next 4 years. It provides a blueprint for developing a system to take refereeing towards being a fully respected and valued component within the game of Squash.

The Plan is designed to be a fully working document that will be adjusted according to market forces, innovation and the robust evidence that will be provided.

The Strategy outlines the direction of refereeing and will be supplemented by various implementation plans across all regions and member nations, which will identify agreed measurable targets and will be reviewed annually with the help of Regional feedback.

WSF refereeing is committed to equality and, although equality is implicit throughout this strategy, progress in this area will also be evaluated annually.

The WSF Referees Committee under the leadership of its Director and Chairman are tasked with evaluating the success of this strategy.

The on-going evaluation of this strategy is of paramount importance. Measures will be established to assess progress directly against it. More and better Referees will be measured and evaluated. More and better Assessors will be measured against the strategy too.

WSF will proactively work with its partners at Regional and National levels who can clearly demonstrate how they can contribute to our aspirations.

*Roy Gingell*

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## Summary of the WSF Strategic Plan for Refereeing 2015-2018

### Our Mission

- To develop and deliver high quality, effective and consistent Refereeing throughout the global squash community, which is valued and appreciated by players, promoters and spectators, and meets the expectations of the squash community.

### Our Aspirations

- WSF Refereeing will be outcome (evidenced) focused, raising the standards and status of refereeing worldwide.
- To increase the number of active Referees worldwide through properly developed pathways and Assessment programmes to CBTA standards.
- All Referees will be qualified to a CBTA level appropriate to his or her role.
- All Referees will be deployed and active at a level appropriate to his or her role.
- All Referees will feel valued and will have access to opportunities to develop their skills to their particular level of aspiration and capability.
- Through this to ensure a consistently high standard of Assessment worldwide.

Its Guiding principles include:

### Being Innovative

- Active listening, new approaches and creative solutions will be intrinsic to the strategy.

### Being Evidence Based

- Planning of refereeing interventions will be based upon robust evidence.

### **Being Outcome Focused**

- In aiming for “more and better qualified” referees and raising the standards and status of refereeing worldwide, we will set ambitious but achievable targets, monitor and share outcomes and adjust plans to ensure a process of continuous improvement.

This includes a clearly defined Referee Pathway and approach for those Countries that need specific help in developing their Referees.

Areas include:

#### **Recruiting**

To increase the number of active Referees and Assessors throughout the world.

#### **Training**

All Referees/Assessors will be qualified to a level appropriate to his or her role.

#### **Deploying**

All Referees will be deployed and active at a level appropriate to his or her role.

#### **Retaining**

All Referees will feel valued and will have access to opportunities to develop their skills and will include various interventions all being measured by smarter outputs and outcomes.



The strategic Plan can be found [here](#).

For further information please contact [Roy Gingell](#); Director, WSF Referees Committee

## **Tournament of Champions**

New York, New York – so great, they named it twice! I was again privileged to be invited by the WSF to referee at this prestigious event, so expertly presented in Grand Central Terminal by John Nimick and his EventEngine team.



*Signage in Grand Central Station*

I was joined by three other WSF Referees – Wayne Smith, John Massarella, and Mike Riley – as well as several other Regional and National Referees from the USA and Canada, who stayed a varying number of days to help with the qualifying rounds (staged at four different local clubs) and the very long days during the early rounds of the 32-man PSA and 16-woman WSA main rounds. More qualified people have expertly reported the brilliant squash on display, so I will write about some other aspects of the event.



*Referees jumping simultaneously on court*

The 2015 Tournament of Champions saw the introduction of the new TriRef system, developed by Omar Kandili for the PSA. The TriRef system is an electronic scoring device using iPads to record all aspects of the match - the score, all interference decisions, all video reviews and any conduct penalties applied. All of us were very apprehensive about trying this out for the first time at such an important event as the Tournament of Champions. However, as we became familiar with the mechanics of the system, that apprehension disappeared.

Speaking for myself, I was very confident with it by the end of the tournament. I cannot speak for John, Mike, or Wayne, but it appeared they too had bought in. Omar was brilliant and sat beside the Central Referee for every point of every match to help us out when we were either a bit confused or had made a mistake with the buttons and needed to backtrack. The decision-making is definitely a little slower than it was with hand signals, but everybody accepted that. That is why those of you who watched the matches on Squash TV, may have heard us say “Decision, Shabana” to indicate that a decision was pending. This was necessary to let the audience know what was happening, rather than a long pause while the 3 referees were punching the appropriate buttons.

During the week, we made a few suggestions to Omar for improving the display, such as putting a big cross over the video review button when a player didn't have a review remaining, adding the players' name to the Decision buttons, etc. He acknowledged all of these and had the changes made for the next days' matches. You will see those changes in place when you attend your next event.

What about a backup, you ask, if (when?) the technology failed. The right side referee kept a written score sheet, just as he did before. That was a little cumbersome at first with both a clipboard and an iPad to juggle, but we all developed our own balancing technique and were quite comfortable with it after a few days. Of course, this backup became vital. Although the iPads themselves are wireless, there is a server on the floor under the Central Referee and it's hard-wired to the Squash TV computer, and during the last match of Day 1 in Grand Central, that cable had somehow become dislodged. Nobody knew what the problem was at the time, and there was no time to investigate. I was the right side Referee on that match, so I quickly passed my score sheet over to John, and we finished the match using hand signals. I don't think the players even knew, but some of the off duty Referees wondered how we had been able to give our decisions so quickly!

Another very positive step was having Lee Drew there for the whole week. I had not met Lee before and was very impressed with his personable nature and his willingness to discuss decisions and situations by reviewing videos the following day. He also invited several players to attend, and they did. Karim Gawad, Tarek Momen, Borja Golan, Simon Rösner, James Willstrop, and Camille Serme all came to different sessions and the entire conversation was very positive and led to a better understanding of each other's views; long may this continue.

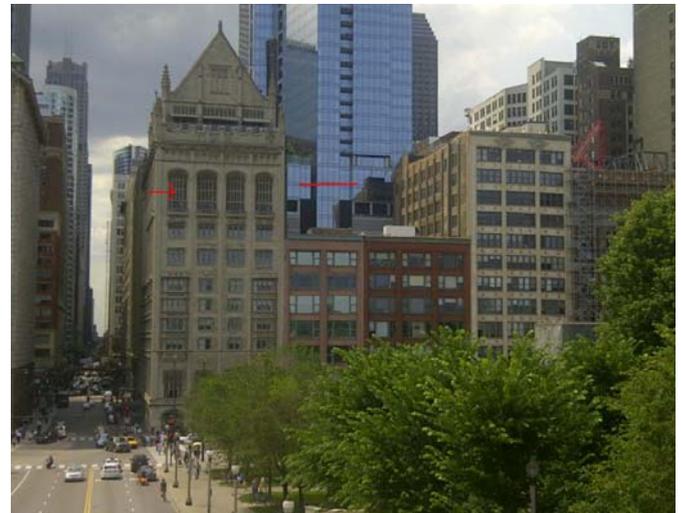
Overall, it was a great event, as the Tournament of Champions always is. I feel that the refereeing team did an excellent job over all and that some very positive advances were achieved.

Were we perfect? Of course not, and we probably never will be, but we continue to strive toward that goal.

*Graham Waters*

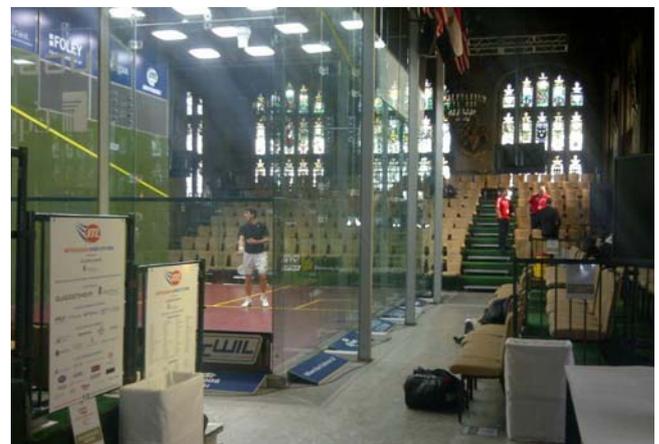
## Windy City Open

The 2015 Windy City Open event ran from 26 February to 4 March in Chicago, Illinois, USA, at the University Club of Chicago. The major sponsors were Guggenheim Partners and Equitrust Life Insurance. Men's and Women's prize purses were each US\$150,000.



*Looking westward down East Monroe Street, the University Club building is on the street corner.*

The picture above taken in the summer of 2014 showcases the architectural beauty of the building finished in 1909. 500m east of the camera position is the large water expanse of Lake Michigan. Red arrow on the University Club of Chicago shows the 9th floor where the glass court was assembled for the Main round matches. The additional red line shows the walking bridge from the University Club of Chicago building across to an adjacent building and an additional three courts. Qualifier matches were played on these courts.



The photo above shows the inside of the 9th floor after the McWIL Court had been assembled. Note the windowed stain glass designs that align three sides of this dining room.

The court was brought into the building in sections, either in the elevator or attached to the bottom of the elevator cage; sections were physically too big to be carried within the cage.

The Tournament Director and Operations Manager for the event was the very capable John Flanigan. John was assisted by the Head Squash Director Mark Heather and squash professional Yoni Ellous. John hosted the assembled Referee team from the USA, Canada and Europe within the hotel room facilities at the University Club. With the -20C average temperature outside, it was great to be able to move around from hotel room to gym facilities, to food breaks, to matches without having to step outside! Key to the Referees at any event is a watering hole for assembling after matches, to recover, tell stories, banter and joke about the day's events. Luckily there were a few places within a block of the Club to do this; otherwise you would have gotten very cold, very quickly.

Every day before match play, a Referee review session was held with the local and international officials on what had been learnt from the previous day plus the requirements in the upcoming day's matches. Often these sessions had a PSA representative as well as players. The PSA TriReferee system, a key tool for the Referees at PSA World Series events, was used. I always acknowledge the patience and assistance of the PSA's Omar Kandili, who sits beside the Centre Referee on all the glass court matches. The TriRef created by Omar's impressive, intuitive IT coding skills are relative to what a Referee requires of the tool. Omar's help in fast corrections from Referees in pressing wrong icon buttons, or decisions made before appeals are requested is priceless.

In the Women's event, Raneem El Welily won the Final over Nicol David. In the Men's event, Nick Matthew won the Final over Mohamed El Shorbagy.

*Wayne Smith*

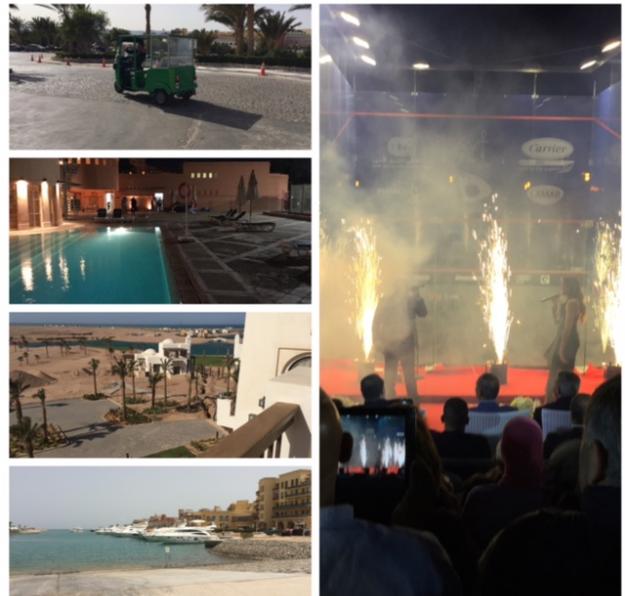
## El Gouna International

This very picturesque Egyptian resort on the Red Sea was the location of the El Gouna International 2015.

The play took place on two courts: the inside court was situated at the local Movenpick Hotel while the glass court was situated in a local square next to the Marina.

WSF Referees Roy Gingell, John Massarella and Mike Collins were aided by local Egyptian referees Samah Hanafy, Amr M Elmataany and Abbas Kaoud.

Accommodation was at the brand new Ancient Sands Resort, which opened on the day we arrived. Both lunch and evening meals were taken in a local beach-side café called Moods, situated right on the Marina next to some very expensive Yachts.



*Images from the resort.*

With the weather in the 90s, Massarella and Collins made themselves familiar with the local beach and pool provision, improving their already brown complexion – whilst Gingell preferred to explore the local shops in the local transport provided.

With the 3-Referee system in use for all matches, along with Video Referee for the all glass back, evening matches there provided more than enough quality games for all.

On Quarter-Final day with play not starting till 8pm, Collins and Gingell teamed up against PSA commentator and ex World No4 Paul Johnson and World No21 Nicky Mueller for a game of golf in the blistering daytime heat. They ended up losing narrowly on the 18<sup>th</sup> with bandit Collins proving a little better than his 24 handicap and keeping the Referee team in contention.

The Squash as normal was of the highest order with Ramy, making a well anticipated comeback, winning in a 94 minute, 5 game thriller; a fitting climax to an event staged in a truly remarkable location.

*Roy Gingell*

## Allam British Open 2015

For the third year running the event was held in Hull on the east coast of Yorkshire, predominantly a seafaring community of many years tradition. For me it was a pleasure to travel only 50 minutes by road to the Airco Arena where the main draw was held. The arena is in the grounds of the Premier League football team Hull City of which Mr Allam, the main sponsor is the owner. From the Tournament Referee's point of view, I am pleased to report a very successful tournament, which started with the qualifying and women's first round at the university and then to the Arena for the remainder.

Lee Drew, in his PSA role, spoke to Referees at the beginning of the event and on two other mornings we had a video analysis, on one of those days we were joined by Fares Dessouki. This new initiative in the last eight months has been very productive for both players and referees.

The number of Referees was adequate throughout the event, four WSF referees were appointed, myself, Roy Gingell, Thomas Wachter and Tomas Forter. We were well supported by England Squash referees, a total of 14 referees were used on some days, as on the final five days there were full Masters events, with over 300 entries.

Facilities at the arena were generally very good, the 'Referees room' was a little Spartan – it was actually a changing room, though at least it was secluded and private in itself, whereas the bathroom facility within could have been a little more secluded and private. I was dispatched further afield on more than one occasion.

The hotel was very acceptable, with a gym and swimming pool. It was only a short trip to both venues; a shuttle bus was available, though we normally travelled with chauffeur Roy.



One morning as Roy was indisposed (a Chinese the night before), Thomas Wachter had the privilege of travelling in the back of my van, very DEL BOY like; see photo above. On a number of occasions I didn't negotiate bends as carefully as I could of. Thomas Forter, who had won the toss of the coin and sat in the front, thanked his lucky stars.

Our late evening hostelry (due to late finishes) was more often than not the Wetherspoon pub; many of our Referee colleagues will remember the same procedure in Glasgow. Not in the best of areas, this one served a meal and a pint for a fiver. On six separate visits I only ever saw four different ladies with a full set of their own teeth. By the way, Hull has called itself the City of Culture.

Chris Nutley the TD attended to us very well, prior to and during the whole event. He treated us to an Indian meal on the first and the last nights above our daily meal allowance and we were invited and welcomed to the players' awards in the VIP area immediately after the semi finals. A good tournament to end the season on.

*John Massarella*

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