



Referees' Review

June 2009

Editor: Rod Symington



Following a very busy period on the latter part of 2008, the first six months of 2009 have been rather quiet for WSF referees. The economic downturn has inevitably led to some challenges for the tournament calendar, and the demand for WSF referees has been correspondingly low. (See the Table of Assignments later in this Newsletter.) As a consequence, this issue of the *WSF Referees' Review* is somewhat shorter than usual.

However, the second half of 2009 will be a busy season, with both the Women's World Open in the Netherlands and the Men's World Team Championships in Denmark.

In addition, the world of squash will be waiting with great suspense for the final vote of the full International Olympic Committee on whether squash will be admitted to the 2016 Olympic Games. At the time of writing there is a sense of cautious optimism; the WSF and its allies have made tremendous efforts to promote the case of squash, and whatever the outcome the sport will have benefited from an infusion of renewed energy and professionalism.

The 10th World Squash Refereeing Conference will be held in Odense, Denmark on September 25 and 26. See announcement on the next page.

10th World Squash Refereeing Conference
“TOWARDS POSITIVE REFEREEING: THE WAY FORWARD”

25th and 26th September, 2009
First Hotel Grand, Odense, Denmark

Friday, 25 September. Session One: Calling the Shots – Correctly!				
8.45	Registration			
9.00	Introduction			
9.30	The Challenges in Refereeing	Identifying the Issues and Moving Forward	Rod Symington	PowerPoint Presentation and Discussion
10.00	Front Court Interference	Theory and Practice	Ian Allanach Rod Symington	PowerPoint/Video presentation
10.45	Break			
11.00	Deep Court Interference	Theory and Practice	Ian Allanach Rod Symington	PowerPoint/Video presentation
11.45	A Referee’s Phrasebook	What To Say and When	Ian Allanach	PowerPoint presentation
12.15	Lunch			
1.15	Mid-Court Interference	Theory and Practice	Ian Allanach Rod Symington	PowerPoint/Video presentation
2.00	Blocking and Physical Tactics		Rod Symington	PowerPoint/Video presentation
2.45	Break			
3.15	Some Difficult Problems	How to Solve Them	Rod Symington	PowerPoint/Video Presentation
4.00	Forum	Questions From the Floor	IA, RS, GW	
4.30	Finish			
Saturday, 26th September. Session Two: The Way Forward				
9.00	The Way Forward	Refereeing in a Perfect World	Rod Symington	PowerPoint presentation
9.30	The Three-Referee System	Current Practice and Outstanding Issues	Graham Waters	PowerPoint and discussion
10.15	Break			
10.30	Injuries and Bleeding	How To Get It Right Every Time	Rod Symington	PowerPoint presentation
11.15	Conduct on Court	A Challenge for all Referees	Ian Allanach	PowerPoint/Video presentation
12.00	Lunch			
1.15	Pressures of a Team Event	Preparation and Practice	Ian Allanach	PowerPoint presentation
2.00	The Assessment Process	How To Benefit	Rod Symington	PowerPoint presentation
2.45	Break			
3.00	Relations with Players	The Way Forward	TBA	Discussion
3.45	Forum	Questions from the floor	IA, RS, GW	
4.15	Finish			

Hong Kong Open 2008

by **Harvey Bowlt**

[This article was omitted by accident from a previous edition of the *Referees' Review*.]

The Hong Kong Open was held from Monday 17 November to Sunday 23 November 2008. The qualifying rounds in both the men's and women's tournaments were held on 17 and 18 November and the draw proper started on Wednesday 19 November.

The WSF referees allocated to the tournament were world referees Chris Sinclair and Roy Gingell and international referees Yogendra Singh, Fayyaz Mohammad, Harvey Bowlt and Fahim Gul. Fahim Gul was unable to make the tournament at the last minute and accordingly there were only 5 WSF appointed referees.

Other referees sent by their national bodies were Miyuki Adachi (Japan), Kim Jae Ohan and Woo Chang Wook (South Korea), Yang Yuan Fang (Taipei) and Andy Karuppiah and Aaron Soyza (Malaysia). A number of local referees assisted with refereeing duties, as the three referee system was used in both the qualifying rounds and the main draw for the men's tournament and from the quarter finals onwards in the women's tournament.

The Three Referee System

Although the system has been used at many tournaments throughout the world it was a novelty to me, as it was the first time I had used the system.

A general observation is that it seems to have been favourably accepted by the players, who consider it a fairer system, and there was minimal dissent throughout the week.

Due to the fact that there were only 5 WSF referees present we were initially under the impression that we would be worked off our feet. However, the tournament referee, Anthony So, made significant use of the other visiting referees and some of the local referees/players to assist with refereeing duties and ultimately the WSF referees were, if anything, underutilised during the tournament.

Where possible, at least 2 WSF referees were used in the more difficult matches, but in many matches a WSF referee was the central referee and was assisted by one of the other national referees and/or a local referee. On occasion this resulted in some interesting situations where the central referee was either overruled by the two less qualified referees or there were three different decisions. Although WSF referees obviously make mistakes, the two examples of overruling that I saw in matches where I was not involved were clearly incorrect decisions.

I think the lesson to be learnt is that although there were very few problems throughout the tournament because of the three referee system, it is preferable for at least two WSF referees to be allocated to each match where at all possible, particularly when it gets to the later rounds of the tournament.

As regards refinements to the system, where dissent is shown it is generally addressed to the central referee and

ultimately an electronic system needs to be developed where all three referees give their decision anonymously and only the consensus decision is displayed to the players. This should not be an issue with modern technology.

Accommodation

The referees were accommodated at the Rosedale on the Park Hotel in Causeway Bay, which was strategically placed for transport and other facilities. Although the rooms were small they were very comfortable and the other hotel facilities were good. The players were accommodated at one of the local Marriott Hotels, which I believe was more upmarket. I understand that WSF have decided that in future referees must be accommodated in a hotel that is the same standard as that used by the players. However, I had no complaints about the ref's hotel accommodation.

Venues

The initial rounds were held at the Hong Kong Squash Centre and the semi finals and finals were held at an open court in Tsim Sha Tsui on the Kowloon side of Hong Kong. Fortunately the weather for the semis and final was good and the court was at a different angle to its position a couple of years ago, when I had the interesting experience of a ball going out of court over my head and into the sea! It was positioned so that the skyline and light show on the Hong Kong island skyline were displayed behind the front wall and it must be one of the more spectacular venues for a squash tournament in the world.

The Tournament in General

I was interested to hear that this is the 23rd year that Cathay Pacific has sponsored the tournament and Hong

Kong Squash is fortunate to have such a good sponsor.

As usual the organisation of the tournament was good and my thanks to Tony Choi and his organising committee for their hospitality and the excellent lunch during the week. Thanks also to Fayyaz from Hong Kong who arranged an informal dinner on the last evening at the United Services Recreation Club in Kowloon, which was hosted by the club president, Ross Parker.

9th World Squash Coaching and Development Conference Hong Kong, May 2009

Chris Sinclair WSF World Referee

I was asked to present two one-hour sessions at this Conference. My topics were:

1. Singles Rules – What's Next, and Doubles Rules – 2008 Changes to Interference and Scoring
2. Squash Australia's Video Rules Presentations, and Refereeing – Its Place Within Squash

Of course it was innovative for Hong Kong to include refereeing topics at a Coaching Conference and it was a great opportunity to spread the word about refereeing generally – different ways of presenting rules information to players and for training referees; WSF's CBTA programme; problems facing refereeing; and of course Rules updates (which I kept very brief).

After speaking about the topics, I handed out a survey on certain aspects of the

Rules including Turning, Excessive Swing, Minimal Interference, Injury and Blood situations, as well as the 3-Referee System, and I will pass those results onto the WSF Rules Committee.

Other presenters were:

Gerard DeCourcy (Vice President WSF); Tony Choi (National Coach HK Squash); Anthony Ricketts (National Coach Squash New Zealand); David Pearson (UK National Coach); Stafford Murray (Head of Analysis EIS); Aidan Harrison (Head Squash Professional USA); Sarah Fitz-Gerald (5 times World Champion); and various personnel from the Hong Kong Sports Institute.

The topics covered included:

Olympic Update; Junior Development in HK; Footwork; Becoming a Professional Squash Player; Sports Science in the England Squash Elite Programme; England Squash Coaching Philosophies; Adapt to Style; Squash Skills Program; Coaching Techniques and Tactics; Anti-doping – What, Why and How; Marketing of Squash; Integration of Chinese and Western Medicine in Elite Squash Players.

There were representatives from 21 countries present – a great response. There was a Forum where some coaches reported what was happening in their countries – e.g. Qatar, Malaysia, Sweden and Canada.

This 3-day Conference was held at two venues – the Conference room of the Hotel and the Kowloon Squash and Table Tennis Centre. Facilities were excellent at both places and all arrangements were perfect. Meals and social events were happy occasions and well organised.

On World Squash Day Mr Timothy Fok Tsun-ting (President of the Olympic Committee of Hong Kong) was invited to lunch and to address the gathering. His son is a keen squash player in Hong Kong.

I had some spare time for shopping the day I left, and having arrived in Hong Kong with 16 kgs of luggage, I left with 26 kgs. Well, Tony did ask us to contribute to Hong Kong's economy!

I believe smaller countries are desperate for information and material for them to be able to teach their players the rules, and to be able to fully instruct prospective referees. Therefore I hope this idea of refereeing and coaching mixing and contributing to each other's areas continues, and I applaud Hong Kong for this initiative.

Honours for WSF Referees

Two WSF Referees, one current and one former, have been honoured by the Asian Squash Federation:

Munir Shah (Singapore), IR and Director of Asian Referees for the past 25 years, has been elected to the Asian Squash Hall of Fame.

Major Maniam (Malaysia and India), former IR and Asian Squash Federation Director of Coaching, has also been elected to the Asian Squash Hall of Fame.

Our sincere congratulations to both of these colleagues on being appropriately recognised for their many years of service to squash.

Editorial

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

The Pursuit of Excellence

In sports, as in life, progress is evident. All of human life evolves – and in sports the evolution can be seen in the improvements in equipment, training, and performance. Any player who stands still is left behind.

Refereeing is subject to a similar process: as the sport of squash evolves, so must refereeing. It took a long time (squash being a very conservative sport and people in general disliking change), but we have finally adopted a far superior referring system (Three Referees) that without doubt has been of enormous benefit to the sport. We still have to overcome the obstacle of the stubborn belief that there are not sufficient referees to use the Three-Referee System universally. Why do we never hear the same objection from the sport of tennis, where a minimum of *seven* officials are needed for a match? Here again, the thinking needs to change.

But the evolution of the *system* should not mislead us into thinking all is fine. Each of us involved in the sport of squash has an obligation to evolve *personally*: that is, to become better referees. No human being is perfect (only psychopaths think they are); thus each has the duty to engage in self-analysis and self-development.

Despite the global economic crisis, professional squash will continue to

expand and develop. And this means that the demands on squash referees will continue to increase: more professional tournaments, more prize money – and more pressure to perform at the highest level. Although squash referees are all amateurs, it is essential that they maintain at all times a professional attitude.

This professionalism requires an open and flexible mind: every day and every event can provide us with lessons from which we can draw useful conclusions. On the back page of the WSF Assessment Form there is a very important box: “Receptive to feedback”. If an Assessor does not tick that box, the referee faces a significant handicap. But that box and that principle are not confined to squash matches and assessments: it is also a principle for life. Stubborn deafness and a refusal to be receptive to feedback are fatal to personal growth and professional development, and any referee who does not listen to feedback from any source is condemned to stagnate and move backwards.

A commitment to excellence is the primary duty of all referees, but especially of WSF Referees. As the top referees in their profession, they must set an example at all times by their conduct, their performance, and their devotion to the highest standards. But equally important, they must show the world that they mature enough to admit error and commit to improvement – and to listen to advice from any source.

From the Director

Graham Waters



Unfortunately, the world's economic climate has claimed a few victims on the squash scene with events cancelled in Mexico City (even before the swine flu scare) in January, Abu Dhabi in May, and Cairo (SKY Supersport), also in May. In fact, we had only two requests for WSF Referees for events in the first half of the calendar year – the Tournament of Champions in New York in January and the WISPA event in Seoul in June. We did, however, have the traditional requests for Assessors to attend the European Team Championships and the Canadian National Championships, both during the same week in late April/early May. It is troubling to note that major events such as the Super Series finals, Canary Wharf, and the Hurgada International chose not to request WSF Referees.

However, the second half of the year appears much brighter, with WSF Referees already assigned to the World Championship events - the World Games in July, the World Junior Individual and Junior Women's Team Championships in July/August, the Women's World Open in September, the Men's World Teams in September/October, and the Men's World Open in November. Still to come are the long running PSA Super Series events in Qatar, Hong Kong, and Saudi

Arabia, plus the British Open in Manchester and the World Masters in Sydney. There are also two brand new Super Series events on the PSA calendar, one in Nigeria, and the other in India. There is also the possibility that the U.S. Open and the Canadian Classic might be revived during the September/October period. Pheewww – we might all be very busy come September.

As most of you know by now, the adoption of a new logo by the WSF means that WSF Referees and Assessors will be receiving new clothing – shirts and jumpers (sweaters, if you prefer), and a new crest for our blazers. For budgetary reasons, this has been planned for next fiscal year (which starts on July 1st) and will also coincide approximately with the new WR/IR appointments. That's when we should all expect our new uniforms!

The WSF will be holding a 2-day Referees' Conference in Odense, Denmark, on September 25th and 26th, 2009 – immediately before the beginning of the Men's World Team Championship. It will be led by Ian Allanach (Scotland) and Rod Symington (Canada), and they are currently busy finalising a program, which I am sure will be both informative and entertaining. More details will be forthcoming in the coming weeks.

The WSF has begun a project to document the competencies to be an effective Tournament Referee, and to develop a training program to educate interested candidates. The goal is to develop a list of approved "WSF Tournament Referees", available for assignment to World Championships and

tour events. The group working on this comprises Ian Cherington, Wendy Danzey, Chris Sinclair and Rod Symington, all of whom have served as Tournament Referees at World Championships and other major events like the British Open, the European Team Championships, and the Commonwealth Games.

With the official implementation date of PAR to 11 scoring, the rules on the WSF website have been updated in English, although the rules in the many other different languages need to be updated as well. They have been marked as reflecting only the previous (2001) rules, and will be updated as we find volunteers to do so.

The WSF Score Sheet has also been updated on the website and the example shows the newly adopted PAR to 11 scoring system. It has examples of the three most common methods of scoring, and also shows HiHo scoring, and doubles scoring. I would encourage everybody to promote the use of this sheet for all events (professional tour down to club events), as a way to standardise scoring methods worldwide.

As always, your comments and suggestions on any aspect of our programme are always welcome. I look forward to catching up with many of you during what is shaping up to be a very busy second half of 2009.

Assignments in the First Half of 2009

Month	2009	Site	#	Referees Assigned
Jan 23-29	Tournament of Champions	New York	2	Massarella, Riley
Feb 10-15	MX Squash Classic	Mexico City	4	Event postponed
Apr 9-16	Abu Dhabi Open	Abu Dhabi, UAE	4	Event postponed/cancelled
Apr 28-May 2	Canadian Nationals (A)	Calgary	1	Allanach
Apr 29-May 2	European Team Championships (A)	Malmö	2	Flynn, Parker
May 11 - 16	MX Squash Classic	Mexico City	4	Event postponed (again) cancelled?
June 1 - 7	Seoul Open	Seoul	1	Fayyaz

Another Asian Odyssey:

Malaysia and China

by Rod Symington
Senior Referee Assessor

Being based in Asia for six months of the year or more, I have a good opportunity to help Asian referees

develop. In the past two years it has been a privilege to mentor referees from Malaysia and India, where there are several referees in both countries who are potential International Referees. It is also very gratifying that the two squash federations, the Malaysian and the Indian, have a commitment to improving refereeing and to supporting their referees who wish to gain international experience.

There are two major tournaments a year in Kuala Lumpur – in March the KL Open and in July the Malaysian Open – and both attract the best players from both the PSA and WISPA tours. These events offer developing referees the chance to gain valuable experience and the opportunity to be mentored towards better performances.

In March 2009 I attended the KL Open and before it delivered an advanced refereeing clinic to approximately 35 referees. (The three referees from India who attended had flown overnight, so they were present in body, if not in mind...). The tournament organisation recognises that refereeing is important to the success of the event and has made considerable effort to develop local referees, both through clinics and through mentoring. Under the leadership of Tournament Referee Leslie Ponampalam the Malaysian referees have been gaining ground year by year, and they show a welcome enthusiasm to become better.

Two years ago the tournament organisers had the foresight and wisdom to agree to use the Three-Referee System, and the result was an immediate improvement in refereeing performance and player conduct – both which were of great benefit to the Tournament’s image – especially since the event in March takes place in a shopping mall, with hundreds of people watching for free from the shopping galleries around the court.

This year’s tournament was superbly organised again, under the leadership of Tournament Chairman Sivanesen Kanapathipillai, as the Malaysian tournaments have been for a long time.

After Qualifying and First Rounds at the Bukit Jalil squash facility, just outside the city, the event moved downtown to the Berjaya Times Square where the magnificent new glass court was erected.

The Men’s event unfurled with no great surprises, Peter Barker beating Adrian Grant comfortably 3 – 0 in the final with an example of what he called “boring English squash”.

On the women’s side, however, there was a major upset when Natalie Grainger beat Nicol David in five magnificent games, to end Nicol’s winning streak of 54 matches.

With the presence of Director of Asian Referees and IRs Munir Shah (Singapore), Yogi Singh (India), and Tahir Khanzada (Pakistan), plus three referees from India and the usual reliable group of Malaysian referees, the refereeing team was strong – with the result that the refereeing performance throughout was highly competent.

China

Chinese squash is still in its infancy. There is a very keen core group of players and referees, but what they urgently need is help with coaching and refereeing development. Since all sports in China are administered out of the Ministry of Sport, there is some financial and bureaucratic support, but the relative insignificance of squash is revealed by its location, along with golf, snooker, cricket, and bocce (!) in what until recently was called the Department of Small Balls.

The Chinese referees are more than ably led by Franco Amadei, who has had a remarkable career. Born in Italy, he

began as a student of Chinese philology, but after marrying his lovely wife Luna and starting a family, he changed careers and became an adviser to Western companies wishing to navigate through the muddy waters of Chinese bureaucracy and laws. He is now the Chairman of Fiat China. Under Franco's leadership from Shanghai, Chinese referees are developing rapidly and competently.

I flew to Shanghai in the last week of April and stayed for five days with Franco and Luna (and their two sons) in their spectacular apartment overlooking busy tributary of the Yangtse River on which the main section of Shanghai lies.

After conducting a two-day Assessors' Seminar in Shanghai, I flew with Franco to Beijing for the main event. Over three days, ten of the top Chinese referees attended twenty-four hours(!) of advanced refereeing seminars. Is there anywhere else in the world where squash referees show such enthusiasm and devotion? I was extremely impressed by the attentiveness of the Chinese referees

and by their willingness to learn as much as possible. Their attitude was truly exemplary.

They are also good referees; all they lack – as is the case with many referees in the world – is more exposure to the top players. At the moment the only PSA Tournament in China is a one-star PSA event in Shanghai.

The Ministry of Sport was represented by Shirley Zhang who bravely attended most of the seminar sessions and proved to be an excellent host throughout my stay. Both Shanghai and Beijing are wonderful cities, and the people I met everywhere were all friendly and inquisitive. All in all, this was one of the greatest experiences of my squash career. My parting gift was a beautiful doll from the Beijing Opera in a glass case – which was a challenge to bring back to Canada in one piece. I was detained in Customs at Vancouver Airport for three hours...



Envoi

My thanks to everyone who has contributed to this issue of the WSF *Referees' Review*.

The next issue of the *Review* is scheduled for January 2010. Contributions may be sent to the Editor at symingto@uvic.ca.