



## Referees' Review January 2010



**Editor: Rod Symington**

This edition of the *WSF Referees' Review* presents a fairly comprehensive picture of the activities of WSF Referees in the past six months. While the enclosed articles demonstrate how busy WSF Referees have been, there were many more tournaments to which WSF Referees were assigned, but unfortunately the promised reports had not arrived by our editorial deadline.

The major development of the past six months was the resignation of the Director of the Referees and Rules Committee, Graham Waters, after 12 years in that role. He will be sorely missed, especially as he has also resigned as a World Referee. You will find an appreciation of Graham's many achievements for the WSF later in this Newsletter.

In the meantime the Management Committee of the WSF has decided to undertake a review of the administrative structure of the refereeing area, and that review is being conducted right now by Chris Stahl, who has become the WSF Vice-President with the responsibility for overseeing refereeing matters.

This coming year is going to bring many changes to the international refereeing scene: new personnel at the helm of WSF international refereeing and no doubt further

developments in the technology of officiating: the hand-held electronic devices for the Three-Referee System have been promised for early in 2010. An exciting year lies ahead of us!

### 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 ongoing debate about whether or not the Central Referee in the Three-Referee System ought to give a player an explanation for a decision or not (see article later in this Newsletter), allows us to reflect on a wider question: Why isn't a player given the reason for the decision every time?

A typical pattern of a player-referee exchange is the following: "No Let." "Why was that no let?" "Because the shot hit the dead nick."

That seems to be not too unpleasant, but we all know how often and how easily such exchanges can deteriorate into a prolonged "discussion." That is bad for the game in progress and bad for the image of squash.

With the renewed effort to bring squash to the attention of more people, there is a need to make the game more comprehensible to spectators and viewers on television and the Internet.

Many times I have heard a spectator say after a Referee has given a decision: "Why was that a stroke?" Many spectators – even those who play the game – do not understand the reason for a decision. Would it not therefore be better if the Referee gave the reason for the stroke at the same time as the decision, so that everybody – players and spectators – would be fully informed?

This small, but radical change could have a very beneficial effect on the game and its image. Thus the following would happen: “Let, please.” “Stroke – front wall.” Or: “Let, please.” “Yes, let – he was just clear of your swing.”

Once the decision and the reason have been given, play must continue without delay: there is no reason for further discussion or delay of game.

Obviously, we would need to draw up a list of recommended phrases for the Referee to say, but there are only a few basic situations that would need to be covered.

One of the objections to such a proposal would be that in the Three-Referee System the Central Referee cannot possibly read the minds of the two Side Referees, so should not presume to give a reason for their decision.

While it is true that in some cases the Three Referees may read the situation on court differently and have different reasons in mind for their decisions, in the vast majority of cases the reason for a decision is obvious. There is already a trend for Central Referees in the Three-Referee System to give an explanation: what is being proposed here is simply an extension of that trend.

In rugby the Referee blows his whistle and says: “Penalty. Offside.” The offending player moves away without saying a word (or another penalty ensues) – and play continues.

Why don't we do that for squash?

## The Director Resigns



As many of the readers of this Newsletter will already have known, Graham Waters, Director of the Referees and Rules Committee, resigned from that position (and as a World Referee) in October 2009, after a long and distinguished period of service to the WSF.

Graham was one of the first five WSF International Referees to be appointed (in Toulouse in 1986 – the tournament at which Ross Norman defeated Jahangir Khan), and he thus acted as an International and World Referee for 23 years. He refereed at many events around the world, including many World Championships.

But Graham was also a strong supporter of squash at all levels and “rolled up his sleeves” and officiated in many club, city and provincial tournaments.

He holds the distinction of having attended every Canadian National Championships since 1978.

For the past 12 years he had been Director of the Referees and Rules Committee, assuming that position when the previous Director, David Donnelly resigned.

During his period as Director Graham was a stabilizing force at the center of WSF Refereeing and he made many friends around the world because of his natural flair for diplomacy and tact.

It is a sign of his great success as Director that there were no scandals or great upheavals in squash refereeing during his tenure: the sport developed organically, and his efficient administration of his office ensured that the Rules were well formulated and the International Refereeing Programme progressed.

In particular, the recent introduction of the Three-Referee System that has led to vastly better decision-making and has improved the image of squash was the result of discussions held between Graham and members of the PSA Board.

His firm, but quiet control of WSF Refereeing matters will be missed.

At this time of writing Graham is relaxing in Florida and playing golf: we wish him all the best and thank him for all of his valuable contributions to the WSF and its refereeing programme.

[Ed.]

## **Indian Adventures**

### **World Junior Individual and Team Championships, July/August 2009**

**by David Atkins, WSF International Referee**

#### **Tuesday 28th, 7:30am:**

Case packed, raring to go on the long haul trip from Manchester to Chennai via Heathrow. 12½ hours later, I arrive to Chennai airport tired and exhausted. My first job on landing was to fill in a “swine flu” form. Over one hour later, after getting past the medical staff, I queue for passport control.

“Visa, sir?” “Didn’t Squash India arrange

that for me?” I am escorted to a side-room and questioned as to why I have come to India. Two hours later, a member of British Airways staff asks me whether I want Manchester or Heathrow, as they want to send me back on the next plane! After much pleading because of my role in the important tournament, I am given a reprieve, a visa for 72 hours!

I have 3 days to get it extended and I am given the address for the Bureau of Immigration. Starting to feel better knowing I can stay, I am hit with the next bombshell: “By the way sir, your suitcase is still at Heathrow and won’t arrive until Saturday, 4 days away!”

#### **Thursday 30th, 10am:**

I am taken to the Immigration Office with an interpreter. 6 hours later I am free to stay for the rest of the tournament.

#### **Thursday 30th, 7pm:**

A visit to the shops to buy clothes, underwear and essential toiletries.



**Transportation in Chennai**

#### **Saturday 1st, 7pm:**

Still no suitcase so I went on a trip to Spencer Plaza to buy more shirts and underwear. I got a taxi back to the hotel in a yellow ‘tuk tuk.’ This was a mind-blowing experience!

**Sunday 2nd, 1:30am:**

My suitcase arrives intact.

**Tuesday 4th, 8pm:**

We were taken to a local bar, 'tazmac' by Sarah Fitz-Gerald for some Marco Polo bottled beer which was quite malty and cost 65 rupees a bottle.

**Wednesday 5th, 8pm:**

I have not eaten for 24 hours and had to get stronger tablets from the doctor at the squash club to control the dreaded "Delhi belly." Aside from my various problems, some very good squash was played at the tournament. El Sherbini of Egypt became the youngest female under 19 world champion at the tender age of 13. El Shourbaghy, also of Egypt retained the boys crown. Needless to say, during the 2nd week, the Egyptian girls won the team title.

Chris Sinclair, Mike Collins, John and myself were well looked after by Major Maniam, Yogi Singh and the rest of the local Indian referees. In fact, on the final day, local referee, Srikanth took us on a short sightseeing tour that included a trip to the local beach, St Thomas' church and a temple near where the tsunami struck.

**Sunday 9th, 7am:**

Return flight home and, yes, you guessed it, I had just as much trouble leaving Chennai as when I arrived!

**World Games, Kaohsiung, Taiwan,  
July 2009**

**by Harvey Bowlt, WSF International Referee**

The World Games were held in Taiwan's second city, Kaohsiung, from 16th to 26th July. The games showcased a number of

non-Olympic sports, including several unusual ones such as canoe polo.

Our processing on arrival was quick and efficient and suggested that we were in for a well-run tournament. We were initially supposed to be accommodated in a five-star hotel about 400m from the squash centre, but were ultimately placed in a hotel about a kilometre and a half from the tournament venue, which was still very comfortable and within walking distance.

The refereeing team comprised John Massarella (WSF World Referee), Damian Green, Yogi Singh, Mohammad Fayyaz, Jamshed Gul and myself (all WSF International Referees) and Rajiv Reddy (a National Referee from India [since elevated to IR – Ed.]). The hosts did not provide any local referees or markers and we were therefore kept very busy. In my opinion it was one of the most cohesive teams I have been involved with over the years.

The tournament proper started on 20th August on three courts – the match court in the main auditorium and two courts in the basement, which had been set up just for the Games. Because of the limited number of referees and the large number of matches on the first day we took turns to act as both Marker and Referee (or we officiated all the matches on a particular court with two officials). The second day matches were played on only two courts and thereafter all matches were on the main match court and the Three-Referee System was used.

Life was made more interesting by the fact that an IOC delegate was present to see how squash was presented, as it was being considered for inclusion in the Olympic Games. Various suggestions were made to impress the delegate, but ultimately the task was left to the Tournament Referee, Munir

Shah and the Tournament Director, Major Maniam. They clearly have talents other than squash and before each match on centre court made presentations to the crowd by way of question and answer sessions between them explaining the rules, the referee signals and other interesting facts about the game, all of which were duly translated into Mandarin.

Although this seemed to impress the large crowds immensely, Munir and Maniam were somewhat crestfallen after the first day when the IOC delegate gave squash 1 out of 10 for presentation. However, the hosts are obviously quick learners, because by the third day the score was 9 out of 10.



**The A Team, World Games**

Thereafter nothing could stop them and players were heard muttering darkly about not being able to get onto the court because the referees were hogging the limelight. Rumour has it that several TV stations are interested in their services. Seriously though, the presentations added a lot to the atmosphere and the crowds loved them. Even the Referees were introduced to thunderous applause!

The Three-Referee System again proved popular with the players and is now the norm in major tournaments. Ultimately, a situation should be reached where all three

referees can give their decisions electronically and anonymously and the Central Referee then just announces the decision. This should not be difficult with current technology and should almost totally eliminate dissent. That said, there were very few problems with the refereeing and the general feedback from players and coaches was positive.

The other issue that needs to be considered with the Three-Referee System is that it is difficult to get assessments, as at the moment only the Central Referee can be assessed. This needs to be reconsidered, as the WSF actually needs more referees with the Three-Referee System and thought needs to be given to whether Side Referees can also be assessed.

Although we were not paid a daily allowance because the tournament was not an official WSF event, we were not significantly out of pocket, as the hosts made sure that we were well fed during the day and arranged two great evening meals (banquets may be a more appropriate description!).

All in all, it was a great tournament and we owe a vote of thanks to the Squash Rackets Association of Chinese Taipei, Thomas Yang and his team of volunteers for their hospitality and generosity.

## **CIMB Malaysian Open, Kuala Lumpur, July 2009**

**by Rod Symington, Senior Referee  
Assessor**

The fact that the World Games had just been held in Kaohsiung, Taiwan had a beneficial effect on the draw for the CIMB Malaysian Open. Most of the top players who had been

in Kaohsiung entered this event, too, with the result that the Tournament, which has enjoyed great success over the years, reached new heights.

For the two major events that SRAM stages each year the qualifying and first two rounds are held at the Bukit Jalil Squash Centre, just outside the city, while the matches from the Quarterfinals onwards move to a shopping-mall where the glass show-court is erected in an atrium, surrounded by shopping galleries.

Two different venues are used, and both are spectacular. The Tournament in July is held at a large mall called The Curve, some distance from the city centre. This is a very extensive complex, with every kind of shopping and restaurants you could possibly desire which it needs to be, as otherwise you are miles from anywhere!

The events staged by SRAM are so professionally run, so predictably efficient, and so well-managed in every respect, it is difficult to make a report on them interesting. But this time there was an unexpected excitement: just three days before the show-court was to be used for play, some clumsy workmen managed to break the glass back-door panel, and the officials from SRAM had to scramble to find a replacement. They did, of course.

An Advanced Refereeing Seminar was held before the Tournament, and it was attended not only by a large number of Malaysian referees (some from out of town), but also by several members of the Malaysian National Team Squad.

Most of the early-round refereeing duties were carried out by Malaysian referees, who thanks to the many squash events throughout the year in Kuala Lumpur are making excellent progress. Some are getting close to

the international level. They were assisted by IRs Tahir Khanzada (Pakistan) and Munir Shah (Singapore) who led the way as Central Referees in the later rounds.

I had in previous years trained the Malaysian referees in the Three-Referee System, and they performed very well. I also discovered that there was an advantage in having a Central Referee whose English was not perfect. Having been taught to forestall “discussions” by saying: “It’s a team decision. Play on, please,” one Referee uttered the statement when a player protested a decision. However, the combination of the Referee’s accent and the microphone rendered the statement incomprehensible – so the player simply gave up his protest and played on!

Once we had got over the hurdle of Wael El Hindi vs Ong Ben Hee (108 minutes, 105 decisions), it was plain sailing: on both the Women’s and the Men’s sides the matches were exciting, close and played in excellent spirit.

Nicol David won her fifth successive Malaysian Open, beating Alison Waters in four games, and Amr Shabana also won in four from Nick Matthew, who had just triumphed at the World Games (as had Nicol).

As ever there was a constantly helpful staff under the leadership of Tournament Chairman Sivanesen Kanapathipillai and Tournament Referee Leslie Ponam-palam. The SRAM events are models of how squash tournaments can and should be run all around the world.

## **CIMB Singapore Women's Masters August, 2009**

**by Munir Shah, WSF International Referee**

Kallang Squash Centre has been the venue for major squash championships in Singapore for 4 decades now and this year's edition of the CIMB Singapore Women's Masters was no exception. The tournament attracted the leading women professional squash players in the world and Nicol David (Malaysia) triumphed for the third year running, beating Natalie Grinham (Netherlands) 11-9, 11-8, 11-9 in a closely fought final.

Singapore Squash invited Rod Symington, WSF Senior Referee Assessor, to conduct 2 events at the Grand Mercure Roxy Hotel for local referees in conjunction with the tournament. The first event was the Advanced Officiating Conference on 2-3 August 2009, which was attended by 36 participants. This was followed by the Basic Officiating Course on 8 August 2009 attended by 65 participants, the biggest audience Rod has ever faced in his 25 years of conducting squash lectures. The feedback was positive and Rod received top marks for his high quality presentation and delivery.

Despite initial apprehensions, the Three-Referee System was used for the first time in the country from the quarter-final stage onwards. The local referees gained more confidence in using the system and their knowledge was further enhanced with guidance and daily debriefing sessions by Rod and Munir Shah, the WSF International Referee assigned to the Championship.

The hospitality extended to Rod by Singapore Squash Rackets Association President Desmond Hill and Tournament

Director Raymond Tan was exemplary. Although matches finished rather late every night there was never any problem in searching for a meal in this tropical food paradise. Rod looked rather prosperous at the end of the 1-week assignment.

## **Forrex Women's World Open, Amsterdam**

**by Chris Sinclair, WSF World Referee**

The Referees were: WSF: Dean Clayton and Wendy Danzey (England) and Chris Sinclair (Australia); Dutch: Jos Aarts, Cor Hagers, Marco Van der Berg and Jacques Wielandt. USA: Bob Hanscom. The Tournament Referee was Linda Davie who has been TR at Tommy Berden's events many times and she had a good relationship with all the tournament officials and did a good job with the referees.

The Frans Otten Stadion is only 10 minutes from the airport and 5 minutes from the Novotel Hotel. It is a huge, modern complex with 8 indoor and 15 outdoor tennis courts, and 21 squash courts including a permanent glass court.

The set-up for the main glass centre court from round 1 was brilliant, as the court was erected over some of the indoor tennis courts. Ticket sales, VIP hospitality (not for us!), sound and technology were fabulous, and this was the most professionally presented event I have ever attended, and I have been to many. Tommy Berden did a fantastic job, and next year and the year after should be stupendous.

The music was *loud* and repetitive. I don't need to hear Queen's "Don't stop me now 'cause I'm having a good time" one more time! But the young audience seemed to

enjoy it again and again. The entertainment included a marching band too.

Our daily meetings were held in different places. We started in a very impressive old-fashioned, beautifully furnished room, and then we were gradually moved, until we ended up at the last table near the outdoor smokers.

The food was great. We were given credit cards with more than we needed on them to use at the food and drink counters. The food was plentiful and of good quality, and the staff went out of their way to ensure meals were kept for us late at night.

There were 3 days/rounds of qualifying before we reached Round 1, which was a long day with 6 matches on outside courts and 10 on centre court.

Poor seating was the only drawback for the event from refereeing's aspect. The Dutch are officially the tallest nation on earth – and where did the tallest of the tall sit? Yep, in front of the 3 referees. It appears the spectators could see though – when one player challenged a “Yes let” with “Why? She didn't even touch me,” the person behind the Central Referee loudly said, “I sure would if I could get to you!”

We were shown the recently developed small, PDA device for use in the Three-Referee System. Fantastic. Just pick one up and log in as Central or a Side Referee. The CR tells the SRs to make a decision and those are inputted quite quickly – not as quickly as using hands, but acceptable. Anything can be done with these – ones for assessor/s added, printouts of 3 referees and assessor's decisions together with the score, and scoreboard can show for example: “Decision Pending” then flash up: “Stroke.” The technician said we could have

something like “No let, but thanks for asking,” but we declined that.

Transport was efficient, with regular large buses between the hotel and the courts. Bus drivers were challenged by the extremely tight turning room within the grounds of the Novotel and some drivers were sometimes brilliant, but only sometimes. The rest of the time it did not pay to be a smoker outside the hotel (serves them right!) as external bus mirrors regularly bounced off posts and railings and crashed to the ground. We assume one driver did not survive the night, after one ride where we all considered ourselves lucky to survive his constant choking, spluttering, gurgling and awful coughing all over the passengers.

The Novotel hotel was good but was under renovation and although work was supposed to be from 9 a.m., it started at 7 a.m. with drilling. There was no bar or lounge area for people to sit around. There was not a pool, but Wendy and Dean found a park for their daily sun worshipping. My biggest problem with the hotel was that they wrongly charged €4000 to my credit card and it took 2 weeks to have the charges reversed.

The WISPA Silver Jubilee dinner was held after the semi-finals and was a great success. There were 5 world champions present and 4 presidents. Lisa Opie and Martine Le Moignan have not changed. Amazingly, it has been 20 years since Martine won the Championship. Andrew Shelley (the only man who does not use a mobile phone) was genuinely surprised with a presentation by WISPA and was given a long, standing ovation. He was surprised yes, but not lost for words, and his speech in reply was typically Andrew.

One morning Jacques took Wendy, Dean and Bob on a city tour by tram. Dean was trapped in his seat and monopolised by a

beautifully clad Dutch local dressed head-to-toe in an elegant turquoise colour – trousers, skin-tight shirt, jacket, eye shadow and even shoes. Great care was taken with a tube of hand cream liberally applied. Did I mention this local was (once) male? The referees also enjoyed their walk through the “red light” district.

From Amsterdam, I travelled with Linda to Odense, Denmark to the Men’s Teams. Once we discovered how to release the handbrake, get out of the airport car park, and then drive on the correct side of the road, we were off to Odense until the voice of John Cleese came from Linda’s satellite navigation: “You have reached the end of your journey, but don’t even think of asking me to carry in your luggage. Goodbye.” And to our rooms we walked, up 68 stairs, no lift working for the entire event, 22 kgs of luggage...but that’s another story coming from Barry Faguy [see below – Ed.].

## **The 10<sup>th</sup> WSF Referees’ Conference, Odense, Denmark, September 2009**

**by Ian Allanach**

Where, this year, would you have found 32 referee delegates filled with excitement and anticipation? Where would you have found referee representatives from virtually all the major continents? Where would you have found two presenters who pushed the average age of the assembled group up from 47 to 61.5 (marginal exaggeration).

The answer is “In Odense,” of course, in attendance at the World Refereeing Conference immediately preceding the World Men’s Team event. Rod Symington and myself, under the chairmanship of George Mieras, had been entrusted with

constructing and co-presenting this conference. In hindsight, how would the two of us be described for our routines? “Good cop, bad cop”? “Dim and Dimmer”? Or maybe “Anchorman and Trawlerman,” with myself as “Anchorman” in that it needed an anchor to keep my feet still when presenting – and Rod as “Trawlerman” given that he had trawled through hours and hours of squash video archives to find the most suitable of clips to show.

And at the start of the conference, there was but one question on everyone’s lips: “Who was sleeping with whom?” You see, the Grand Hotel, Odense had only one double bed in each room – I mean real double beds which did not separate into two singles – at least not without a chainsaw – there was a Lidl shop round the corner but they were clean out of chainsaws. So all the referees who had agreed to share a twin room to conserve costs were either :

- A – surprised
- B - shocked
- C – pleased
- D – too jet-lagged to notice.

The matter was resolved by transferring the most intelligent-looking referees to another hotel. John Massarella was also moved.

Now to the serious matter of the conference and its highlights. Rod and I co-presented a number of workshops, with myself introducing the theory and Rod developing the subject with reference to video clips. These clips generated great constructive discussion. We introduced the concept of “paired indicators” to help inform decisions in Front Court, Mid-Court and Deep-Court interference situations. These paired indicators are combined the individual factors you look for in making a decision. They are now available, along with the other

course materials, on the WSF website in the Refereeing Section.

The second day of the conference was loaded with topics which would be highly relevant in the Teams event to follow. There was a specific input into the “Pressures of a team event” as well as a close look at “Conduct on court” and “Injuries.” But we had to be careful here. The audience was made up of distinct groupings. The first group was there for the conference only, a second group attended and would stay on to officiate at the World Teams, and yet a third group was to arrive to officiate at the event but were not attending the conference (although one or two came in to the last sessions on arrival).

Reflecting on the combinations above, our experience over the entire event, i.e. the school and the competition, highlighted the following :

1. All referees are a bit rusty at the start of an event.
2. When a school exists immediately ahead of an event, those officiating should make every effort to attend the final day at least.
3. The programme should be constructed so that the topics most relevant to the event appear on that second day.

A major reason for the points made above was that some of the referees who arrived without attending the school had difficulties which would have been better resolved if they had attended the appropriate seminars at the preceding school.

That the conference was a major success was due in no small part to the attendance and input of Alex Gough from the PSA. As the players’ representative, he presented a

specific seminar in the conference, but also attended almost all of the Conference. He spoke and he listened. He is intelligent and articulate and many points he made related to improving communication between players and referees. He reported back to the PSA members within hours of the finish of the conference. His presence and input spoke volumes and were greatly appreciated.

At the end of the event the presenters reflected. The participants were courteous and animated, no-one was attacked, debate was constructive, we managed to master the technology other than the room lights, we were well watered and fed, debates continued over coffees and lunches and everyone seemed to have an appetite for more. Above all, evaluations were positive.

And speaking of appetite, it has been said that what you eat is a reflection of your inner confidence and competence.

If that is the case, think on this. Ahead of the conference, i.e. the night before it began, the presenters, along with others ate a two course meal with Danish beer in an Italian restaurant, average price £35. At the end of the first day of the conference they settled for a Chinese buffet restaurant, where with beer the cost averaged £14. The night the conference finished, at least one presenter was seen in the local Mac-donalds having the “Econo meal” for less than a fiver.

We enjoyed the cosmopolitan feel of the conference, the mix of experience being a bonus rather than a drawback. We tried to allow for the fact that for half our audience, English was not their first language. Rod (being a language professor) was OK, but I needed a translator from time to time – thank goodness Jack Flynn was not speaking!! A great experience – we need more frequent refereeing schools.

P.S. Contributor's note: all references to persons named above are the copyright of the author. Those mentioned are squash referees – they will have heard worse.

## Men's World Team Championships, Odense

by Barry Faguy, WSF International Referee

### The Journey to Denmark

From Canada, it's quite a long-haul to get to Denmark – but who would pass up a chance like that? The travel and time-change leaves you feeling quite ill at ease – when things don't quite match – a bit like apple pie with béarnaise sauce. It takes a couple of days to shake off the effect – but no one complained. OK, OK – I complained, but no one listened.

Pretty much everyone flew into Copenhagen – and right by the airport is the gateway to a very efficient train system that got us to the thousand-year old host city of Odense, southwest of Copenhagen, in less than a couple of hours.



The main hotel, the 'First Grand' pictured here ...was a charming place, originally built in 1897 and recently renovated

with a stylish, avant-garde look that was impressive to anyone – anyone that is, who didn't get the short end of the stick when an administrative miscommunication resulted in some referees being assigned to shared rooms that had only one double-bed – an uncomfortable prospect on the best of days. Some background negotiations ensued – and

a second hotel was called into action in short order.

### Tourism

Now, some of you may have recognized that name, Odense, as the home of the very famous Hans Christian Andersen, he of fairy tale fame. Here's a picture of one of his many statues – apparently a giant of a man for the times ...



He hasn't been around for 134 years, but would have been proud of the very-welcoming Danish people – who are universally English-speaking. I never found one over the space of nine days who didn't! These same Danes certainly followed in Hans Christian Andersen's footsteps by creating the memorable event that these championships were – but without the fairy tale ending, since the top-seeded country held true to the predictions.

Odense is an old city, with many cobblestone streets, quaint row homes, majestic public buildings, churches, parks, rivers, and museums of every sort.



Many of the things a tourist would do inevitably involve Hans Christian Andersen in some form or other – but the central attraction is the museum devoted to his life and works. It's well worth the visit.

## The Venue

Within 10 minutes by shuttle-bus from the hotel, the Odense Squash Club was the sole venue for the first four days, boasting a permanent, modern, all-glass show court attached to 6 conventional glass-backed courts that served the purpose very well.

However, since the main club had seating for only about 200 at its show court, a second show court had to be installed nearby (a 5-minute walk) to conform to WSF championship guidelines that required seating for 500. That was where most of the playoff rounds took place.

Meals were efficiently provided on a daily basis – covering the lunch and dinner times over a wide range of times with a varied menu that allowed us to eat pretty much anytime we wanted to.

## The Officiating Team

They came from all over – some 30 referees from 18 different countries. Here a photo with most of them there – but with a pose that leaves a lot to be desired since some faces are hidden.

Our excuse is that the professional photographer missed his date with all of us because of a “scheduling conflict.” A gracious and lovely passing Dane was commandeered to act as lensman – er – lenswoman – and the picture below was the result.

Here are some more snapshots of the team around and about the event



## Is this man funny?



The appropriate answer to someone who asks this question is: “Yes!” We’re talking here about our fearless Team Leader, Jens Kragholm, who had his fingers on the pulse of officiating and his iron fist (in a velvet glove, of course) on the administration of it.

With him up front, there was no shortage of jokes, anecdotes, and displays of wit – a veritable Hans Christian Andersen of officiating, there is no doubt.

On some days the soft drinks were free and on others, we had to pay – prompting this question: “So, are they free?” Jens offered the following analysis: “They are free on the days that you don’t have to pay – and not free on the days that you do.”

At the first referee’s meeting, Assessor Ian Allanach from Scotland, was giving an example of proper Marker lexicon at the start of a new game: “Scotland leads one game to love – Love all.” Jens then quipped: “But of course, as the week goes on, we’re less likely to hear that particular announcement!”

## Relaxation

Well, it’s no surprise that with a bunch of squash referees from every part of the planet turned loose on a sedate Odense, that the

local press would have a field day. Luckily the montage of photos below, compiled from the nightly visits to the local establishments, were kept out of the hands of the paparazzi – otherwise you can only imagine the international repercussions.



It’s no surprise that all this could lead to embarrassment should these photos get out – and that’s no doubt what prompted this Senior Referee Assessor to ensure that he was not identified with this group of merrymakers:



## The Final Night

The last night of the event called for a party of course. After a few speeches, a grand banquet spread was the headliner, and there were no complaints about that wonderful meal. Given that we were in Odense, it was quite appropriate that the evening's entertainment was a Hans Christian Andersen Review – featuring the lead character whose booming voice led the costumed cast of fifteen fairy tale characters in a collection of well-known songs. They then mingled with us at the tables afterward the whole thing lending a great mood to the festivities. This is what they looked like:



As well, during that party, we sat next to the Kenyan team who demonstrated as good an attitude as one could hope for when considering their final placement out of 28 countries entered in the championships.



They proclaimed proudly to anyone who would listen: *"We are 26<sup>th</sup> in the world!"*

## Quotes and Anecdotes

Jonathon Power was going on complaining – and the Referee was going on telling him that he needed to stop complaining. Meanwhile, Amr Shabana, taking advantage of the delay, takes off his shoe to make adjustments. The Referee gives Power a formal warning – and then Power quips: *"Ah come on! He's putting on a shoe – and I'm putting on a show."*

The ball gets jammed in the tin – and stays there. The Marker calls *"Down"* – to which the player adds: *"Are you sure?"*

Referee Graham Waters to a player: *"I'm not sure – play a let."*

Player to Referee: *"Are you sure?"*

A Referee says to Jonathon Power: *"I'm not sure about your pickup. Play a let."*

Power then rant and raves – to which the Referee says: *"Sorry"*

Power then says: *"Don't be sorry – it was the right call!"*

David Palmer was assessed a Conduct Stroke by Referee Barry Faguy for physical abuse. Palmer then asked if he could appeal that sanction since we were using the 3-Referee System. Barry answers that *"There is no appeal to penalties that fall under the provisions of Rule 17"* – to which Palmer retorts: *"I just want to know if it's yes or no!"*

Wael El Hindi, on being given a No Let after colliding and losing his racket on the way to getting the ball: *"Am I supposed to play that with my shoe!?"*

Referee Chris Sinclair reports hearing Jonathon Power, at the  $\frac{3}{4}$  mark of the warm-up, say to his opponent: *"Oh for god's sake. Let's start. We're getting worse, not better."*

A player asks Referee Jacques Wielandt, if his opponent's 'scoop' was good. Jacques answer: *"Yes – the 'scoop' was good."*

An email about the upcoming Men's World Open, arrives on Referee Zal Davar's Blackberry, but its headline was truncated by the screen size to: *"Karim Darwish seeded to win maiden...."*

A little diplomatic embarrassment followed the discovery that the official program of the event had the Austrian flag displayed besides Australia's listing.

Assessor Graham Waters was debriefing a candidate and made the following summary: *"I agreed with the only decision in the first two games – and then all hell broke loose with 3 more decisions in the last game!"*

An overly-tall Austrian was playing a diminutive Japanese player – and the Japanese player runs into the Austrian in the front court trying to get the ball – and getting a let. The Austrian, pointing to his own waist, complains with: *"A let! He's only this tall."*

Oh yeah, I almost forgot; Egypt won!

## **Saudi International, Al Khobar, Saudi Arabia**

**by Damien Green, WSF International Referee**

Earlier in the year I was lucky enough to receive an invitation to referee at the Saudi International in Al Khobar, Saudi Arabia. I was really happy to accept this appointment as Saudi was a place I had not been to before.

The organising of flights and visas prior to the event was first rate, with a gentleman named Emad Zikry handling all of our affairs and he did a magnificent job.

Qatar Airways now flies out of my hometown of Melbourne, which meant I was able to take one fourteen hour flight to Doha and then one more short hop to Bahrain where I was met at the airport and driven over the border into Saudi. I had heard stories of trouble getting across the Saudi border, but no such problems this time. We did make a quick stop to get photographed and finger-printed, but it went very smoothly.

The tournament was once again held at the Sunset Beach resort just outside of Al Khobar, with all facilities on site so there was no travelling to and from the Squash centre. WSF World Referees Nasser Zahran and Roy Gingell were also assigned to the event, and it was a big bonus for me to be able to see these two experienced referees in action. However, with only three refs and sixteen matches across two courts on day one, we were always going to be a bit busy. Three local Saudi referees stepped in to assist us on day one, along with the odd player or two.

The main show-court was still getting the finishing touches done to it as the players were warming up for their first round match, but it turned out to be a great court. We were initially surprised that the organizers had opted for a dark wooden floor this time, but it proved to really popular with the players. It was easy to see the ball, there was no paint to discolour the ball, and the floor was not slippery (except under one extreme circumstance).

After day one, the work-load was reduced to four matches each evening until semifinal night, so all matches were covered by the

WSF referees. Evening matches did give us a bit of time during the day to use the Sunset Beach facilities, so the gym, pool and café were well frequented. Thanks also to Samer who was kind enough to give Roy and me a tour of the local shopping haunts, whilst Nasser ran a training course for some of the local referees.

The crowds for the matches, although small in the earlier rounds, were quite vocal, especially for the Egyptian players, and when the seating filled for the finals, the atmosphere really grew. The way the tournament was run and setup was awesome to experience, but then again, most of the Middle Eastern tournaments that I have attended have been similar. Light shows, instant replay screens and Robert Edwards doing his usual job at promoting the players and revving the crowd up, all added to the spectacle. It was also the trial event for the new SquashTV, live online coverage of major PSA events, which I believe was quite successful.

A couple of lighter moments caused some giggling amongst the spectators: Nasser Zahran repeatedly asked a player to serve from the right box when he was already there (sorry Nasser, but I had to throw that one in), and there was an over-diligent court cleaner whom the players had to almost escort off the court because he didn't want to leave.

The final was between Ramy Ashour and Nick Matthew, and because of their respective PSA point totals and that of the players above them, the match was not only to decide the tournament champion but also which of the two finished the calendar year as world number one. It suffices to say that both players were pretty pumped up for the match.

It turned out to be a 110-minute marathon, with Ramy seemingly in a strong position in the fourth but Nick fighting back to take it to a fifth game. After some minor issues with both players sweating so much that the court for the first time during the week became a bit slippery, Ramy won the last game and achieved the world number one ranking. From a refereeing point of view, it was simply a magnificent experience to be involved in, but all credit must go to both players for putting on such a show.

In the end, the tournament went well and Ziad Al Turki and his team must be congratulated for once again putting on such a good show. My thanks to both Roy and Nasser for their advice throughout the week, and especially to Roy for not complaining about my snoring. Thanks also to the usual PSA circuit regulars (Fram, Steve C, Fritz, Paul Selby, Jean Delierre) for their company and encouragement throughout the tournament. I know I am being a little indulgent, but I also have to thank Robert Edwards for sneaking me into the first class lounge in Bahrain airport. It was the first time I got to see a beer for the entire week, and it certainly tasted good.

## **The Assignment Process**

### **Jasmine Gibson, International Referee Coordinator**

Firstly I would like to extend my thanks to you all during the past year, for your commitment and professionalism at events. My first year as International Referee Coordinator (IRC) has been a steep, varied and interesting learning-curve and one that, so far, I am thoroughly enjoying (well most of the time!).

I have had the pleasure of meeting Wendy, John and Munir in person, where it was lovely to finally put faces to well known names! Hopefully I will get the chance to meet the rest of you in due course.

I would like to take this opportunity to briefly remind you of the procedure for the assignment of WSF Referees and/or Assessors to events.

### **Brief outline of process:**

- WSF receives a request from the host of a World Championship, PSA or WISPA event for a required number of Referees and/or Assessors to their event.
- The IRC immediately emails a Tournament Promoters Agreement (TPA) for the hosts to complete (Referees and/or Assessors are never assigned without this).
- In the meantime, the IRC begins checking the availability of Referees and/or Assessors based on:
  - A fair rotation of assignments
  - Geographical location
  - Any particular requests from the host (that are within reason)
- Bearing in mind the above three points, the IRC then emails the Referees and/or Assessors inviting them to the event with a deadline for replying.
- On receipt of the Referee and/or Assessor's confirmation of their availability, a formal e-mail is sent to the host outlining which referees have been assigned and their contact details.
- The IRC e-mails the Referees and/or Assessors confirming their assignment and provides the contact details of the host and a copy of the completed TPA.

- This effectively hands over the assignment to the host for arranging flights, accommodation, refereeing schedule etc.

### **Process after an Assignment**

- IRC emails the Referee/Assessor Feedback Form for completion and return to the office as soon as possible. This provides the WSF with valuable information on the event, the Referee's position, the accommodation, meal arrangements, transportation, and all other pertinent details.

### **Direct approaches from hosts**

- If a WSF Referee or Assessor receives an invitation to officiate at an event directly from a promoter or host committee, that Referee or Assessor should politely refuse the invitation and request that the promoter request the services of WSF Referees/Assessors via the IRC.
- Penalties for accepting assignments from a direct approach are currently being reviewed.

Thank you all again for your hard work last year and I look forward to working with you all again in 2010.

## Assignments 2009

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	#	ASSIGNED
19 Jan - 30 Jan	Tournament of Champions	USA	2	(R) Massarella, Riley
29 Apr - 2 May	Canadian Nationals	Canada	1	(A) Allanach
29 Apr - 2 May	European Team Championships	Sweden	2	(A) Parker, Flynn
2 Jun - 7 Jun	Seoul Open	Seoul	1	(R) Fayyaz
19 Jul - 25 Jul	World Games	Chinese Taipei	7	(R) Bowlt, Fayyaz, Green J Gul Khan, Massarella, Singh (TR) Shah
29 Jul - 9 Aug	World Junior Women's Championships	India	4	(R) Atkins, Collins, Sinclair, Singh
10 Sep - 14 Sep	British Open	England	4	(R) Atkins, Clayton, Gingell, Massarella
16 Sep - 19 Sep	European Champions Cup	Sweden	1	(A) Danzey
17 Sep - 23 Sep	Sky Petrosport Open	Egypt	1	(R) Collins
20 Sep - 27 Sep	Women's World Open	Netherlands	3	(R) Clayton, Danzey, Sinclair
28 Sep - 4 Oct	Men's World Team Championships	Denmark	4	(A) Allanach, Symington (R) Faguy, Massarella, Waters, Zahran
12 Oct - 18 Oct	Hong Kong Open	Hong Kong	6	(R) Danzey, Fayyaz, Gingell, Reddy, Sinclair, Singh
1 Nov - 7 Nov	Men's World Open	Kuwait	6	(R) Clayton, Collins, Danzey, Gingell, Khanzada, Massarella
17 Nov - 23 Nov	Qatar International	Qatar	9	(R) Atkins, Clayton, Danzey, F Gul Khan, A Khan, Khanzada, Massarella, Reddy, Singh
5 Dec - 10 Dec	Punj Lloyd PSA Masters	India	2	(R) Danzey, Massarella
13 Dec - 18 Dec	Saudi International	Saudi	3	(R) Gingell, Green, Zahran

# Reflections on the Three-Referee System

By Chris Sinclair, WSF World Referee

I have been watching, refereeing and assessing as Central Referee (CR) and Side Referee (SR) in the latter part of 2009 at the World Women's Individuals in Amsterdam, the World Men's Teams in Denmark and the Hong Kong Open. I have observed a few things that I believe warrant further discussion.

I have always considered the greatest problem is that the CR cannot set his/her "line," thus the players do not have a line to follow. Of course ideally all referees should have the same line, but this problem applies particularly with regards to the first two issues below:

## 1. Minimal Interference Rule 12.7.1.

I find that even inexperienced referees have the courage to give good, strong "No let" calls using the 3-Referee System, but a common standard for minimal interference cannot be set unless the 3 Referees agree. Options are:

- The CR says "Yes let, but that is almost minimal interference, and we won't give lets for that anymore." That can be a "hint" to the SRs.
- If it is a SR who wants to give the No Let for minimal interference, the SR must wait until the end of the game to have a chat to the CR and other SR.

## 2. No let after Turning: Rule

**9.2.3.** *The Referee shall not allow a let if deciding that the act of turning was to*

*create the opportunity to appeal rather than an attempt to play the ball*

This was introduced formally into the main body of the Rules in 2001 following PSA's adoption of it sometime earlier. It shouldn't be, but it is hard to apply it for first time in a match with the 3-Referee System. Unless the CR is looking out for it, a "No let" from a SR can have the CR wondering: "What the heck ...?" Options can be as above for (1)

- The CR says, "Yes let, but that turning was unnecessary, and we won't give lets for that anymore." ("Unnecessary" is not the wording of the rule, but the players will understand.)
- If it is a SR who wants to give the No let for the turning, the SR must wait until the end of the game to have a chat to the CR and other SR.

With both (1) and (2) the problems are:

- The CR is not truly "in control" of backing up a statement with appropriate action – that is, he can be over-ruled each time, so cannot follow through with the "next time" statement.
- It is not always feasible for the 3 referees to discuss between games, as this depends on where the 2 SRs are sitting and how many audience members have to be scrambled over, for the 3 to get together.

So, how else can one referee get the hint to the other two, other than using the ways suggested above?

A response to (1) and (2) from Alex Gough, CEO of PSA:

*... my feeling on it is that we need a protocol of what the Central Referee should/could be*

*coming back with. i.e. your idea of "yes let, but that is minimal interference and we won't give lets for that anymore" is exactly the way we should be going. When we are live on TV there is also a need for educating and informing the TV audience as well as the people in the stands.*

This leads me to (3)

### **3. Terminology to be used by the CR**

The most difficult response for the CR to come up with is when the CR has been overruled by the SRs but needs to explain to a demanding player the reason behind that decision. We need to make a decision as to how to deal with this and the options are: (a) CR says "We have made our decision, play on"; (b) CR stumbles through a response to support the decision; or (c) CR strongly gives a reason to support the decision. All WSF referees should be able to do that. I support (c) as does Alex Gough.

After attending the recent Men's World Open in Kuwait, Alex has mentioned 2 other things to improve terminology and communication.

*3.1 The syntax of decisions of appeals is nowhere near clear enough if there were an incident or two within a rally that also ended in a decision.*

The CR must make it very clear to the SRs which decision an appeal is to be voted on, e.g. "Referees, the appeal is from Mr Shabana for interference." When that has been decided, "Referees, now the decision is on whether Mr Shabana's ball at the front right was good." When that has been decided, "Referees now the decision is on whether Mr Palmer's ball on the left side wall was good or out."

If a SR is not sure that the CR has seen something the SR has seen, the CR should be asked: "Is this appeal on Mr Shabana's ball at the front left or on Mr Palmer's ball on the left side wall?"

We must make this all very clear, as the possibility of confusion and misunderstanding is very real.

*3.2 Some CRs are too happy to keep coming back with a secondary response after an initial explanation had been given. This is the: "I will have the last word syndrome." This facilitates more and more comebacks from the player, most of the time the player just wants to have the last word and a silence is often enough, again after an initial explanation has been given.*

This is a self-explanatory statement from Alex. Remember, statements do not need responses, e.g. "He was nowhere near that ball" does not need a response. Sometimes questions are not really questions that require a response. As WSF Referees, we need to be able to "read" a match and know when to respond and when to keep quiet.

### **4. Teamwork**

This has provided me with some anguish recently and must be mentioned. It is vitally important to the correct working of the 3-referee System, for the integrity of refereeing and for the image of squash that referees work together as members of a team. There have been some unfortunate incidents recently and these have been discussed with some of the referees involved. A reminder of what not to do:

- After a "disputed" decision, do not leave your hand up in front of yourself, indicating your decision was different from the other 2 referees.

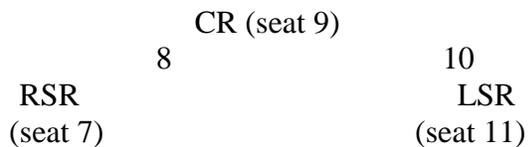
- Do not shrug your shoulders, indicate with your hands, or indicate in any way that you were not “responsible” for a decision that a player obviously did not like.
- Do not say “Team decision” in a tone that conveys, “I personally did not make that decision, but it was a 2:1 majority, so you will have to play on.”
- Do not speak with any player, coach or another referee after a match and state that you were over-ruled “x” number of times (implying that the other 2 referees were often wrong).

## 5. Seating of the 3 referees

We need firstly to define what the concept is of having 3 referees. Obviously it is to get the correct decision for the players, but from what perspective? In the 3 major events that I have attended in 2009, I have used different seating positions. Bear in mind that the guidelines say that the SRs should *sit in line with the inside line of the service box*. Some options are:

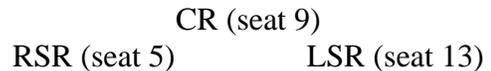
5.1. All 3 referees seated reasonably close to each other so that all 3 have about the same perspective and thus there will be more chance of consensus.

e.g. Just one spare seat between CR (seat 9) and each SR, with the SRs on the service box line but not inside the box (seats 7 and 11).



5.2. All 3 seated to ensure they have different views to ensure all angles/ positions are covered by at least one of the 3. The

“downside” is that when SRs are seated too wide, the referee furthest from the action rarely gives the same decision as do the other 2 does it look good for spectators to see only occasional agreement between the 3 referees? e.g., The CR (seat 9) and the 2 SRs inside the service boxes and close to the side wall (seats 5 and 13)



Of course there are in-between options of e.g. SRs sitting in Seats 6, 7, 8 and 10, 11, 12.

## 6. How to signal

The latest paper issued jointly by PSA, WISPA and WSF says:

4 *Every appeal must be decided by all three referees, simultaneously and independently. All three must signal and must not look at each other before doing so.*

8 *If an electronic device is available, the Referees give their decision through their console and the CR announces the result.*

*Where an electronic refereeing system is not available, the use of cards is encouraged so that players cannot see the individual decisions of the three referees.*

Over the last couple of years I have used all versions (including holding stainless steel spatulas/egg lifters).

In the card system the decision of the CR is not seen by anyone (except an Assessor), so I see an anomaly when the CR is asked to show a decision when hand signals are used.

Personally, my preference is for the card system over hand signals. It was trialled this year in both the Australian Open (Singles) and the Australian Doubles (using 3 and 4 officials as a trial as requested by WSF). When talking to players this year about the various systems, it was interesting to hear from the players who could be considered the most “chatty,” that they are all in favour of *not* seeing any decisions. They say they get aggravated to see e.g. one referee consistently “at odds” with the other 2; or if the SRs sit as wide as the service-boxes, they are aggravated when they see great discrepancies in the decisions. I suggest that the “discussing” and “scoffing” at decisions by players could be overcome if they do not see any individual decisions. Again as in my introductory paragraph to point (1), I find that referees have more courage if their decisions are not seen – and those initial, “gut” decisions are mostly correct.

I was involved in trialling hand-held PDAs in Amsterdam and they are fantastic – a little slower than using signals or cards, but once referees are used to them they will be fine. (As in other sports there is then the opportunity for the system to include words to be flashed on the big screen, e.g. a bright, flashing “Decision Pending”, and then, e.g. flashing a subdued “No Let” or a bright “Stroke.” This gets the crowd involved and they do not get impatient at a delay while the decision is being announced (at least in squash, the crowd will not know which referee to “boo” as they do for the (single) football referee!)

Alex Gough advises that the PDA system should be available from the start of 2010.

If you are interested in giving your opinion on any of the above, please submit comments through Rod Symington for

inclusion in the next *WSF Referees’ Review*. Thank you.



**The referee’s Haven**

## Sound Advice

When a great man makes a mistake, he realises it.

Having realised it, he admits it.

Having admitted it, he corrects it.

He considers those who point out his faults as his most benevolent teachers.

**Lao Tzu**  
(6<sup>th</sup> century BC)

## Envoi

My sincere thanks to all the contributors to this issue. The next issue is scheduled for June 2010. Comments and articles may be submitted to the Editor: [symingto@uvic.ca](mailto:symingto@uvic.ca).