

Line Judge Hints and Protocol

Pre-Match

Uniform and Travel Attire

- Check your uniform prior to each match.
- Dress in a professional manner (i.e., business casual clothing - no collarless shirts, jeans, or tennis shoes) when arriving or departing from the playing facility. Change into your uniform at the site and change into your regular clothing before departing. Unless you are working a later match at a site, do not wear your uniform while sitting in the stands. If the match preceding yours runs long, sit in area of the stands away from the fans so they cannot overhear anything that could be misconstrued.

Pre-Match Briefing with First Referee

- The line judges should arrive at the site at least 45 minutes before match time for conference playoff matches and 60 minutes before for zonal playoff matches.
- Prior to the match, the R1 will review the line judge duties and protocol.
- During the pre-match briefing, the first referee will assign the line judges to their positions, unless they have previously been assigned. LJ1 is nearest the first referee and LJ2 is on the bench side of the court.
- Take time to assess the surroundings, such as court markings, amount of free space, obstructions, lighting, etc. The line judges should take a position behind the score table until the time comes to warm-up their eyes.

Pre-Match Discussion with Fellow Line Judge

- Decide on where to hold the rolled-up flag during timeouts (in front or behind).

Warming Up Your Eyes

- This exercise is an opportunity to observe the court surface and markings, types of arm swings and shot selections, speed of the ball and types of serves; it provides stimulus to mentally prepare for the match.
- It is appropriate to stand upright during this pre-match exercise. The line judges should stand without a flag.
- At the 12-minute mark, most teams will hit a variety of shots during which both line judges should take their base position. Occasionally, a line judge should take a position on the end line extension. (Be aware that part of a team's warm-up may be to serve the last portion of their 6 minutes.)
- There is no prescribed length of time to warm-up your eyes.

Antenna Check

- As the line judges and referees take their positions for introductions, each line judge checks the tautness and position of their antenna.
- This task should be completed prior to the National Anthem.

During the Match

- When a server takes a position in preparation to serve that is within 8 feet of a line judge's base position, move to the default position behind the server on the sideline extended.
- When positioned behind the server, remain stationary until after the ball is contacted. Remember to stop moving in order to correctly judge an antenna fault or sideline call, even if you have not arrived at your base position.
- When the server's location requires a position adjustment by the line judge, the first referee may instruct the line judge to move to an alternate position on the end line extension to assist with a potential foot fault. (Occasionally, not enough room may exist behind the server as he/she may prefer to go back as far as the spectators or a wall.) Take the alternate position only when directed by the first referee.
- Occasionally, a server changes her mind in regard to the desired location to begin her service. If a server alters his/her position by moving toward a line judge and the line judge does not have sufficient time to make the adjustment, it is acceptable to take the alternate position on the end line extended.
- At the moment of ball contact, the server cannot touch the court or the end line. The server must be within the serving area, but can be on the hash marks, but not contacting the floor outside either sideline extension.

Timeout Protocol

- When the second referee whistles to acknowledge a timeout request, LJ1 retains their position while LJ2 walks outside the court along the end line. The line judges should roll up their flags. When LJ2 reaches LJ1's sideline, both line judges walk toward the first referee's stand to their timeout positions. The LJ2 should not cut the corner when moving towards the first referee's stand position.
- Each line judge straddles the attack line extension with their flags held in front or behind them with both hands. The line judges should decide the position of the flags prior to the match.
- Converse with the first referee only if they engage you or you have something important to share about crowd behavior.
- If cheerleaders encroach in your area during a timeout, both line judges move nearer to the first referee stand.
- At the 15-second warning whistle to end the timeout or when one team returns to the court, both line judges give a glance toward each other to ensure that they leave their timeout position at the same time and return to their base position.

End of Set Protocol

- If there is another set to be played, the line judges go to the timeout position near the first referee stand.
- Wait until the teams have changed benches, and then walk across the court along the attack lines towards the score table, continuing to the designated seating area. The line judges sit behind the score table if chairs are provided. If no chairs are available, the line judges stand behind the score table if room is available or sit in a corner of the stands away from the fans.
- If line judges are sitting or standing behind the score table, by the 45-second mark, they should return to their base position by walking around the court.

- Between sets, if sitting at or standing behind the score table, discuss with your partner servers who have a tendency to serve near the line judge's base position and those who may be close to the line when they serve.

Position during the Deciding Set Coin Toss

- After collecting the game ball, the line judges will take their timeout position at the attack lines on the first referee's side of the court and wait until the coin toss is complete.
- If the teams are switching courts, the line judges wait until all participants have changed benches and then take the game ball to the score table. If teams do not switch courts, wait until the area near the score table has cleared and then return the game ball to the table.
- The line judges will take their between-set position.

Position during Injury

- Use common sense. Move away from the area and stay away until the injury is resolved.
- If it appears that the team cannot move the injured player quickly, both line judges should take their timeout position on the first referee's side of the court. If the injury is near the time out position and it appears that medical assistance has been called, the line judges should go behind the score table.

End of Match Protocol

- Collect the game ball and return to the score table
- Leave the playing area, following the R1's exit plan.
- During the post-match debrief, line judges need to engage in the discussion pertinent to the line judge duties or calls. Refrain from critiquing your fellow officials unless your opinion is requested. Be a good team player.

Line Judge Reminders

- Maintain a professional demeanor before, during and after a match. Avoid overly familiar contact with spectators, players or coaches throughout the event.
- Get your eyes to the line before the ball, but only after you have determined that no player is in position to make a play on the ball.
- Face the line, stay with the ball that is coming near your position. If necessary, take the hit for the team if necessary and then recover.
- Be alert to a player or players coming toward you to chase a ball. Avoid going in the direction of the ball.
- If you have an opinion about a touch, antenna fault or pancake, make a signal regardless of the side of the court. If you do not have an opinion, do not mimic your partner's signal.
- Check your touch signal in the mirror. The arm that is signaling the touch should be parallel to the floor, with the hand at chin level – not necessarily directly under the chin. Present the touch to the first referee by keeping the flag away from your chest and make eye contact.
- In order to sell a line call, hold the call momentarily and then look at the first referee while still holding the call.

- Avoid any dialogue with players, coaches or spectators. Continue eye contact with the first referee.
- Signal an antenna fault by waving the flag back and forth and pointing with the other hand if the ball contacts an antenna above or below the top of the net, a portion of the net outside the antenna, the straps, cables or pole.
- Either line judge can call a fault on either antenna. The line judges are responsible for calling a fault if the ball touches the antenna, but not a player.
- When an antenna fault requires additional information, indicate the team at fault.
- To indicate a fault by the team on the near side of the net, give the antenna fault signal and then extend the right arm toward the center of that court. If the team on the opposite side of the net committed the fault, extend the left arm straight out along the sideline.
- When moving to judge a wide ball being returned to the opponent, be cautious not to move too far from base position. Recover to your line quickly in case you need to call a ball landing near a line.
- Anticipate pancakes by reading the tip, off-speed shot, short serve or ball coming off a block. Move like a defender in order to get a good look at the pancake. Typically, you do not need to move more than two or three feet. Refrain from moving unnecessarily to avoid being a distraction.
- When a player chases a ball off the court and unsuccessfully attempts to pancake the ball, signal that the ball hit the floor by pointing the flag down, and then follow with a touch signal.
- When your team is chasing an errant ball beyond the end line (not toward you), do not automatically move with the player(s) unless a reason exists to move to continue to see the play. If the player's only chance to make a play is a pancake, you may follow the player to make sure that the ball does not hit the floor. Return to your corner as quickly as possible. If the player has a legitimate opportunity to play the ball by staying on her feet and appears to be able to use a forearm skill and there are no obstructions, do not follow the player.
- If a player, other than a server, is habitually outside the court markings, it is appropriate to tell the first referee during a time out. Give the player's number and location. It is no longer part of the line judges' duties to call a non-serving player for being off the court.
- Report to either referee, during the next dead ball, inappropriate comments made to them by any team member.
- Occasionally, the first referee may overrule a call by a line judge. Remain poised while dropping the signal and prepare for the next play.
- A snap of the flag during the call gives the appearance of assuredness. Eliminate the flag snap after the call.
- Style is good, but show-boating is unacceptable!

Line Judges are an integral part of the officiating crew. Thank you for your dedication and cooperation.