

GUIDELINES FOR 1ST REFEREE VERBAL COMMUNICATION WITH THE AUDIENCE

To be implemented at the Centre Court for ALL 2009 Grand Slams. Also at the Open events whenever agreed by the parties (FIVB and the organizers).

1. FORWARD

- The FIVB World Council has decided to implement a new procedure allowing the 1st Referees to clarify for the spectators their decisions. The aim is to clarify the implementation of the Rules of the Game and allow the audience to better understand and identify any controversial or relevant decisions.
- Any discussion between the Referee and the Players will remain exclusively personal and internal for stadium purposes. In what regards TV the producer will keep the ability to decide what to put on air (the producer may also directly ask for the referee's explanation when they think required).

2. FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE ORGANIZERS

- Provide the 1st Referee at the Centre Court with a wireless lapel microphone either equipped with a switch on/off button or with sound control operated by the DJ/Announcer. The sound quality of the system must be of good standard and duly tested in advance by the Referee Delegate.
- This microphone should be connected with the stadium sound system and duly coordinated with the announcer/DJ mixing table.
- The Announcer and DJ must be well aware of the procedures and objectives of the procedure in order to allow the 1st Referee the possibility to get on air whenever required (this is to be coordinated well in advance by the Referee Delegate).
- The process of the communication is to be led by the Referee, not the DJ or the Announcers. It should be the referee deciding that he/she wishes to address the spectators and not the Announcer asking for his/her opinion. It is nevertheless possible that the Announcer creates some atmosphere around the announcement (i.e.: saying something such as "let us find out what the 1st ref has to tell us about his decision", etc).
- Communication language used may eventually be the host country language in case the 1st Referee has a good level of communication in this language. Short English translation by the announcer may be required for this case. The same may apply in the opposite sense (English communication by the referee being shortly translated by the Announcer into the host language).

3. FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE REFEREES

- Referees must be effective communicators. These skills are at the top of the main characteristics shared by them. They usually communicate more non verbally than they do through words.
- Verbal communication is currently used by referees to convey messages to players, fellow officials, etc. At this specific procedure referees will be required to add to their usual communication format, the verbal communication with the audience.
- As individuals referees all have different personality traits and different ways of doing things. Despite of the fact that they can't do much to change this, still will be required to control things about their look, manner of speaking, posture, in order to appropriately dress for this new role. This will be as much important as they will be dealing with qualified and extensive media and TV coverage at the main arena of some of our most visible events.

1. "what you say"

- When you are required to verbally explain your decision, first it is very important to think about the messages you are sending out and to make sure they are consistent with the non-verbal communication previously expressed through the official gestures used, your posture, your facial expression, etc.
- Your officiating requires deep comprehension of Beach Volleyball, both concerning regulations' technical knowledge and a feel for the spirit of the game. When you verbally explain show sound knowledge of the regulations and base yourself on the language of our sport's discipline but always keep it clear and simple.

2. “how you say”

- Then you will have to think about how you say it. The tone of voice you will use will send itself a message. Be in control of your feelings during the game and learn how to use your voice to fit the situation. A loud voice may convey confidence, firmness, etc, but it may also convey abuse of authority. A soft voice may convey trust, understanding, but it may also convey lack of confidence, etc; it will all depend on how you will fit to the environment and situation.
- You will have also to assess the way you speak, if you do it clearly, quickly or slowly, friendly or aggressively, etc.

3. “when you do it”

- While running the coin toss (either at the start of the game and between sets 2 and 3), the referee is required to announce the respective result. It is understood that this announcement is only relevant if made immediately following the toss (or even live and possibly on the stadium video wall if existing). Announcements made right before the first service of the set are useless while also looking quite unprofessional. Referees should use common sense and not overlap with the entertainment or video board commercials that obviously have priority while only enforcing announcements at the most convenient time and if applicable.
- At every decision that in your own opinion requires further clarification to the audience, or at every decision that has been questioned for clarification by one of the teams/players (i.e.: after a ball mark protocol, etc).
- More often communication is required. In accordance to the concept that inspired this procedure, the referee must address the spectators about the nature and rational of the call (or no call) made, for instance by informing:
 - “I did not call a double on this overhand setting contact because in my opinion there was one only contact regardless the slight spinning of the ball which does not necessarily mean that a double contact occurred”;
 - or “I have given the ball to team XXX playing now on my left side, because after a simultaneous contact it is considered the last player to have contacted the ball the player on the opposite side of the direction of the ball”; etc.

4. “how you do it”

- Listen to the player’s request for clarification. First deal with him/her directly explaining your decision and/or in case required issuing any verbal warning or any misconduct sanction.
- Only after this you should proceed to start your verbal explanation to the crowd, opening your microphone immediately before this.
- Your verbal explanation must clarify the prior decision that led to the request for clarification by the player, and any further action that you might have taken from then on.
- It must be communicated in good English and accurate technical terminology.

4. FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE REF DELEGATE

- Referee Delegate’s at the events where this procedure may apply, will be responsible to coordinate all arrangements and instruct procedures to referees, DJs, announcers, etc.
- Relevance to the anticipate testing of the characteristics of the equipment of the quality of the sound system by the Referee Delegate.
- A visual signal by the 1st Referee that the production team could identify easily should be established to indicate that the referee wants to speak. The signal recommended is to place the right arm across the chest with the open hand pointing towards the shoulder.
- Referee Delegates should also very carefully select the referees who have the best profile and the minimum required English communication skills, in order to assign them for the matches where this procedure will apply.
- Finally they are required to include any comments at their final WT/25 report, based on relevant feedback eventually collected near all parties’ concerned (audience, referees, players, TV, media, DJs, announcers, organizers, etc).