



Officiating Guidelines
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General Guidelines and Court Management

Official Conduct

As an official you are representative of the WDBF. Your conduct is expected to reflect professionalism, understanding of the rules as well as creating positive interactions with coaches, captains and other officials. Your performance and conduct is a reflection of the entire team of officials and, over the course of the tournament, creates a positive or negative perception of the officials as a whole.

In performing your duties, an official should be open to hearing and acknowledging concerns and commentary from captains and coaches provided in an appropriate manner. The players and coaches are not your opponent, you are solely there to officiate the games to the standards set out by the rules. As a referee, part of your duty is conflict resolution where you are trying to come to a resolution in a timely manner. As such you are not to instigate volatile situations with players, captains and coaches. When speaking with captains and coaches you must treat them with respect and be engaged in the conversation. Do not be dismissive of their concerns as that may escalate the situation.

Be aware that all those involved in the matches may have the capacity for emotional swings towards a situation or yourself. It is not your responsibility to manage their emotions but to apply the rules to the best of your ability, irrelevant of their emotional state.

Referees may be perceived as the enemy and it is important to stay impartial and neutral. When performing your duties ensure that you are only making calls in situations where you are confident or have line of sight. When in doubt use your other referees to confer about the call in question.

Each match is independent of one another where any previous issues should not be carried over outside of the misconduct system in place. You should not approach a match with any bias towards or expectations of the participants.

When making a call bear in mind that there is extra time fit into the schedule to take the time to make the right call. It is a stoppage in play and doesn't negatively impact the time of the game. The emphasis would be to minimize these situations but if necessary don't hesitate to discuss a call. When discussing a call use all of the referees input to come to the best decision.

Court Management

It is the match officials' duty to ensure that all aspects of a match are conducted in an orderly, safe, and respectful manner. The officials set the tone and manage the conduct of all participants in a particular match, including players, captains, coaches, ball retrievers, court managers, spectators, and any other officers or participants on the court.

Court management should prioritize safety above all else. If any situation arises that compromises the safety of the players, teams, officials, or any other participant the match should be paused until the situation can be cleared up. At no times should a WDBF official order a match to continue to be played when an outstanding safety concern is present.

Safety issues can include:

- Netting or court equipment failure
- Spills or objects onto the playing surface
- Injuries
- Overcrowding such that players, ball retrievers, and officials are unable to move with safety around the field of play

Any instructions given to participants should be firm but courteous. All actions taken by officials in their duties should be to de-escalate any tense situations, or to avoid escalation of any conflict.

If at any point an official feels unable to de-escalate the situation, they should call another official over to assist and then step away from the situation.

Emotions are a part of the game and officials should not be expected to manage participant emotions. However, intense emotions do not excuse actions that cause conflict or break the misconduct guideline. Officials can use the tools available to them to manage these actions, up to and including any penalties found in the misconduct guidelines.

As a trial for the 2019 World Championship, teams will be asked to not shake hands or interact at the half way point in a match when switching sides. Teams will be given a few minutes to regroup and gather their belongings, and then will be instructed by the official to switch sides. Officials will be monitoring interactions at this point to watch out for any behaviour that may need to be addressed by the misconduct guideline.

General Court Management

1. At all times, an official may direct any participant on the court to:
 - 1.1. Move over to clear some obstruction.
 - 1.2. Ask to inspect any piece of equipment to enforce rules on allowed equipment.
 - 1.3. Otherwise perform some action to ensure safety or the orderly conduct of a match.

2. During the match, participants should be instructed to never cross the centre line under any circumstance except as ordered by an official, including at half when teams switch sides.
 - 2.1. Teams will be given time to regroup and gather their belongings, then instructed when and how to switch sides by an official.
3. At all times, an official must be respectful of team captains' and coaches' wishes to communicate.
 - 3.1. Officials should not be dismissive of teams' desires to bring up any issues.
 - 3.2. If an issue cannot be addressed immediately due to ongoing play, an official should:
 - 3.2.1. Quickly let the team coach or captain know that they have been heard.
 - 3.2.2. Address the issue at the earliest possible time.
 - 3.3. Coaches and captains should be instructed to bring any non-urgent issues to the official in between sets, and not during ongoing play.
 - 3.4. Coaches and captains should be encouraged to call for timeouts during ongoing play to address urgent issues.

Officiating Guide

Section 1. Officiating Team

An officiating team can consist of the following personnel:

1. The head official who is in charge of all other officials on their court and is the final decision maker on all matters covered by these rules and regulations.
2. Assistant officials are there to assist the head official and they can number between 1 and 5 on each court.
3. Assistant official #1 is the main assistant to the head official. They will usually be an accredited Level 3 dodgeball official.
4. Assistant officials #2, #3, #4 & #5 will be line official. Each Line Official will be responsible for their zone on the court, including the two adjacent lines of their corner.
5. A court manager can also be appointed to keep accurate match scoring, by filling out the score sheet as the match progresses. They will operate the scoreboard and monitor the game clock for accuracy.
6. The court manager can also be responsible for operating all officials timing used during the match where a designated time keeper is not provided by the competition coordinator.
7. If no court manager is available the assistant referee shall assume the responsibilities of the court manager.

Section 2. Responsibilities of a single official

1. If only one official is assigned, that official assumes all powers and duties of both a head official and assistant official.
2. The official shall take position as a head official at the centre line.

Section 3. Power and duties

1. Officials are representatives of the league or organization by which they have been assigned to a particular match and as such, are authorized and required to enforce each section of these rules.
2. Officials may order spectators, ball retrievers, players, captains, or coaches to carry out or to omit any act, which in their judgment is necessary to give force and effect to one or all of the rules.
3. An official may assign warnings or eject players, captains and coaches at any time with reasonable cause in according to the misconduct guidelines.
4. The official has the authority to make a decision on any situation not specifically covered in the rules.

5. No official has the authority to set aside or question the decisions made by another referee within the limits of the respective duties, as outlined in these rules.
6. An official may consult other officials at any time. However, the final decision and call rests with the head official of that match.
7. The primary responsibilities for a head official are:
 - 7.1. Enforce proper conduct from all participants of the game.
 - 7.2. Inspect the court, balls, and all equipment in play.
 - 7.3. Review and verify the team line-up, substitutions, and roster.
 - 7.4. Verify that all balls are placed validly on the center line and initiate a rush.
 - 7.5. Assume all responsibilities of a sideline referee.
 - 7.6. Call together necessary officials to discuss a play under review.
8. The primary responsibilities for an assistant official are:
 - 8.1. Calling and verifying a catch made in their territory.
 - 8.2. Calling and verifying an out made within their territory on the court
 - 8.3. Monitor players exiting and re-entering from the queue.
 - 8.4. Assist the head referee in enforcing the rules of the game.
 - 8.5. Calling successful blocks and dodges with hand signals.
9. The head official and assistant officials have equal authority to:
 - 9.1. Determine if a ball has hit a player in their territory.
 - 9.2. Determine if a ball was an invalid throw.
 - 9.3. Call a player out.
 - 9.4. Declare a catch.
 - 9.5. Declare a player out of bounds.
 - 9.6. Suspend play or call a timeout, when an injury occurs or a protest is enforced.
 - 9.7. Give a warning, disqualify or eject a spectator, ball retriever, player, or coach from the match for violation of rules or unsportsmanlike conduct.
 - 9.8. Initiate advantage and 10 second count to the appropriate team.
 - 9.9. Declare a false start on the team whose rush they are monitoring.
10. An official will declare the player out without waiting for an appeal for such decision. In all cases the player must move off the court and line up with the other dead players in accordance with these rules.

Section 4. Guideline for officials

1. An official should not be a member of either team (i.e., player, coach, officer, scorekeeper or sponsor).
2. The officials should be sure of the date, time, and location of the event and the matches they are responsible for.
3. At some events the officials will be responsible for the accurate marking and set up of the court and its immediate playing area.
4. When officials are responsible for marking out courts and set up the playing area, another official or event official should inspect the court area before play commences.

5. They should start the event or match at the designated time and leave the court when the match is over.
6. The official jurisdiction begins upon entering the court for the court check and ends when they leave the court at the completion of the event or the match.
7. The head official and assistant official should introduce themselves to the coaches and team captains.
8. The official should inspect the court, boundaries, balls, and all other equipment
9. The official should clarify all rules for the representatives of both teams.
10. The official may suspend play when in their judgment, conditions justify such action.
11. The official should suspend play when a player becomes injured and requires immediate attention, the official will call a timeout and seek first aid or contact emergency services if required.

Section 5. Code of Conduct

1. Officials shall not to be aggressive or antagonizing to players, coaches, captains, ball retrievers or other officials.
2. Officials should only make calls that they are confident in.
3. If an official is in question of a call, said official shall blow their whistle and discuss with the officials team.
4. When officials are discussing a call, officials should provide relevant information during discussions. If an official did not see the play under review, they should alert the head referee.
5. Officials are there to assist and should not be responsible for making every call.

Section 6. Official's judgment

1. There will be no protest or appeal of any decision made by an official on the grounds that the official's judgment was incorrect.
 - 1.1. i.e. Whether a player was hit, a ball was caught, a player crossed an end line, side line, or center line (with the exception of the opening rush for the center line) or on any action involving accuracy of judgment.
2. No decision rendered by an official may be reversed unless the official team meets to discuss the call and the conclusion reverses the call.
3. Should a coach, captain, or assistant captain of either team seek reversal of a decision based solely on a point of rules if in doubt, the referee shall confer with other referees before rendering a decision. Any decision is solely the responsibility of the head referee.
4. Under no circumstances is any player or person other than the coach, captain, or assistant captain, able to protest any decision and or seek its reversal on a rule.

Section 7. Change of official

1. Only an officer of the organization may remove an official at their discretion.
2. A team may not request the removal or change of an official during or immediately preceding a match.
3. An official must recuse themselves if they have a clear conflict with a member of a team (ie: any romantic relationship, prior serious conflict, or any other serious reason that may bias an official).

Section 8. Referee interference

1. An official shall avoid interfering with the play or balls in flight whenever possible.
2. Any ball rebounding off an official is considered a dead ball as if it touched any other dead object.

Section 9. Hand Signals (WIP)

1. Out:
2. Catch:
3. Bounce:
4. Line infraction:
5. Double:
6. Triple:
7. Hit:
8. No Hit:
9. Invalid Throw:

Section 10. Making a Call

1. When making a call use both sight and hearing to do so
2. Steps to making a call:
 - 2.1. If in line of sight of a player verbalize and hand signal a call. If not in line of sight of player, call player number and name, and hand signal.
 - 2.2. If no acknowledgement of Step 1, single whistle blast and repeat Step 1.
 - 2.3. If no acknowledgement of Step 2, double whistle blast, head referee stops play and directs player who is out to exit the court.

Section 11. Court positions

1. The head official shall:
 - 1.1. Take a starting position at the attack line across from the rushing players.
 - 1.2. Following the opening rush the head official will then return to the center line where he will then be opposite the assistant official.
2. The assistant officials shall:
 - 2.1. Take a starting position at the attack line across from the rushing players.
 - 2.2. Following the opening rush the assistant official will then return to the center line where he will then be opposite the head official.
3. The head official and assistant official will remain on the center line following the opening rush.
4. Each line official will be at a designated corner of the court, standing back from their corner, dependant of the gym spacing.

On-Court Checklists

Prior to the match

- Meet with captains and coaches of each team at centre court
- Introduce officials for the match, including identifying the head official
- Advise teams of any updates or issues
- Ensure teams are setting up on their respective halves of the court
- Confirm match sheet is correctly filled out with captains and coaches
- Inspect each team for contraband equipment (ie: sticky tape on fingers not for medical or preventative reasons)
- Get captains to shake hands
- Inspect court equipment, and ensure all necessary equipment is present and in good working order including
 - 6 match balls are present, plus extras
 - All court lines are clear and undamaged
 - All netting is secure
 - Match clock functions and is programmed properly
 - Any tables or chairs are clear of leftover items, and are in their respective places
 - Towels, mops, brooms, or other maintenance equipment is ready and available

Prior to each set

- Ensure the score is correct
- Ensure 6 players are on the court, lined up on the back line
- Ensure balls are lined up in the appropriate spacing on the court
- Ensure all your referees are in their designated locations and ready for the start of play

At the beginning of Sudden Death

- Ensure each team has the correct players remaining on the court, lined up on back line
- Ensure each team starts Sudden Death with 3 balls
- Announce to both teams that there is no blocking in Sudden Death

If referees have to make a call or provide disciplinary action

- Stop play with a whistle blast
- Referees come together to discuss the issue at centre court

- (Optional) Stop game clock if discussion will take more than a few seconds
- Arrive at a consensus based on best vantage points and the discussion
- Invite one captain or coach from both team to explain the situation and the result

At the end of the match

- Allow teams about 2-3 minutes to themselves
- Ensure scores are correct with the coaches or captains
- Ensure all match notes are complete, including any misconduct incidents or other issues
- Inform coaches and captains that once signed, all scores are final
- Obtain signatures on match sheet from both coaches or captains

Rules Interpretation

General Guidelines

In general, the rules are written such that knowing the order of events, the state of the balls (live or dead), and the state of the players (live or dead) any ruling should be possible for all situations on the court. This is the first avenue taken in interpreting the rules to emergent situations on the court.

In the case that a situation has occurred that is not covered by the rules, the officials are able to substitute a reasonable ruling. In this case, any penalties or punishments should be minimized – players should not be out for any reasons except those clearly stated in the rules.

If agreement cannot be reached between the officials, or if a team raises an objection to a rules interpretation, the head rules official should be called to make a final ruling. This situation should be avoided at all costs as it is disruptive to the flow of the match.

Any minor rules questions should be immediately ruled upon during the match, and noted for later clarification or discussion.

Frequently Asked Questions

Ball Position After Stoppage of Play / Timeout: Anytime that play is stopped, balls in the court NOT in a player's possession will remain where they are. A ball which is with a retriever or a player can be handed to other players as a team wishes. If a player does touch a ball that was on court and not in their possession before the ref stoppage/timeout - that ball will be forfeited to the other team

Player Eligibility to Return to Court: A player is immediately available to revive once they are out. EVEN if they are still within the boundaries of the court. Players must promptly leave the court and re-enter from the back in the event that they are caught in while still in bounds.
-Remind players to step out of back line to step back in through back line

Rushing Players Catching on Opposite Side Of Court: Rushing players who slide or run past the centre line off the rush ARE able to make valid catches thrown by opposing players, despite the rule which would place them in invalid boundaries for a catch normally. This is allowed as the opening rush grants them an exception to be in the other side of the court temporarily.

Difference Between Player Error and Player Error via Official Error: Referees are able to call back on certain players due to officiating timing. If a player is acting in good faith and steps off the court because they believed they were out – and at the time of stepping out did not have access to information that would lead them to believe they are not out.

For example, if a player makes a throw that is caught, and the player immediately steps out. While the player is stepping out, a referee rules that the player who caught the ball had touched the line before catching it making the catch not valid. The initial player should not have been out, but they had no idea the catching player was out when they caught. In this case, a referee may call the player back in.

Trap Terminology: At no point ever in this tournament will a trap be called. It is either a bounce or a hit. There are no traps in the WDBF ruleset. The player or referee must make a judgement call.

Zero Count Timeout: When counting down the throw advantage for one time, your zero count will be the "z" of zero

Ball Retrievers Intentionally Preventing Rollbacks: Ball retrievers are not permitted to intentionally roll a ball onto court to prevent another ball from rolling over to the opposing side. The determination on if the ball was rolled intentionally or not will be up to the Official. If the interference is unintentional, the ball retriever should receive a warning and then any other interference should be punished.

Ball Retrievers Bouncing a Ball Into the Path of a Throw: Ball retrievers are not permitted to interfere with live balls. This should not be a warning, and should be immediately be punished by the team the ball retriever is on forfeiting a ball. Continued abuse of this should be handled under the misconduct guidelines.

Dead Ball Block: These must be absolutely clear to refs. If it's not a clear "drop" of the ball, it may be counted as a disarm.

False Starts: A false start ONLY occurs if a player no longer meets the requirements of having one foot in bounds and one foot on the back line. If they move before the whistle but still have a foot on the line, no false start should be called.

Rolling Balls Back When hit: Players may only pass balls that they had in hand when they were deemed out. These "out" players may not intentionally interfere with any other ball in play. If a dead player touches a ball that was not previously in their possession, it will be forfeited to the other team. (If a player was attempting to retrieve a catch, and the ball hit the ground but still ended up with them, handing it off is fine. This is to prevent a player from interacting with another ball that was clearly out of their hands and giving it to a teammate.)

Resetting the Count on Ball Advantage: In the event that a ball which was not thrown somehow crosses the middle line and changes which team has ball advantage, the count will be reset. When a ball crosses the middle line without being thrown, but advantage remains with the same team, the **count continues to count down**. Example: Team A has 4 balls and more players. The ref starts to count them down. A player on Team A fumbles a ball and loses it, it rolls to Team B. The ref continues to count down Team A, as they still have advantage and have yet to throw. Similarly if a ball rolling to a team gives them a bigger advantage, they still need to throw within the same count.

Coin Flip to Determine First Throw: Before the start of a new game, refs will bring captains together to flip a coin. Winner decides if they want to throw first or if they want the opposing team to throw first.