

Conduct on Court

Guidelines for the Application of Rule 15 Violations

Rule 15 mandates that, in the event of unacceptable behaviour on court, the Referee “shall penalise the player.” However, the severity of the offence and the nature of the penalty are left to the discretion of the Referee. This has led to the imposition of different penalties (or none at all) for similar offences, depending on who is refereeing. On the one hand, a harsh (inappropriate) penalty might be assessed for a single or mild offence; while on the other hand, a serious offence is penalised lightly, or not at all. The players do not know in advance what standards will be applied, and the Referees are left individually to set their own standards.

The development of these Guidelines is an attempt to bring some order to the existing chaos, and to offer both Referees and players some guidance on the application of Rule 15. If Referees follow these Guidelines fairly closely, then players will know in advance what the standards are in relation to Rule 15. This is, in effect, no different from the desirability of knowing what the standards are for the application of the rules concerning interference: a greater measure of consistency is the aim. The achievement of such consistency will greatly benefit the sport of squash.

Referees will apply the following Guidelines in the appropriate circumstances. While the Referee under Rule 15 retains discretion in deciding whether or not there has been an offence under that Rule, once the Referee has decided that an offence has occurred, the following actions **MUST** be taken:

Abuse of equipment (racket or ball or other equipment)

- Minor offence (e.g. throwing the racket onto the floor after losing a game, hitting the ball hard after the rally is over): **Conduct Warning**
- Major offence (e.g. deliberately breaking the racket; smashing the racket against the wall; hitting the ball or throwing the racket out of the court): **Conduct Stroke**

Audible or Visible Obscenity

- Minor offence (e.g. muttered expletive; blaspheming): **Conduct Warning**
- Major offence (e.g. audible obscenity): **Conduct Stroke**

Time-wasting

- Minor offence (e.g. a few seconds late back on court; taking excessive time to serve): **Conduct Warning**
- Major offence (e.g. very late back on court; prolonged discussion with Referee): **Conduct Stroke**

Dissent

- Minor offence (e.g. questioning a decision): **Conduct Warning**
- Major offence (e.g. prolonged or repeated questioning of or disagreement with decisions): **Conduct Stroke**

Abuse of Official

- Minor offence (e.g. unflattering comments about official or decisions): **Conduct Warning**
- Major offence (e.g. pejorative comments about official or decisions): **Conduct Stroke**

- Severe offence (e.g. hitting ball at official or into spectators; throwing racket at official or into spectators): **Conduct Game or Match** (depending on the severity of the offence and the danger caused)

Excessive physical contact

- Minor offence (e.g. running into the opponent): **Conduct warning**
- Major offence (e.g. physical abuse of the opponent): **Conduct Stroke**
- Severe offence (e.g. deliberately injuring the opponent; dangerous play that injures the opponent): **Conduct Game or Match** (depending on the severity of the offence and the extent of the injury caused)

Unsporting conduct

- Minor offence (e.g. making negative comments to the opponent): **Conduct Warning**
- Major offence (e.g. repeated negative or pejorative comments to the opponent; any attempt at intimidation of the opponent): **Conduct Stroke**
- Severe offence (e.g. extreme behaviour that brings the game into disrepute): **Conduct Game or Match** (depending on the severity of the offence)

Coaching

- First occurrence: **Conduct Warning**
- Second occurrence: **Conduct Stroke and expulsion of offending person**

Repeated and excessive bad conduct

When, in the Referee's opinion, the player is guilty of repeated acts of unacceptable conduct on court following the imposition of the penalties outlined above, the Referee may impose for the next occurrence of the offence either the same penalty for the second offence or a more severe penalty than the one already imposed. However, if a Conduct Warning has been given for both the first and the second offences, for the third offence of a similar nature a Conduct Stroke must be applied. (Example: If a player has received a Conduct Warning for Dissent, on the next occurrence of this offence, either a Conduct Warning or a Conduct Stroke may be imposed. On the third occurrence, however, a Conduct Stroke is mandatory.)

Reporting Process

When a conduct penalty (other than a warning) is imposed against a player, the Match Referee and the Tournament Referee (TR) must report the incident using the Conduct on Court Report Form.

Should the TR have to take action against a player for any other (off-court) conduct violation, it is essential that a written report be sent to Squash South Africa (SSA) and the Referee Committee (RC) within seven (7) days of the incident. The report should cover the following details:

- Name of Tournament, dates and venue
- Name of individual against whom the complaint is made

- The name(s) and status (e.g. Official, Referee, Marker, Social, Committee, Spectator, Press, Administration) of those involved
- A detailed report of the incident from the TR
- Action taken (if any).

The report may also cover incidents involving the organisation and administration of the event including:

- Late withdrawal:
 - Main draw: after the closing date for entries
 - Qualifying: 7 days after the closing date for entries
- Punctuality: any player not ready to play within ten (10) minutes after the match is called and where the TR or Tournament Director defaults the player
- Dress and Equipment: wearing of unacceptable attire, including sweatshirts, gym shorts, running shorts, T-shirts and failing to comply with an order from the TR to change
- Leaving Court: leaving the court area during a match without the permission of the Referee
- Best Efforts: failing to use best efforts to win a match
- Failure to complete a match unless reasonably unable to do so.

Process for Dealing with Conduct on Court Violation Reports

- The Director of the Disciplinary Committee, in consultation with his/her committee, should review each report in conjunction with any previous reports on the same player
- If the violation occurs at a WSF event, the Director should then determine whether the individual incident, or the pattern of behaviour, warrants any further action within 24 hours
- A charge of “bringing the game in to disrepute” or “unsporting” behaviour may be laid, banning the player from taking part in future WSF World Championships
- If a charge is not warranted, the report will be kept on file and may become relevant if there are further violations that warrant a charge because of the accumulation of violations, or may be relevant as part of the player’s history if a penalty is being considered for another offence
- If no action is to be taken, a warning letter should be sent to the player copying both his Member Nation, Regional Federation and PSA or WSA as appropriate
- Copies of the Rule 15 report form and a report of any action taken should be forwarded to the player’s Member Nation, Regional Federation and PSA, as appropriate
- The Referee who submitted the original report should receive a copy of the Disciplinary Committee’s report, whether any further action is taken against the player or not.