

**BWF**

# BADMINTON TECHNICAL OFFICIALS LINE JUDGES' MANUAL



# BWF TECHNICAL OFFICIALS' RESOURCES LINE JUDGES' MANUAL

Published by:  
**BADMINTON WORLD FEDERATION**  
Unit 1, Level 29  
Naza Tower, Platinum Park  
10 Persiaran KLCC  
50088 Kuala Lumpur  
Tel +603 2631 9188  
Fax +603 2631 9688  
Email: [bwf@bwfbadminton.org](mailto:bwf@bwfbadminton.org)  
Website: [bwfcorporate.com](http://bwfcorporate.com)

© Badminton World Federation  
First published April 2018

ISBN National Centre – National Library of Malaysia  
ISBN 978-967-15281-8-1

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted without the prior written permission of the BWF.

Printed by Fussian Advertising & Printing Sdn. Bhd.  
Kuala Lumpur

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The BWF would like to acknowledge and thank the following individuals and organisations who have made a significant contribution to the development of this resource and the other components of the BWF Line Judges' Manual.

### MATERIALS WRITER

- Sharon Springer

### LINE JUDGE EXPERT PANEL

- Gilles Cavert
- Torsten Berg
- Abby Kumar
- Marisa Baird
- Christopher Trenholme

### CONTINENTAL CONFEDERATIONS

- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| • Badminton Africa  | <a href="http://www.bcabadminton.org">www.bcabadminton.org</a>         |
| • Badminton Asia    | <a href="http://www.badmintonasia.org">www.badmintonasia.org</a>       |
| • Badminton Europe  | <a href="http://www.badmintoneurope.com">www.badmintoneurope.com</a>   |
| • Badminton Pan Am  | <a href="http://www.badmintonpanam.org">www.badmintonpanam.org</a>     |
| • Badminton Oceania | <a href="http://www.oceaniabadminton.org">www.oceaniabadminton.org</a> |



**Badminton  
Confederation  
of Africa**



COVER PHOTO CREDIT: BWF/BADMINTONPHOTO

### MORE INFORMATION

The resources for Technical Officials will be available in different languages. The material can be downloaded from the BWF Education website: [bwfeducation.com](http://bwfeducation.com)

### BADMINTON WORLD FEDERATION

Unit 1, Level 29  
Naza Tower, Platinum Park  
10 Persiaran KLCC  
50088 Kuala Lumpur

Tel +603 2631 9188

Fax +603 2631 9688

[bwf@bwfbadminton.org](mailto:bwf@bwfbadminton.org)

Website: [bwfcorporate.com](http://bwfcorporate.com)



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>SECTION 1. OVERVIEW</b>	<b>1</b>
01. BWF Technical Officials' Resources	1
02. Manual Contents	2
03. Badminton Basics	3
04. Aim of the Game	4
05. Elite Level Badminton	4
06. Olympic & Paralympic Games	4
07. The Origins of Badminton	5
08. Regulating Badminton Worldwide	5
09. BWF Vision, Mission, Goals	6
<b>SECTION 2. WHAT IS BEING A LINE JUDGE ALL ABOUT?</b>	<b>7</b>
01. Motivations	7
02. Qualities	7
03. Benefits	7
04. Pathway	8
<b>SECTION 3. WHAT DO LINE JUDGES DO?</b>	<b>9</b>
01. Their Role in a Match	9
02. Possible Calls by Line Judges (...and Umpires)	9
03. Calling of Lines	13
04. Interaction with Other Technical Officials	16
05. Mopping	16
<b>SECTION 4. WHERE DO LINE JUDGES SIT?</b>	<b>17</b>
01. Position of Line Judges	17
02. Possible Configurations of Line Judges	19
03. Sitting and Standing	22
04. Getting On and Off Court	22
<b>SECTION 5. THE EVENT AS A WHOLE</b>	<b>23</b>
01. Before the Start of the Tournament	23
02. During the Tournament	23
03. Codes of Conduct	24
04. Health & Safety	25
<b>SECTION 6. TIPS FOR LINE JUDGES</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>SECTION 7. SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS</b>	<b>28</b>

# SECTION 1. OVERVIEW

## 01. BWF TECHNICAL OFFICIALS' RESOURCES

Welcome to the BWF Line Judges' Manual, which forms part of the BWF Technical Officials' Resources. The BWF is committed to providing quality resources to assist in the training of technical officials from grassroots to international levels. This resource is free for anyone to use in improving their line judging practice.

The BWF Technical Officials' Resources include:

RESOURCE	SEQUENCE	TARGET LEVEL
LINE JUDGES' MANUAL	SINGLE LEVEL	From grassroots through highest world levels
UMPIRES' MANUAL	LEVEL 1	Up to and including <b>national</b> level
	LEVEL 2	Up to and including <b>continental</b> level
REFEREES' MANUAL	LEVEL 1	Up to and including <b>national</b> level
	LEVEL 2	Up to and including <b>continental</b> level

These resources are available to all our member associations to use in training their technical officials. Each country will have their own structure for training, evaluation and certification of technical officials. For those who are interested in forming part of the technical officials team, the first step is to contact your national federation to inquire about opportunities and procedures.

---

## 02. MANUAL CONTENTS

This Line Judges' Manual is designed to form part of the BWF Technical Officials' Resources outlined in the previous section. It will offer aspiring line judges an introduction to badminton in general, as well as an idea of what is involved in line judging. For those who have already done some line judging and are looking to improve their knowledge and skills, this resource will also serve as a handy reference. Finally, for national badminton federations who are interested in conducting training for their line judges, the resource can be used as a learning tool in such training programmes.

Because this resource covers from initial grassroots training up to BWF-level performance, users can focus on the parts that are most relevant to their needs. This same principle applies to national federations, who are free to use the content that most suits their training needs and national structures.

SECTION	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
<b>01. OVERVIEW</b>	<b>Introduction to line judging and badminton in general</b>
<b>02. WHAT IS BEING A LINE JUDGE ALL ABOUT?</b>	<b>Description of how people get involved in line judging and how far they might advance</b> This section provides an idea of what motivates line judges to join the technical officials team, as well as the benefits and possibilities for growth that this implies.
<b>03. WHAT DO LINE JUDGES DO?</b>	<b>Overview of the roles and responsibilities of line judges</b> The focus here is on the key role line judges play, the specific duties they perform, and who else they work with on the team.
<b>04. WHERE DO LINE JUDGES SIT?</b>	<b>Logistical information about where line judges are positioned</b> This section offers logistical information about the positions and numbers of line judges on court, as well as standard procedures for getting on and off court.
<b>05. THE EVENT AS A WHOLE</b>	<b>A look at the larger context of an event and how line judges fit into this</b> This section looks beyond the court itself to provide relevant information on what is expected of line judges throughout the event.
<b>06. TIPS FOR LINE JUDGES</b>	<b>Practical pointers on line judging through on-court scenarios</b> The helpful advice and descriptions of typical situations faced by line judges are aimed at helping line judges feel more comfortable in their chairs.
<b>07. SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS</b>	<b>Evaluation of understanding of the manual content</b>

There is also supporting video material available on BWF's YouTube Channel [BWFTV](#), which includes:

- Sample line calls and signals
  - "Test yourself" instant replays
-

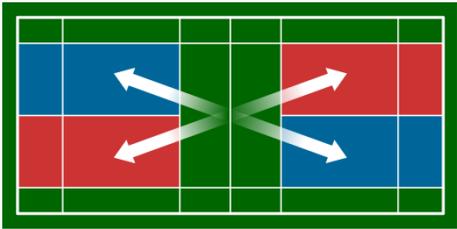
### 03. BADMINTON BASICS



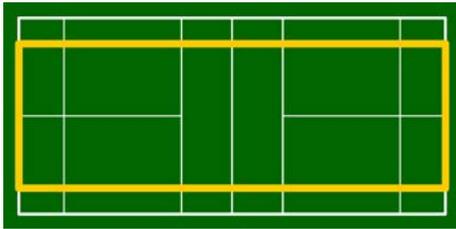
Line judges may be enthusiastic players who want to get more involved in the sport. However, not all line judges will have extensive experience with badminton. For those who are new to the sport, badminton is:

- a net game.
- played on a rectangular court.
- a volleying game, with rallies beginning with an underarm serve.
- a game that has five disciplines – singles (men / women), doubles (men / women and mixed).

Singles badminton involves serving diagonally into a long, narrow service box. Rallying then continues on a long court with the border on the first side line.

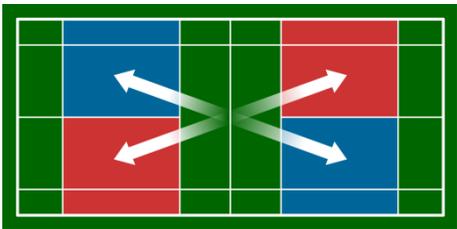


The shuttle is served diagonally into the opponents 'service box'.

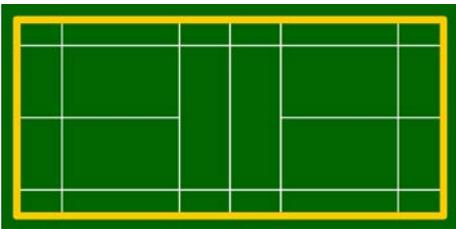


The shaded part shows the area of play for singles. A shuttle that lands outside this area means a point is won / lost.

Doubles badminton involves serving diagonally into a shorter, wider service box than in singles badminton. After the serve, rallying takes place on the whole court area.



The shuttle is served diagonally into a shorter, wider service box in doubles.



After the serve, doubles rallies are played on the whole court area.

For players with a disability, court sizes are adapted according to the category of player under the para-badminton classification system.

The complete set of rules – Laws of Badminton and Regulations governing the sport, can be downloaded from the BWF website – [bwfcorporate.com/statutes](http://bwfcorporate.com/statutes)

## 04. AIM OF THE GAME

The aim of the game is to score points by:

- landing the shuttle in your opponent's court.
- forcing your opponent to hit the shuttle out of the court area.
- forcing your opponent to hit the shuttle into the net.
- striking your opponent's body with the shuttle.

## 05. ELITE LEVEL BADMINTON

At the highest levels of badminton, the sport requires extraordinary fitness, technical ability, perception and predictive skills, as well as extremely fast reaction times.

Players at the top level require extraordinary physical ability including:

- aerobic stamina
- agility
- strength
- explosive power
- speed

At the top levels, badminton is a very technical sport, requiring high levels of motor coordination, sophisticated racquet movements and precision when under pressure. Badminton is also a game where tactics and deception are very important.



Photo credit: BWF/BADMINTONPHOTO

## 06. OLYMPIC & PARALYMPIC GAMES

Since 1992, badminton has been a Summer Olympic Games sport. Altogether 15 medals are available in Olympic badminton – gold, silver and bronze for each of the five disciplines:

- men's singles
- women's singles
- men's doubles
- women's doubles
- mixed doubles



Photo credit: BWF/BADMINTONPHOTO

Badminton players from each region (Asia, Africa, Europe, Oceania and Pan America) compete at the Olympic Games.

Since 1992, players from China, Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, Denmark, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Spain, India, Russia, and Japan have won medals at Olympic Games badminton events.

Beginning with the 2020 Games in Tokyo, para-badminton has also been included in the Paralympic sport programme.

## 07. THE ORIGINS OF BADMINTON

Although the exact origins of badminton are unclear, games based on a shuttlecock and a battledore were played in China, Japan, India, Siam and Greece over 2000 years ago.

Between 1856 and 1859 a game known as 'battledore and shuttlecock' started to evolve into the modern game of badminton at "Badminton House", the Duke of Beaufort's country estate in England.

Similar games were played in Poona India around this time and a badminton code of conduct was drawn up in 1877.

The aim of battledore and shuttlecock played at "Badminton House" was to keep the shuttlecock in the air for as long as possible by hitting the shuttle between two or more people. The reverse is true today. The aim now is to finish a rally as quickly as possible by scoring winning points against your opponent.

In 1893, the Badminton Association of England was formed to administer the game internationally from England.

## 08. REGULATING BADMINTON WORLDWIDE

The International Badminton Federation (IBF) was established in 1934 and consisted of nine founding members – badminton associations from Canada, Denmark, England, France, Ireland, Netherlands, New Zealand, Scotland and Wales.

In 2006 the IBF changed its name to the Badminton World Federation (BWF).

The BWF is the world governing body for badminton, recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). In 2011 the Para-Badminton World Federation formally merged with the BWF, bringing both sports under the same umbrella of governance and emphasising the message of "one sport, one team". The BWF supports this philosophy through the incorporation of badminton and para-badminton in its competition and development activities.

BWF's members are, with a few exceptions, the national governing bodies for badminton. These are organised into five confederations under the IOC system, with each Continental Confederation representing one of the five Olympic rings – Africa, Asia, Europe, Oceania and Pan America.

### CONTINENTAL CONFEDERATIONS

- Badminton Africa [www.bcabadminton.org](http://www.bcabadminton.org)
- Badminton Asia [www.badmintonasia.org](http://www.badmintonasia.org)
- Badminton Europe [www.badmintoneurope.com](http://www.badmintoneurope.com)
- Badminton Pan Am [www.badmintonpanam.org](http://www.badmintonpanam.org)
- Badminton Oceania [www.oceaniabadminton.org](http://www.oceaniabadminton.org)



**Badminton  
Confederation  
of Africa**



**BADMINTON  
ASIA**



**BADMINTON  
EUROPE**



**Badminton  
Pan America**



**BADMINTON  
Oceania**

## 09. BWF VISION, MISSION, GOALS

The BWF works closely with National Badminton Associations and the five Continental Confederations for badminton and *promotes, presents, develops, and regulates* the sport worldwide.

### VISION

- Making badminton a leading global sport accessible to all – giving every child a chance to play for life.

### MISSION

- To lead and inspire all stakeholders, deliver entertainment through exciting events to drive fan experience, and create innovative, impactful and sustainable development initiatives.

### GOALS

The BWF goals are to:

- Publish and promote the BWF Statutes and its Principles.
- Encourage the formation of new Members, strengthen the bonds between Members and resolve disputes between Members.
- Control and regulate the game, from an international perspective, in all countries and continents.
- Promote and popularise badminton worldwide.
- Support and encourage the development of badminton as a *sport for all*.
- Organise, conduct and present world-class badminton events.
- Maintain an Anti-Doping Programme and ensure compliance with the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) Code.



Photo credit: BWF/BADMINTONPHOTO



## SECTION 2. WHAT IS BEING A LINE JUDGE ALL ABOUT?

### 01. MOTIVATIONS

Line judges are a key part of any tournament, and many dedicated line judges are needed to run a successful event. At smaller events, line judges are often local volunteers who want to help out in their badminton community. They may be former or aspiring players, parents of players, or enthusiastic sports fans, and they will have undergone a certain level of basic training. However, at larger, more established events, line judges travel from different parts of the world to form part of the technical officials team. They have more extensive training, as well as a great deal of experience.

Becoming a line judge can be a very rewarding experience, whether this means helping out at a local club tournament, or aspiring to be part of the Olympics. There is a good deal of camaraderie in being part of the technical officials team, in the shared sense of purpose and enthusiasm. For those who love badminton, it is always exciting to be in the tournament environment, especially at close range. Finally, dedicated line judges who carry out their duties in a professional manner are greatly appreciated by the players, umpires, referees and spectators.



Photo credit: BWF/BADMINTONPHOTO

### 02. QUALITIES

Whatever their reasons for getting involved, line judges need certain characteristics and skills. Obviously, they need to have a good understanding of badminton, including court dimensions and general rules. They must be able to work under pressure to make split-second decisions, sometimes at crucial moments in key matches. They must be able to concentrate for extended periods of time, not just during a match, but over the long day or days that tournament work implies. And in order to keep their skills current and to continue to improve, they should be able to commit to regular participation in tournaments, as required by the organisation in question (local, national, international).

In addition, in order to do their jobs successfully, line judges must be able to function as part of a highly coordinated team. They need to work together with the other court officials, in order to ensure that matches and tournaments run smoothly. This means working with fellow line judges, as well as umpires and referees. On-court communication between line judges and umpires is a vital element to a successful match. Line judges need to understand their responsibilities and carry them out to the best of their ability, but it is equally important to understand what is *not* part of their job, in order to avoid confusion. Finally, as part of a team, they need to present a professional image, which includes appropriate dress and posture, being ready to go on court as needed, and following any protocol as appropriate to the tournament.

### 03. BENEFITS

Line judges' decisions are important to the smooth running of a match, and as such, they can take pride in their contributions in service to the players, the technical officials team, the tournament organisation and the sport.

As they progress their skills and experience, and become involved in higher-level tournaments, they will have the opportunity to participate in more exciting matches. This may imply traveling to different tournament locations and working with well-known players. It also means building a wider network of



Photo credit: BWF/BADMINTONPHOTO

colleagues and friends within the community of technical officials. Depending on the level of event, line judges may receive special uniforms to identify them as part of the court officials team.

Finally, line judges are in a prime position to watch exciting play from as close to the court as possible. They are, undoubtedly, at the heart of the action.

## 04. PATHWAY

As was mentioned earlier, some line judges are mainly interested in helping out at their local club or league. They may enjoy volunteering in their communities or choose to get involved as parents of young players. However, they may want to go further, working at national or international levels, or even progressing to world-class events.

Different countries have different tournament structures, and with that, different progressions for technical officials (including line judges, umpires and referees). Countries with larger, more developed structures may require basic training and experience at a local level before moving up to regional and then national events. Other countries, with less extensive structures, may have a single “national” level. Whether line judges are looking to progress to higher levels, or are mainly interested in improving their skills where they are, they should look to understand their national system. This can be done by communicating with their national federation.

Those interested in line judging at the international level will need a great deal of experience and commitment, as well as a long-term plan. They should make contact, through their national federation, with the relevant continental confederation, to find out more about opportunities and requirements within their continent.

At the highest levels, the BWF has a pool of over 100 international line judges who serve at BWF major events such as the BWF World Championships, Sudirman Cup, Thomas & Uber Cups, and major multi-sport events such as the Olympic Games. Consideration for this level requires minimum criteria regarding prior experience at national- or continental-level events, as well as nomination by the respective continental confederation. For more information, please visit [www.bwfcoperate.com/technical-officials/line-judges/](http://www.bwfcoperate.com/technical-officials/line-judges/).

It cannot be stressed enough that advancing as a line judge is not just about knowing the theory. Although theory is important, it is experience that will determine how far and how fast a line judge might progress. Experience comes through practice, and getting enough practice means attending as many tournaments as possible. As their experience grows, line judges will be assigned to more difficult matches, with higher-ranked players. If their goal is to officiate at a top world event, such as the World Championships or the Olympic Games, they will need to dedicate a great deal of their time over a number of years to gain enough experience at the right levels. It is a long-term process, but advancing up the line judge ranks is an achievement that many have found incredibly fulfilling.



Photo credit: BWF/BADMINTONPHOTO

# SECTION 3. WHAT DO LINE JUDGES DO?

## 01. THEIR ROLE IN A MATCH

The Laws of Badminton state that:

*a line judge shall indicate whether a shuttle landed 'in' or 'out' on the line(s) assigned.*

This is not always easy with shuttles traveling at high speeds and sometimes landing just millimetres from or within the line. Line judges must make accurate, impartial calls and make them promptly in order to assist the umpire in conducting the match. Players depend on line judges to make correct calls, as the outcome of a match can easily be affected by wrong calls.

The image that line judges project can go a long way towards creating confidence in their performance, on the part of the players, the umpire and the spectators. Line judges should sit upright, look alert, and always concentrate on their own court, no matter how exciting the match on the next court may be. Making clear eye contact with the umpire upon signalling shows that they are working as a team, which will not only inspire the umpire's confidence in their work, but will also make it clear to players and coaches that they will not be influenced.



Photo credit: BWF/BADMINTONPHOTO

## 02. POSSIBLE CALLS BY LINE JUDGES (...AND UMPIRES)

The calls that line judges can make are discussed below. However, it is important to refer to the Laws of Badminton and the Instructions to Technical Officials (ITTO) for the most updated information. These documents can be downloaded at [bwfcorporate.com/statutes](http://bwfcorporate.com/statutes).

### A) APPROVED SIGNALS

#### Shuttle is Out

The ITTO states:

*if the shuttle lands out, no matter how far, call "Out" promptly in a clear voice, loud enough to be heard by the players and the spectators and, at the same time, signal by extending both arms horizontally so that the umpire can see clearly. Look towards the umpire.*

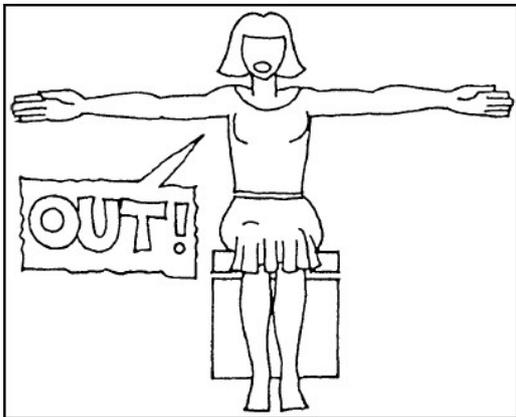


Illustration from the ITTO



A line judge making an "out" call  
Photo credit: BWF/BADMINTONPHOTO

This line drawing from the ITTO document shows the signal quite clearly, as does the photo above, which shows a line judge executing an “Out” call perfectly.

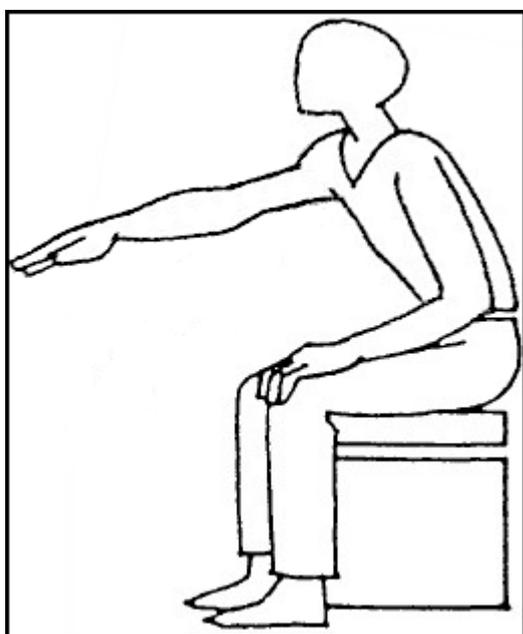
Points to note about the signal and call:

- The palms of the hands are **facing the court**, with the fingers and thumb of each hand together.
- The arms are fully extended horizontally.
- The signal should be held for about five seconds, and eye contact made with the umpire, who should acknowledge the signal and call.
- The call should be loud enough to be heard by the umpire.

### *Shuttle is In*

The ITTO states:

*if the shuttle lands in, the line judge shall say nothing, but point to the line with the right hand while looking towards the umpire.*



*Illustration from the ITTO*



*A line judge making an “in” call  
Photo credit: BWF/BADMINTONPHOTO*

This can be seen in the line drawing from the ITTO, and is very well illustrated by the line judge above.

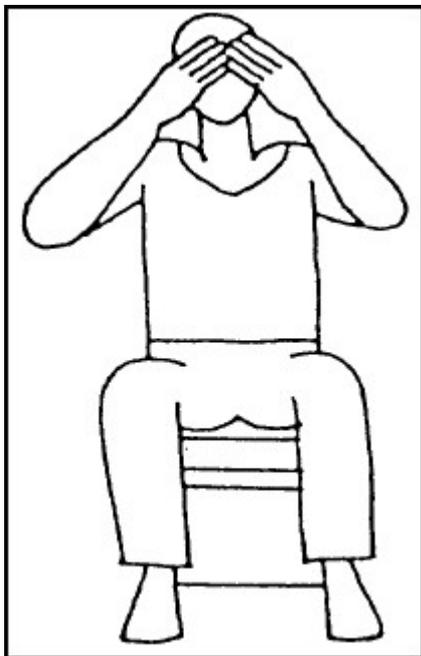
Points to note about the signal:

- There is no verbal call.
- The fingers are held together with the **palm facing the floor**.
- The line judge leans forward slightly when making the call and uses only the right hand.
- The signal should be held for about five seconds, and eye contact made with the umpire, who should acknowledge the signal.
- Any shuttle landing on the assigned line on its *initial* contact with the floor is “in”.
- The shuttle will almost always land base first. In the case of a smash, the side of the shuttle and feathers will make almost simultaneous contact with the floor. It is the **point of first contact**, however, which must be signalled.

## Line Judge is Unsighted

The ITTO states:

*if unsighted, inform the umpire immediately by putting both hands up to cover the eyes.*



*Illustration from the ITTO*



*A line judge making an "unsighted" call  
Photo credit: BWF/BADMINTONPHOTO*

Points to note about the signal:

- There is no verbal call.
- Both hands are raised to cover the eyes, with the fingers held together.
- Arms or hands should not cross.
- This signal is NOT to be used to avoid making a difficult decision!
- This signal is only used if a line judge is truly unsighted (e.g., a player's feet obscure the line and the shuttle at the crucial moment) and cannot make a decision. In this case, the umpire either makes the decision or plays a let (which means that play since the last service does not count and the player who served last serves again).

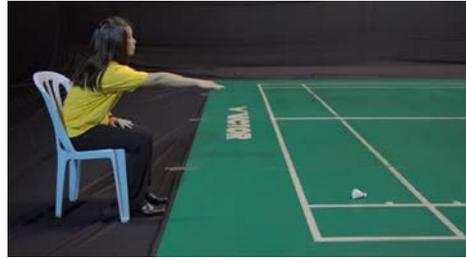
## B) MATCH SITUATIONS

The approved signals, as explained in detail in the previous section, are illustrated below in the context of a match. The line judge is, in this case, responsible for the singles side line. These situations can also be viewed in **Video Clips LJV1 – LJV4**, available at [BWFTV](http://BWFTV).

## LINE JUDGE RESPONSIBLE FOR SINGLES SIDE LINE

SHUTTLE  
IS IN

*Line judge signals "in"  
(front view)*



*Line judge signals "in"  
(side view)*

SHUTTLE  
IS OUT

*Line judge signals and calls "out"*

LINE JUDGE  
IS  
UNSIGHTED

*Player's natural movement blocks line  
judge's view*



*Line judge signals "unsighted"*

## Being Overruled or Challenged

On this matter, the ITTO states that:

*An official's decision shall be final on all points of fact for which that official is responsible except that if, in the opinion of the umpire, it is beyond reasonable doubt that a line judge has clearly made a wrong call, the umpire shall overrule the decision of the line judge (Law 17.5.1) or when an Instant Review System (IRS) is in operation, it shall be used to decide on any line call challenge (Law 17.5.2).*

As a line judge, it is important to realise that no one can possibly get all calls right 100% of the time, especially in a sport like badminton, where the shuttle can be smashed at speeds well in excess of 300 km/h! Line judges may be overruled by the umpire, but they should not let this affect their relationship or their performance over the rest of the match (or tournament).

In tournaments where there is an Instant Review System (IRS) in place, line calls may be challenged by players. While line judges may initially feel that this shows a lack of confidence in their abilities (especially if the challenge is successful), it can better be seen as an additional means to ensure that the best possible calls are made. If they come to see the IRS as a tool to help them do their jobs, this may actually relieve some of the pressure that comes with the possibility of a wrong call! In any case, if overruled or challenged (whether the challenge is successful or not), they should not dwell on this, but rather continue to make their best effort and remain professional at all times, which is all anyone can ask.

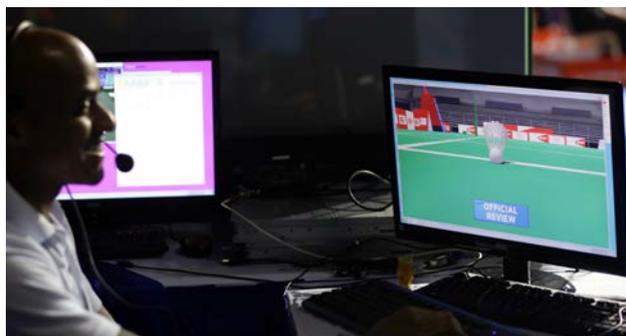


Photo credit: BWF/BADMINTONPHOTO



Photo credits: BWF/BADMINTONPHOTO

## 03. CALLING OF LINES

Throughout the match, line judges should pay strict attention to their own courts, focusing on their line, the shuttle, the players and the umpire. The following tips may be helpful:

- Rather than staring at your line for the whole game, watch the game and follow the shuttle, and when you see the shuttle coming towards your line, focus specifically on your line.
- Do not call or signal until the shuttle has touched the floor. This may seem obvious, but sometimes in an effort to make a prompt call, overzealous line judges signal before the shuttle has actually hit. This can result in an unfair advantage to one of the players and call the line judge's work into question.
- Ensure that you call *only* in relation to the line you are assigned to.

This last point may seem fairly obvious, but there are actually two important points there. As stated in the ITTO:

*a line judge shall be entirely responsible for the line(s) assigned.*

However, the reverse of this is also true: a line judge calls a shuttle *only* in relation to the line(s) assigned, and does *not* make a decision or call based on whether he or she *thinks* the shuttle was in or out on another line.

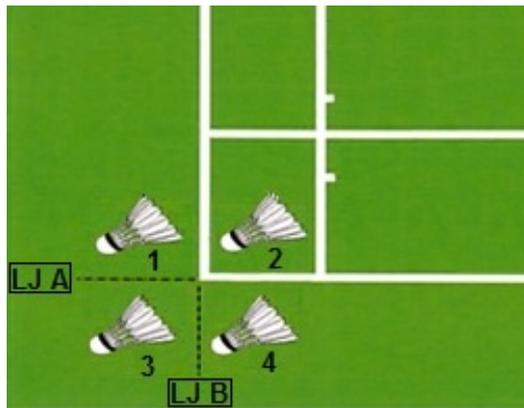
A common point of confusion among novice line judges will be discussed below. This has to do with a shuttle that lands near the back corner and thus requires a call by two different line judges (one on the side line and another on the back line). These two line judges may make two different calls, with both of them being absolutely correct! This situation is illustrated in the photo below.



Photo credit: BWF/BADMINTONPHOTO

The line judge who is signalling “out” is correct, because the shuttle is clearly out in relation to the side line, which is the line he is calling. The other judge, who is signalling “in”, is *also* correct, because in relation to the back line, which is the only line he is calling, the shuttle is in. New line judges may find it difficult to understand why they should signal “in” even though the shuttle was clearly out (on a different line). They may even avoid calling their line at all, leaving it to their colleague to call. This is not good practice and should be avoided.

For further clarification, the potential calls of two line judges in the back corner are examined below. LJ A has been assigned to the back line and LJ B has been assigned to the side line (doubles). In the diagram, the lines have been extended all the way to the positions of the line judges for clarity. In reality, there are no such extensions, although line judges are advised to *imagine* that the line they are assigned to extends all the way to their feet.



The shuttle, landing anywhere near the back corner of the court, can fall in one of four areas, labelled 1, 2, 3, 4 in the diagram. The “easy” areas are 2 (where the shuttle is in, and is signalled “in” by both line judges) and 3 (where the shuttle is out, and is called “Out” by both line judges). The trickier areas are 1 and 4, where one line judge should call in and the other should call out. The table below indicates the correct calls of the line judges for each of the four areas.

	LINE JUDGE A	LINE JUDGE B	FINAL RESULT
Signals/Calls for Shuttle 1	IN	OUT	<b>OUT</b>
Signals/Calls for Shuttle 2	IN	IN	<b>IN</b>
Signals/Calls for Shuttle 3	OUT	OUT	<b>OUT</b>
Signals/Calls for Shuttle 4	OUT	IN	<b>OUT</b>

LJ B is calling everything to the right of her assigned line “in”, and LJ A is calling everything to the left of his assigned line “in”. They need to remember that they are not calling the final result, but rather where the shuttle landed in relation to their line. As can be seen in the diagram and in the chart, it only takes one of the line judges to call “Out” for it to actually be out! The umpire will then make the appropriate announcement of the new score or the change of service.

An illustration of the line calls made by the line judges in the four situations detailed above can be seen in **Video Clip LJV5** at [BWFTV](#).



*Imagine there is only one line on the court – your line!*



## 04. INTERACTION WITH OTHER TECHNICAL OFFICIALS

For line judges to be able to work effectively as part of the technical officials team, they need to have a clear understanding of the other technical officials and their responsibilities. A more complete description can be found in the Laws of Badminton, but a brief overview is offered below.

### *Referees*

The referee is in overall charge of the tournament or championship, and ensures that the competition is carried out in accordance with the Laws of Badminton and the relevant rules and regulations (BWF and/or other).

### *Umpires*

The umpire is in charge of a specific match, the court and its immediate surroundings. The umpire reports directly to the referee. Umpires may also be appointed by the referee to oversee the Instant Review System (IRS), where this is in operation at a tournament.

### *Service Judges*

Umpires are also appointed to matches to act as service judges. In this capacity, they call service faults made by the server should they occur. Unofficially, the service judges also carry out other duties, such as dispensing shuttles to players.

## 05. MOPPING

Depending on the number of court officials working on a match, specific line judges may be assigned to assist with mopping the court. This will generally be those who are assigned to the back lines. If there are no line judges, this task typically falls to the service judge.

Whoever is responsible for mopping the court should wait for the umpire to say "Wipe the court", as it is the umpire rather than a player who authorises this. It is important to be especially alert at intervals, or after any diving or falls on court, in case the umpire calls for the court to be mopped.



*Photo credit:*  
BWF/BADMINTONPHOTO

Wiping the court is generally done with a mop, but as can be seen in the photo at the left, this is sometimes done with a towel or cloth.



*Photo credit:*  
BWF/BADMINTONPHOTO

## SECTION 4. WHERE DO LINE JUDGES SIT?

### 01. POSITION OF LINE JUDGES

The ITTO states the following:

*Where practical, it is recommended that the line judges' positions be 2.5 to 3.5 metres from the court boundaries and, in any arrangement, the line judges' positions be protected from any outside influence (e.g. by photographers).*

The ITTO also states that:

*the line judges shall sit on chairs directly looking down their designated lines at the ends and sides of the court.*

As such, line judges' chairs should be positioned well outside the boundaries of the court, but *directly in line with the line that they are assigned to watch.*

Line judges may find it extremely helpful to imagine that the line they are assigned to watch is extended right up to their chair (as illustrated by the second image below).



*Actual court lines as marked*

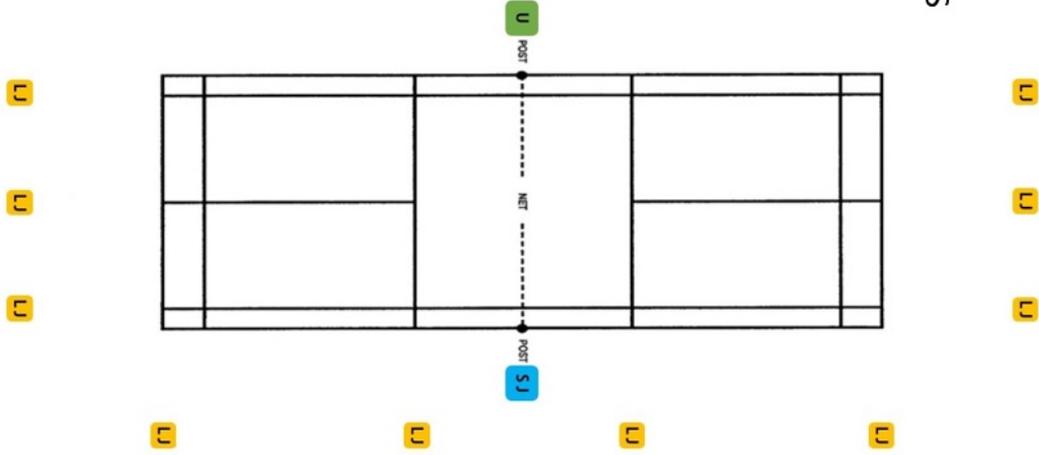


*Imaginary court line in the mind of a line judge*

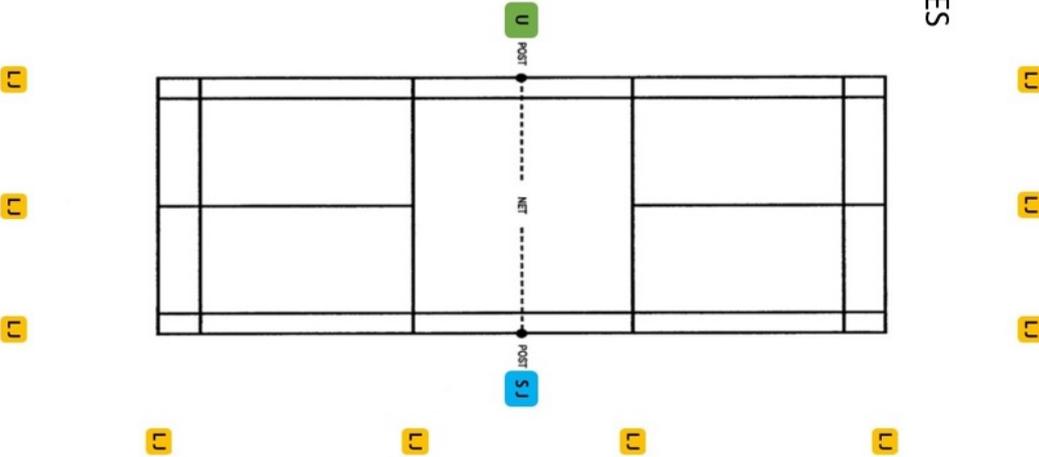
Depending on the level of event, there may be up to 10 line judges per court, covering the side lines, back lines, and short and centre service lines. The 10 positions of the line judge chairs for singles and doubles matches are indicated in the diagrams on the following page. It is important to note, however, that depending on the level of the tournament, there may actually be far fewer line judges for any given match. The possible configurations of line judges and the responsibilities will be discussed in greater detail in the following pages.

It can be seen in the diagrams that the positions are the same for singles matches and doubles matches *except* for the positions of the *side line* chairs – for singles the chairs must be in line with the singles side lines (the inner lines on the sides of the court), and for doubles the chairs must be in line with the doubles side lines (the outer lines on the side of the court).

### SINGLES



### DOUBLES



It is worth noting that for a doubles match, the chairs on the *back lines* are positioned in line with the back boundary lines of the court, *not* midway between the back boundary line and the long service line for doubles. On doubles serves, line judges should lean in their chairs so as to be able to look as directly as possible down the length of the long service line. Once the serve has been delivered, and the rally is ongoing, they should sit straight again, with their attention focused on the back line only. The following image illustrates this perfectly.



In the photo above, even though the line judge is leaning across to look down the long doubles service line, her head is positioned so that her eyes are horizontal. This is perfect technique.

There are four service lines (one short service line and one centre service line per side). These lines are unique in that they only come into play on the serve. The main point to bear in mind about the short service line is that any time the serve is short, even if it hits the top of the net and falls straight down onto the receiver's side, the line judge must call "Out". The centre service lines are unique in that the side that is "in" or "out" is constantly changing.

Usually the line judge chairs for the back lines and the short service lines are on the side of the court opposite to the umpire, but sometimes (e.g., when there are TV cameras in the way) it is necessary to have some or all of these chairs on the same side of the court as the umpire.

---

## 02. POSSIBLE CONFIGURATIONS OF LINE JUDGES

While high-level international events may have a full complement of 10 line judges, most tournaments do not have this luxury. Depending on the number of line judges available and the stage of the tournament (e.g., first round versus finals), there may be from zero to ten line judges. Of course, the fewer line judges there are, the more responsibility the assigned line judges have.

There are different configurations possible depending on the number of line judges working on each court, and that decision will be announced by the referee or the line judge manager. However, in cases of less than a full complement, line judges need to be sure, before they go on court:

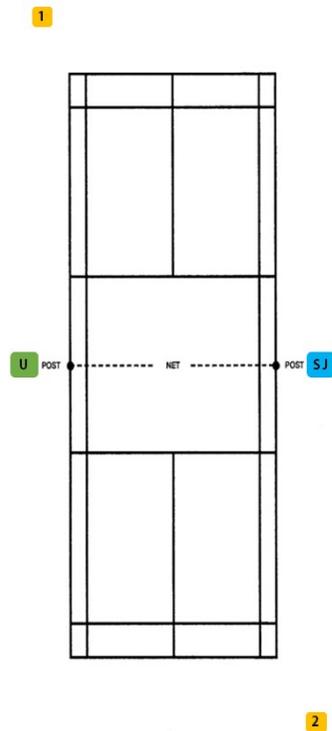
- Are they responsible for half a line (from their end to the net) or the whole line (from their end to the other end)?
- Are they responsible for one line or two (or even three, in the case of doubles)?

This will be examined in further detail using the following diagrams, which illustrate possible positions for different numbers of line judges.

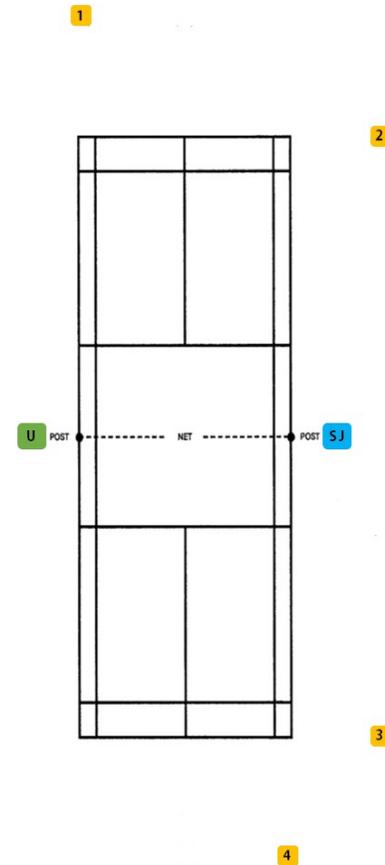
If there are only two line judges covering the court, line judge 1 is responsible for an entire side line, as well as the back line (or lines, in the case of doubles). Line judge 2 is also responsible for an entire side line and the back line(s).

*It is worth noting that occasionally, due to space constraints, both line judges are placed opposite the umpire. In this case, each line judge would call the side line up to the net, and the respective back line(s), while the umpire would call an entire side line.*

If there are four line judges per court, they are positioned as shown below. In this case, line judges 1 and 4 are each responsible for an entire side line. Line judges 2 and 3, generally seated opposite the umpire, are each responsible for their respective back line (or lines, in the case of doubles).

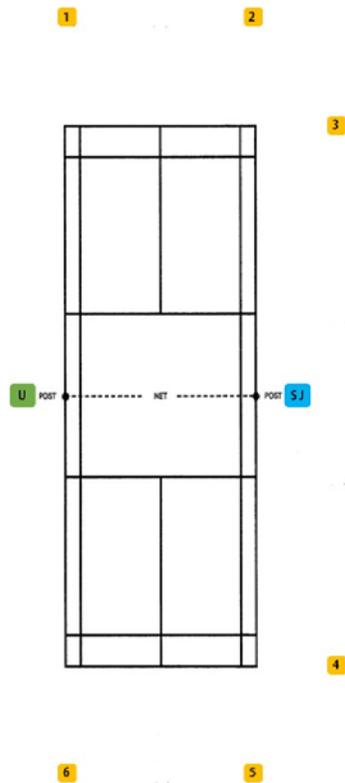


**POSITIONS: TWO LINE JUDGES**



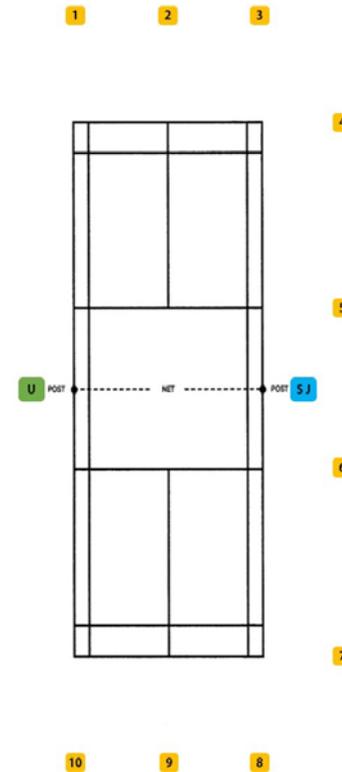
**POSITIONS: FOUR LINE JUDGES**

In the case of six line judges per court, their positions are as follows. Line judges 1, 2, 5, and 6 are responsible for the respective side line up to the net. Line judges 3 and 4 (again, generally seated opposite the umpire) are responsible for the back line(s). *Note: If there were eight line judges per court, the short service lines or the centre service lines could also be covered.*



**POSITIONS: SIX LINE JUDGES**

For the full complement of 10 line judges, all lines are covered, including the short and centre service lines. Line judges 4, 5, 6, and 7 are responsible for their entire lines, while line judges 1, 3, 8, and 10 are responsible for their respective lines up to the net. Line judges 2 and 9 are responsible for the centre service lines on their respective sides of the net.



**POSITIONS: TEN LINE JUDGES**

Again, the actual numbers of line judges per court and their responsibilities will be announced by the referee or line judge manager, but the previous examples serve to illustrate the probable configurations that may occur.

### 03. SITTING AND STANDING

There is a standard protocol around when line judges should be seated and when they should stand, which is often under the direction of a designated team leader. This makes the presentation of the match more professional, and also helps spectators follow the sequence of the match. Although local variations may occur, general procedure is as follows:

- **At the beginning of the match** – The appointed team leader will signal for all line judges to sit at their allocated seats. In the event there is no appointed team leader, line judges should sit once the umpire is seated.
- **During a game** – Line judges should remain seated during the intervals.
- **At the end of a game (unless it is the final game of the match)** – When the umpire has called “Game”, the team leader will signal for the line judges to stand. When the umpire has called “Court X – 20 seconds”, or the players are ready to resume play, the team leader will signal for the line judges to sit. If there is no team leader, line judges should stand when the umpire calls “Game” and remain standing until the umpire calls “Court X – 20 seconds” or the players have returned to court to resume play.
- **At the end of the match** – After the umpire has completed the end-of-match announcement, the team leader will signal for line judges to stand. In the absence of a designated team leader, line judges should stand once the umpire has completed the end-of-match announcement.

### 04. GETTING ON AND OFF COURT

Also in the spirit of making the presentation of the match more professional, teams of line judges (and possibly umpire, service judge, and players) may march on and off court together. This is often the case for larger tournaments or later stages of tournaments (e.g., semi-finals and finals), but may not be practical in smaller tournaments. This will often depend on the overall layout of the courts, as well as the rotation of line judges. For example, if scheduling of matches is tight and the same line judges are staying on court for the following match, this may not be the case. Again, the procedure will be announced by the referee, but in general terms:

- Line judges line up in order as a team, behind the team leader. It is important they know their positions *before* going on court.
- They walk, single file, as a team along the indicated path. The line judge team will usually follow the umpire and service judge.
- Once they arrive at their positions, they stand in front of their chairs, with the backs of their legs in contact with the chair, and their hands behind their backs.
- They sit when the team leader indicates, or if there is no designated team leader, once the umpire is seated.
- At the end of the match, when the team leader indicates (or in the absence of a team leader, once the umpire has announced the final score), they stand.
- Following the team leader, they walk single file along the agreed exit route, without separating until they are off the field of play.



Photo credit:  
BWF/BADMINTONPHOTO

# SECTION 5. THE EVENT AS A WHOLE

## 01. BEFORE THE START OF THE TOURNAMENT

When line judges have been appointed for an event, it is important that they:

- review their line judge procedures before the tournament.
- ensure they are wearing the correct clothing (uniform, if provided) for the event.
- arrive at the venue in time for any pre-event or pre-session briefing.

The person overseeing the line judge team (this may be a referee or a line judge manager) will:

- organise the line judges and assign rotations or teams, as appropriate.
- provide information and instructions through:
  - an initial briefing at the beginning of the tournament;
  - a briefing before the start of play (per session or per day, depending on the length of the tournament);
  - announcements regarding logistics (meals, breaks, off-duty seating, etc.).



Line judge briefing  
Photo credit: BWF/BADMINTONPHOTO

## 02. DURING THE TOURNAMENT

It is important to know the procedures for court assignments, whether matches are assigned at the beginning of the session or work on a rotating basis. Line judges may work as part of a fixed team, or they may rotate as needed. It is also important to be aware of policies on toilet breaks and meal assignments.

There may be a designated seating area for any down time to watch matches, which is a great way to enjoy the tournament and get to know colleagues better. This makes the long days much more pleasant!



Photo credit: BWF/BADMINTONPHOTO

Line judges should be aware that whenever they are wearing their uniforms, they are representing the tournament organisation. This means that they should be extremely careful about how they present themselves, both on and off court. Obviously when they are on court, they should sit up straight and look alert. The recommended position is with feet close together and flat on the floor, and with hands palms down on the top of the legs. They should make sure not to wear any flashy jewellery or anything with a reflective surface (including plastic-coated umpire credentials).

Following are some specific behaviours that line judges should NEVER engage in when they are on court:

- Eating or drinking while in their chairs
- Using cell phones or any other electronic devices
- Celebrating points or clapping for good shots
- Showing preference for any team or player
- Talking to other line judges, players, coaches, or spectators

Of course, when line judges are off court, they should also use discretion in what they do and say. Again, in the eyes and ears of the spectators and everyone else at the tournament, they represent the organisation. The next section offers more detailed information on the conduct expected of technical officials and others involved in events.

---

### 03. CODES OF CONDUCT

As part of the technical officials team, line judges must act in accordance with the *Technical Officials Code of Conduct*, which covers aspects like:

- application of rules in an impartial way
- professional behaviour (attendance, punctuality, attire, etc.)
- relationships with others involved in tournaments (fellow technical officials, coaches, players, tournament organisers, etc.)
- appropriate use of social media regarding participation in tournaments

It is important to consult the most up-to-date version of the code on the BWF website. This and all the other documents mentioned in this section can be accessed at: [bwfcorporate.com/statutes](http://bwfcorporate.com/statutes). Individual national federations or organisations may have their own policies on technical officials, and line judges should keep up to date with these as well.

In addition, there are various regulations that relate to the conduct of anyone involved in badminton in practically any capacity. This means that line judges should also be familiar with:

- BWF Code of Ethics
- Anti-Doping Regulations
- Code of Conduct in relation to Betting, Wagering, and Irregular Match Results

Finally, line judges need to be aware of how the following codes of conduct relate to on-court situations.

- Players Code of Conduct
- Coaches and Educators Code of Conduct

As always, the most up-to-date versions should be consulted on line, but a summary of these last two as they relate to technical officials is provided below.

#### Players Code of Conduct

Players are charged with being model competitors on court, which includes:

- *Conducting themselves in an honourable and sportsmanlike manner.*
- *Respecting technical officials and not trying to influence the decisions of technical officials in any way using an arm, hand, racket gestures, or orally.*
- *Not using words commonly known and understood in any language to be profane or indecent and uttered clearly and loudly enough to be heard by the umpire or spectators.*

- *Not making gestures or signs with the hands and/or racket or shuttle that commonly have an obscene or offensive meaning.*
- *Not making a statement within the precincts of the tournament site, directed at an official, opponent, spectator or other person that implies dishonesty or is derogatory, insulting or otherwise abusive.*
- *Not physically abusing an official, opponent, spectator or other person. Even the unauthorised touching of such persons may be regarded as physical abuse.*

While it is important to be aware of what kind of behaviour is unacceptable from players, there is technically nothing that line judges can do about any of these during a match. It is the umpire who should be controlling these, including any protection of the line judges as necessary. If there are concerns about any of these during a match, the line judge should speak to the umpire *after* the conclusion of the match, and the umpire will raise it with the referee if necessary. Any attempts to influence, intimidate or abuse a line judge outside the field of play should be immediately reported to the referee, without engaging with the player.

#### Coaches and Educators Code of Conduct

Just as there is an official BWF Code of Conduct for players, there is a Code of Conduct for coaches.

*Coaches or anyone performing the role of a coach in the field of play:*

- *must not verbally abuse or intimidate in any form such as shouting or making gestures, or in any other way distract any spectator, tournament official, technical official, opposing coach or opposing team official, or opposing player;*
- *must not make, or attempt to make, any unwelcome, abusive or intimidating physical contact in any way with any spectator, tournament official, technical official, opposing players, coaches or team officials;*
- *must not bring the sport into disrepute through media comments, either pre, during, or post tournament that relate to tournament officials, technical officials, opposing coaches or team officials and/or players, that are personal in nature, imply bias, or question their integrity.*

Again, on court it is the umpire who should control any situations that may arise with a player's coach(es). Any concerns during or after a match should be handled as explained in the previous section.

---

## 04. HEALTH & SAFETY

National federations may have their own health and safety policies, which may also be subject to national legislation. All technical officials, including line judges, should be aware of these policies and their responsibilities around:

- assessment and control of risk,
- response to incidents and emergencies,
- protection of children and other vulnerable people.

In general, if line judges become aware of any situations that raise concerns around safety and well-being, they should bring these to the attention of the umpire (for any immediate on-court hazards such as loose court mats or ceiling leaks) or the referee (for hazards regarding the venue or tournament personnel).

## SECTION 6. TIPS FOR LINE JUDGES

There has been a lot of information regarding regulations and procedures. However, it was also emphasised at the beginning of this manual that line judges cannot improve without experience. This section is designed to offer a head start on that experience by sharing some good practices, as well as the common situations faced by many, if not most, new line judges. These will be divided into two sections:

- How to work as a team with the umpire
- What if...?

### HOW TO WORK AS A TEAM WITH THE UMPIRE

The umpire is in charge of controlling the match, and a line judge's job is to help the umpire do that, by making prompt, clear, correct calls on the assigned line(s) and only the assigned line(s). However, the umpire can also help line judges do their job as well as possible. If they are able to work together seamlessly, everyone's experience (including that of the players, coaches and spectators) is much more enjoyable. Following are some tips on how to achieve this.

- Make eye contact with the umpire when making a call, and be sure to hold your call until this eye contact has been established. This lets both of you know that the call has been correctly communicated. It will also help you avoid eye contact with the player(s) during or after your call.
- If a player or coach disagrees with your call and attempts to argue with you or intimidate you, avoid making eye contact or engaging in discussion. Look to the umpire, who is in charge of the match. Once you have made your call, the umpire is in charge of dealing with any disagreements or disruptions.
- Remain alert at the end of each rally in case a call or repetition of a call is needed. If there was any confusion around the call, or if the umpire did not see your call, you may be asked to repeat it. This is not a questioning of your decision, but simply a request for repetition. Repeat your call confidently so that it is clear to the umpire, the players and the spectators. On another note, you will generally only signal "in" if the shuttle falls within about half a metre inside your line (roughly the distance between the singles and doubles side lines). However, if you did not signal a shuttle that was further in and the umpire asks you for a call, you should be ready to signal.
- If the umpire calls "Fault" because the shuttle touched a player's clothing or body, the rally is immediately over, so you should not make a line call. Conversely, if you believe that the shuttle touched the player's clothing or body, but the umpire does not call "Fault", you should make your line call as usual.
- Players may get tense if they feel that line calls are not made quickly and decisively, or if they feel that there is a lack of communication between the line judges and the umpire. When calls are clear and confident, and the teamwork between the umpire and line judges is evident, it will be easier for players to play and officials to officiate.



*Good eye contact with umpire*  
Photo credit: BWF/BADMINTONPHOTO

## WHAT IF...?

- ...I feel ill during a match? Should I stay on court or leave? *If you start to feel ill and think you will not be able to finish the match, or that your ability to concentrate is affected, you should alert the umpire at an interval or between rallies, depending on the urgency of the situation.*
  - ...the spectators are booing my decision? What should I do? *Your decisions will not always be popular. Do not let spectators, or anyone else, influence or distract you. Look to the umpire, who is in charge of the court and the match. If there is any disruption to the match, the umpire will call the referee to take action.*
  - ...the coach is yelling and trying to intimidate me into changing my decision? Should I explain my call? *You should not engage in any kind of communication with the coach. Instead, look to the umpire, whose job it is to handle the situation.*
  - ...the shuttle just barely hit my line, and the player was very upset with my last call of "in"? Can I signal "unsighted" so the player will not get even more upset with me? *If you saw the shuttle hit your line, you must call "in". You cannot use an "unsighted" signal to avoid making a tough call.*
  - ...the player's foot blocked my view of where exactly the shuttle landed, but I am pretty sure it was in? Can I still make a call? *If you were not able to see where the shuttle hit, you must signal "unsighted". If the umpire was in a position to see the shuttle land, he or she will make a decision. If not, a let will be played.*
  - ... I saw the shuttle graze the player's shorts on the side opposite the umpire, so the umpire couldn't see it? Can I call "fault" or tell the umpire after the rally? *Only the umpire can call this kind of fault. If no fault is called, you must simply make your line call.*
  - ...the shuttle collapses on a smash, but is still in one piece as it hits the ground? Should I make a call? *If the shuttle is still in one piece, you should make your line call as usual.*
  - ...the shuttle cork detaches from the rest of the shuttle, but when the cork hit the ground it was "in"? Do I call "in"? *In this case the umpire should immediately call a let, so no line call should be made.*
-

## SECTION 7. SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1	What is the maximum number of line judges per court?	4	
		6	
		8	
		10	
2	Which of the following calls CANNOT be made by a line judge?	"In"	
		"Out"	
		"Fault"	
		"Un sighted"	
3	What is the correct <i>verbal</i> call when the shuttle is out?	"Outside"	
		"Out"	
		"Long"	
		"Short"	
4	What is the correct <i>verbal</i> call when the shuttle is in?	"Inside"	
		"In"	
		"Good"	
		None of the above	
5	How many possible verbal calls are there for a line judge?	1	
		2	
		3	
		4	
6	How many hands should a line judge use when signalling "in"?	Two	
		One	
		None	
		It depends	
7	A line judge can be overruled by...	Another line judge	
		A coach	
		The umpire	
		None of the above	

**BWF**

ISBN 978-967-15281-8-1



9 789671 528181

BADMINTON WORLD FEDERATION  
Unit 1, Level 29  
Naza Tower, Platinum Park  
10 Persiaran KLCC  
50088 Kuala Lumpur

Tel +603 2631 9188  
Fax +603 2631 9688

[bwf@bwfbadminton.org](mailto:bwf@bwfbadminton.org)