

OVERVIEW

The aim of this section is to provide referees with a standardised and quick method by which to deal with the situation of a ball mark protocol being initiated. The ball mark protocol by its nature is a dispute between player(s) and the officials about a decision as to whether the ball is in or out. As such officials should pay attention that the process is transparent, not protracted and that the result is decisive and well communicated with the match resuming as quickly as possible.

1. THE PROCESS

- The Ball Mark Protocol as it is applied during a match has only a few components and should be completed by the officials, especially the 1st REFEREE with a great deal of accuracy and speed to allow a quick resume of the match. The main components of a Ball Mark Protocol are:
 1. The 1st REFEREE where any doubt exists in the decision as to whether the ball is in or out may decide that a Ball Mark Protocol should commence
 2. Players do not have the right to insist on the commencement of a Ball Mark Protocol
 3. The REFEREES and Linejudges should discourage any actions of the players from deliberately covering up / altering etc of the ball mark. The 1st REFEREE may penalize this as appropriate
 4. A player(s) may acknowledge that the initial decision is not correct thus requiring that a Ball Mark Protocol not be initiated or be immediately discontinued
 5. The Ball Mark Protocol has the strength in that it may allow the 1st REFEREE time to cool down the players after a disputed decision. This does however require the REFEREES to strictly and quickly follow the Ball Mark Protocol

2. WORK OF THE 1ST REFEREE

- Initial and quick decision made by the 1st REFEREE on whether to initiate a Ball Mark Protocol
- 1st REFEREE to come down from the stand and to indicate to the relevant linejudge(s) that they are required to come to the position of the ball mark
- Additionally the 1st REFEREE should ask that the players of the team on the side of the ball mark remove themselves from the area of the ball mark. This is extremely important for it grants equal and fair treatment to both teams within the process
- Verification of the ball mark (in or out)
 1. Once the area near the ball mark is free from players and any relevant linejudge(s) are present, the 1st REFEREE should proceed carefully into structured questioning of the linejudge(s) if required
 2. Initially it should be established if the ball hit the line. This includes the case where the line was in a raised position and touched by the ball
 3. It is important that the linejudge (if appropriate) should be given the opportunity to:
 - Show the position of the ball mark (without touching it)
 - Explain verbally what they saw including both the action of the ball contacting the sand and any subsequent actions
 4. The 1st REFEREE should be clear in their understanding of what the Linejudge has conveyed to them. A good strategy is to get the sequence of events explained as this happened.
 5. When the 1st REFEREE is satisfied that they have received all available information and are able to make a decision he / she should quickly verbally convey information about his / her final decision to the relevant team's while moving to the stand.
 6. 1st REFEREE already at the stand signaling the decision on ball mark (indicate which team now has the serve) and if applicable penalizing any players crossing under net.
 7. If applicable 1st REFEREE to verbally announce to the crowd the result of the ball mark protocol at the same time he/she signals the decision (see point 6 above).
 8. 1st REFEREE to recommence the match.

3. WORK OF THE 2ND REFEREE

- Initially the 2nd REFEREE should place themselves close to the net to dissuade either through body position or verbal communication the opposition team from passing under the net.
- It is good practice to remind teams that it is illegal for them to pass under the net or its extension.
- He / she should also establish eye contact with the 1st REFEREE during the all process.
- Eventually if required the 2nd REFEREE may assist the 1st REFEREE in the final decision.
- The 2nd REFEREE must make sure that the SCORER records correctly the outcome of the Protocol. Play should not recommence until the SCORER has indicated that they are ready.

4. SPECIAL NOTES

- Many of the problems in Ball Mark Protocols can be overcome with quick and accurate communication / collaboration before, during and after the Protocol. All communication should as much as possible be in English.
- The 1st REFEREE and the relevant Linejudge should at all time keep eye contact with the ball mark area so that he/she may spot any actions of the players aiming to cover up / alter etc the ball mark.
- The 2nd REFEREE should actively through both use of the whistle; hand signals and verbal communication indicate to players that they should not cross under the net or its extension.
- The 1st REFEREE may at the time of the reviewing of the ball mark require the presence of the 2nd REFEREE for eventual translation or any further assistance.
- The involvement of the 2nd REFEREE is even more relevant in case the 1st REFEREE's initial review of the ball mark being questioned by one of the teams. In this case, the 1st REFEREE should go quickly back to the mark before he/she returns to the stand, and with the assistance of the 2nd REFEREE make a final review of the mark. The 1st REFEREE should then go straight to the stand and signal the final decision on ball in or out.

5. LINEJUDGES

- Linejudges should during their officiating try to make their decisions as accurate as possible especially in calling in or out, thus avoiding the necessity of a Ball Mark Protocol.
- If a Ball Mark Protocol is requested as being initiated by the 1st REFEREE, a linejudge should ensure in their own thinking that they can convey the exact spot and circumstances of the balls' contact with the playing surface.
- Information including position and circumstances of the contact with the playing surface should be conveyed to the 1st REFEREE if requested.
- It is common for a linejudge to be requested by the 1st Referee to proceed to the area of the ball mark.
- The linejudge (and other officials) should in no way alter the playing surface in the area of the ball mark. Attention should be undertaken to avoid persons walking in the area, or indicating on the surface sand with fingers or linejudge flags.

6. RECOMMENCING THE MATCH

- At the end of the Protocol the 1st REFEREE should communicate the results of the Ball Mark Protocol to all parties through the use of the appropriate hand signals (indicate which team now has the serve).
- If it is appropriate the 1st REFEREE must also penalize any player(s) who cross under the net or its extension. This is penalized as a Rude Conduct (Red Card) and is applied individually.
- Crossing the net or its extension makes no differentiation as to the distance beyond the net (players traveling 1 meter over are treated the same as ones traveling 3 meter's). It is however possible that players may receive other sanctions subsequently for other actions such as delays, verbal abuse, etc
- The 2nd REFEREE must make sure that the SCORER records correctly the outcome of the Protocol. Play should not recommence until the SCORER has indicated that they are ready.