



APTA Chair Umpire Handbook

The APTA Chair Umpire Handbook is intended for officials who umpire matches at all levels. The procedures, techniques and tips in this handbook are drawn from the experiences of platform tennis umpires and suggestions from the USTA Chair Umpire Handbook.

The following is a list of procedures and tasks which, when adhered to, will make the conduct of a match more likely to be smooth and error free.

BEFORE THE TOURNAMENT

Review both the *APTA Official Rules of Platform Tennis* and the *Addendum: The Etiquette of Platform Tennis*. Discuss with the Tournament Director the format to be used, including: if a new ball shall be used every 7 games, if foot fault warnings are given during warm-up; and if foot faults are to be called from the first point of the match. Also confirm when the Chair Umpire will call lines: only when asked; if he/she sees an incorrect call with 100% certainty; or only if there are disputes. Finally, decide how much time will be allowed for warm-up.

BEFORE THE MATCH

Mental and Physical Preparation

About 30 minutes before a match, start thinking about the match. What are the conditions? Who are the players? Are any of the players known for being contentious, confrontational, occasional foot faulters, etc? Rehearse typical lines you will say. Go to the bathroom before going on court.

Assemble a kit of supplies:

- Pencils (2)
- Tape measure
- Stopwatch
- Coin
- Scorecard

Court Preparation

Always arrive at the court before the players. Conduct a pre-match check:

- Measure the net.
- Place the Umpire's stand against the screen so that players can pass in front.
- Make sure you have at least two new balls and they do not have defects.
- See that any loose debris, snow, ice, sticks or leaves are removed from the court.



Warm-up

When the players arrive at the court, conduct your brief pre-match meeting at the net. Choose the player who will call the toss.

Give the balls to the players, let them know they have 10 minutes to warm-up, including serves, and start your stopwatch when the players have struck a ball.

Complete the necessary portions of your scorecard: winner of the toss; time the warm-up began; who will serve.

When there are two minutes left in the warm-up, announce “two minutes” and then introduce the players. When announcing, project your voice and enunciate.

“Ladies and gentlemen, this semi-final round match is the best-of-three tie break sets.

To the right of the chair, in the deuce court,

from _____, John Doe. His (Her) partner, in the ad court,

from _____, John Snow. To the left of the chair, etc., etc. Mr. Doe won the toss and has elected to serve.”

When the warm-up is completed, announce: “Players ready? Mr. Doe to serve.”

DURING THE MATCH

You must be prepared to concentrate during a match. You cannot let your attention wander or you run the risk of making a mistake, losing control and losing your confidence. Always appear confident. Always think before you say anything.

Court Awareness

As the player prepares to serve, glance at his (her) opponent to make sure he (she) is ready to receive. Keep your field of vision open, but first watch the server. You are watching for a foot fault. Then from this point on, while being aware of the entire court, you follow the ball.

However, always be aware of what is happening on and around the court. If a ball or a piece of paper comes on to the court, call a let immediately.

Overruling

Depending on the Chair Umpire’s responsibilities, agreed to with the Tournament Director ahead of time, the Chair Umpire might be charged with overruling. Unless you are 100 percent sure that a call is wrong, do not overrule. However, if you do, make it instantaneous and show confidence. The correct verbiage is: “Correction. The ball was good (or out).”



Announcing the Score

At the conclusion of each point, be aware of the loser. Do not stare at him (her) as you announce the score. Announce the score promptly. Project your voice and enunciate the words, particularly if there is a crowd and you do not have a microphone.

Communicating with the players

Do not get chatty either before or during a match. When a player asks you a question, be careful to respond to the question and not the emotion behind it. Be prepared to use non-verbal communication, for example, after a close call to confirm a call when the loser looks at you. A slight nod is all that is needed.

General

Study and practice your umpire skills. You can never stop learning. Work on court awareness. You are responsible for everything on court, so be aware of all your surroundings.

Accept the fact that you will make mistakes and you are not perfect. Learning from your errors will help to minimize any future mistakes.

AT THE CONCLUSION OF A MATCH

Announce the score, record the ending time, shake hands with the players only if they offer their hands. Get out of the chair and get off the court. Never wait to talk to a player about a decision or call.