

R1 Guide for working with Line Judges

By Ned Santee

Meet with the LJs before the match.

- Assess their experience ability. Ask how often they've been a LJ and what they are currently working on to be better.
- Go over key points of emphasis or things you might particularly want. Eye contact after calls, out vs. touch, when to make signals, eyes to the line before the ball, etc.
- Assign them to their position. At this level usually the stronger of the LJs is put on the R2/bench side. But you may also consider their comfort on each corner.
- Discuss pre-game and post-game protocol. Where to stand during announcements, exit strategy after the game.
- Remind them of game ball control. If a single ball is used, LJ on serving side holds the ball during the TO, LJ should help retrieve the ball at the end of each set, they are not ball shaggers but can help if the ball is very close to them.

During the match

- Look at your LJs! Look at both LJs every time the ball hits the floor or goes outside the antenna/hits equipment.
- Look at the one on the side you're looking, glance at the other LJ, center on the R2 (as you always do of course), only then assign the point and give the reason. This establishes a rhythm you want to maintain, always gathering all your information then making the call.
- Evaluate how your LJs are doing. You want to know early if your LJs are doing what's expected and how much you can trust them. If they're seeing things right but making the wrong signal, do your signal sequence, then get eye contact with them and show them the correct signal in a small way in front of your body.
- If they're giving bad calls, try to assess why and fix it when you can talk to them (TOs, between sets). They need to be 100% sure on a touch, they need to get their eyes to the line before the ball, general confusion about which signals to make?
- Talk to the LJs during TOs to improve things.
- When there is a tough call, you want to know that they're doing a good job and that you can trust them.
- If you think it will help to get the right call, ask a LJ to come to the stand so you can talk to them. My usual first question is "tell me what you saw." Might want to call both LJs and/or the R2 over as well. This should not be a regular occurrence, but once or twice in a match is reasonable if needed.

Overruling LJs

- The book says if the R1 has a different call from the LJ the R1 should use his/her own call. If the ball is very close and the LJ had a good view and made a good call I will take that call. They have a superior angle and if they do their job well can be in much better position and view of close calls.

- If the ball lands near the LJs feet (can't see the line for the ball), if the LJ is hesitant on his call, if the LJ was moving, or if the LJs head was turning or eyes were behind the ball I will always take my call over the LJ.
- When you decide to overrule a LJ and it changes who will get the ball I recommend: Double tweet (look at me), point to upper chest with both hands (my call), signal who won the point and then the reason.
- After the overrule try to reassure the LJ. Sometimes they did everything right but didn't get a good look. Or sometimes you just saw things different. I often give them a look after my signals: "no big deal", "you're doing good" sort of thing.

At the end of the match

- Thank your LJs!
- If you can, take a moment to review any interesting calls/situations that came up.
- Try to give your LJs one or two things for them to work on for future games.