

Match Protocol with Service Judges

Assignment of Service Judges

If no service judges are assigned, then the match will be conducted with one or two umpires as usual. If service judges are assigned there must be two service judges, one at each end. For those matches, there may be either three match officials (one umpire, two service judges) or four officials (two umpires, two service judges).

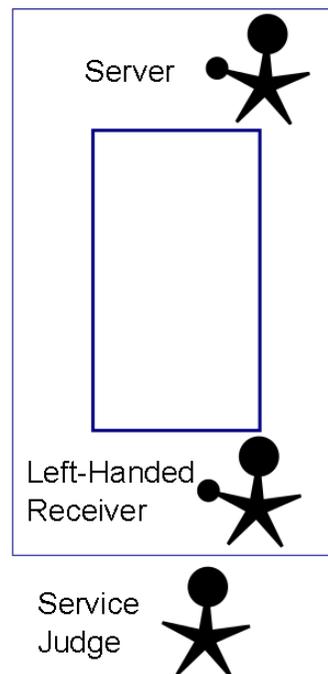
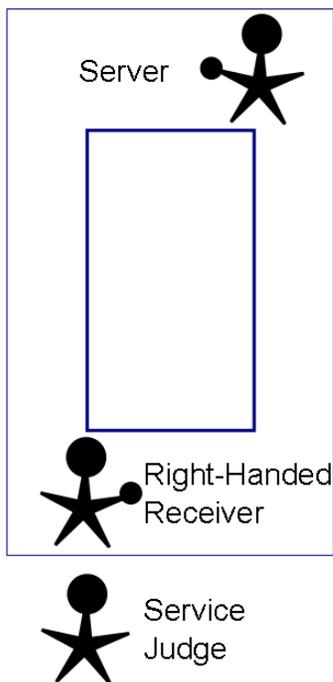
The referee has the authority to assign service judges to any match. In general, service judges should be certified umpires.

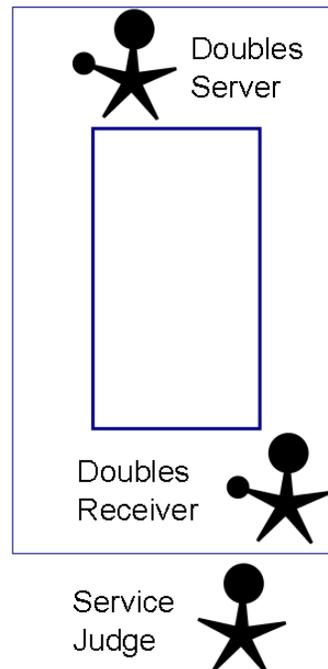
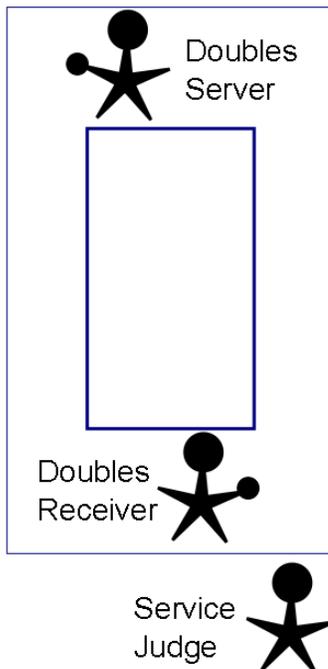
Position of Service Judges

The service judges should be outside the court barriers at both ends, with a chair provided. They do not march into the court with the umpires. The umpire should inform the players that there will be service judges, and point out the two service judges to the players.

A service judge is active when he or she is on the same end of the court as the receiver. The active service judge should stand. The other service judge is inactive for that rally and may sit.

The active service judge should stand at a position that is most suitable to determine whether the ball is hidden from the receiver. Ideally the service judge will have the same perspective as the receiver, similar to a home plate umpire in baseball. One guide that can be used is to stand behind the receiver's racket side; i.e. slightly to the right of a right-handed receiver. Here are some examples:





Service Judge Actions

While the ball is in play, service judges should be as still as possible, to avoid distracting players.

If the active service judge detects a fault in service, he or she shall raise an arm and say "stop". It should be said loud enough for the umpire to hear, as the umpire is probably not looking at the service judge; however it should not be so loud as to distract players in other courts.

Service judges have the right to stop play for any violation in service, but they should primarily be looking for hidden serves. The umpire typically has a better perspective for other violations, so it is recommended that the service judge focus on whether the ball is hidden.

A service judge should only stop play if the violation is certain. Service judges do not have the authority to stop play if they have doubt.

Once play is stopped due to a service violation, the service judge should signal and/or explain the reason for the service fault; use the standard ITTF signals when possible. Most faults called by the service judge will be because the ball is hidden, and in those cases the service judge can simply point to the body part that was hiding the ball; point to the shoulder, or head, or forearm, etc.

Umpire's Role

Normally, if the active service judge stops play, the umpire should call "fault" and award a point to the receiver.

The umpire has the right to call "let" rather than "fault", but this would be unusual. The service judge's call has no doubt, and usually the call should be regarded as correct. However the umpire might call "let" rather than "fault" if the service judge was in error; for example:

- The inactive service judge stopped play
- The service judge's explanation for the illegal serve was invalid (such as "the server stomped his foot", "the server's racket was hidden", etc.)

If a player does not seem to understand the fault in service, the umpire should explain, using the information provided by the service judge.

Other Calls

When service judges are assigned, the umpires continue have full authority over the match. The umpire has the right and responsibility to call all lets and faults as if there were no service judges.

Service judges have one assigned function: To stop play when a service fault is detected. The service judge might notice other things, but may not stop play for any reason except for an illegal serve.

Service judges should be attentive throughout the match. If there is a call that the umpire is unsure of, the service judge may be asked to give their perspective. These situations should be rare.

Specifically, service judges are in a superior position to judge whether a ball hit the side of the table or the edge. If the umpire is unsure, he or she can quietly ask for a service judge's opinion by looking directly at the judge. The service judge can then indicate that the ball was in, by pointing straight at the table with an open hand; or indicate that the ball was out, by pointing to the left or right, away from the table. If the service judge is unsure, no signal should be made. The service judge should not shake his head, as this can be misinterpreted as "no". Instead, he should look down or cover his eyes with his hands.

In other cases, if the umpire needs to speak with the service judge, the umpire should signal to the service judge to approach the umpire to talk. This should be extremely rare.