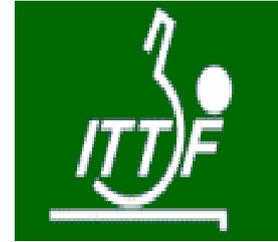


The International Table Tennis Federation
**Referee Directives regarding
Racket Control**

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Section 1: Introduction

During World Title competitions and ITTF sanctioned events, as well as during Regional or Continental championships, rackets are checked that they comply with the regulations specified below and results are reported to the referee under whose jurisdiction racket control resides.

Rackets will be tested according to the policy and procedure established by the Board of Directors on recommendation from the Equipment Committee and Umpires and Referees Committee, to ensure that rackets abide by all ITTF regulations including, but not limited to, racket covering thickness, flatness and presence of harmful volatile organic compounds (VOC).

The purpose of these Referee Directives regarding Racket Control is to describe the procedure for racket testing and the consequences for failures.

References:

- The Laws of Table Tennis: ITTF Handbook, section 2
- Regulations for International Competitions; ITTF Handbook, section 3
- Technical Leaflet T9; the technical procedures to achieve the correct measurements.
- LARC, List of Authorised Racket Coverings; which is published on the ITTF website.

The process of racket testing should interfere as little as possible with the preparation time of the players just before the match and it should not delay the start of a match. Nevertheless, the referee must have the time to make a decision according to the rules, regulations and these Directives.

The ITTF may collect and publish statistics on the test results.

Section 2: Place and Time of Racket Control

Racket testing should be carried out before the match in the “call area” (official place for ball selection/shirt check, etc.). It is the player’s responsibility to present the racket to the umpires in the call area within the advised time limit. Players who choose not to present their rackets before the match or present them after the advised time limit will have their rackets tested after the match and must be aware of the consequences.

The time limit for presenting a racket to the umpires in the call area before the match has to be announced at the beginning of a tournament. A **time limit of 20 minutes is suggested** but should be adapted to the requirements of the tournament.

Testing for VOC has to take place in a specific environment in the Racket Control Centre (RCC) which should be situated close to the call area; the requirements are sent to the organisers in advance.

Rackets that do not pass a racket test/s before the match cannot be used in the match. If rackets do not pass a racket test/s after the match, the offending player will be liable to penalties (see below).

All players are entitled to have their racket tested voluntarily without any penalties during the tournament according to the procedure given for that tournament.

Before the event starts, the tournament organisers provide and equip the necessary facilities (call area including equipment and RCC), for use, at the latest, one day before the competition starts.

The call area must be identified by several signs in the competition venue.

Section 3: Match Officials

The referee may delegate the coordination and organisation of racket testing to one of his/her deputy referees who would be designated the racket testing coordinator (RTC).

Racket testing will be done by umpires before the match.

Depending on the number of umpires and the umpire schedule, either the nominated umpires of the match are responsible for testing rackets in the call area or assigned umpires will undertake this duty.

At tournaments the number of match officials should comply with the directives for match officials at world title, Olympic and Paralympic Games viz.:

World Title Competitions: minimum number of Umpires = Number of tables x 4 + 4.

ITTF Sanctioned Events: minimum number of Umpires = Number of tables x 3,5 + 4.

In events where racket testing is undertaken, racket testing must be included as an additional table for the purpose of determining the number of umpires required for the event.

The referee or his/her deputy referee is responsible for deciding the acceptability of playing equipment, including any allowable tolerances, and must advise the umpires prior to the start of competition. Any rackets that exceed the values listed in the Laws or Regulations must be included in the racket control failure list in the referee report.

One umpire will be assigned for the VOC testing and will help the assigned referee to coordinate racket testing in the call area and select rackets for VOC testing. He/she will be responsible for VOC testing and be available to assist umpires for thorough tests if necessary in the RCC.

Duties of the Referee of the tournament

- prepares and checks the documents and forms in advance for racket preparation and control to be distributed to the team managers, players and umpires;
- liaises with the organiser before the start of the tournament;

- inspects, as soon as possible after arrival, the racket preparation area, the call area, the VOC testing room and meets the tournament director to discuss arrangements and also volunteers, who will assist the umpires in the call area and the RCC;
- informs umpires and team managers during the briefing/jury meeting about the racket control procedure and answers all relevant questions;
- may delegate the racket control procedure and decisions to a deputy referee;
- submits, after the tournament, a report to ITTF (number of the tests, failures and their reasons, other problems).

Duties of the Referee assigned to Racket Control

- plans the duty-roster of umpires who are assigned as racket testers (call area and RCC) in conjunction with the referee;
- supervises the racket testing process to ensure it is conducted with care and accuracy,
- records the results and informs the player/delegation.

Duties of the Umpires

Umpires have to perform racket testing in the call area. **Rackets will no longer be checked in the playing area.** The following tests are obligatory:

- Thickness (for detailed results, electronic devices have to be available)
- LARC (covering authorised by ITTF)
- Flatness (for detailed results, electronic devices have to be available)
- Racket covering extends to the limit permitted
- Any other irregularities

VOC testing will be done in a separate room. Rackets to be tested for VOC will be selected on a random basis by the assigned referee and the assigned umpire. Any other specific tests, if not already done in the call area, will also be done i.e. if the flatness test is done in the call area and the racket complies, this test will not be done again in the RCC.

Rackets which pass the tests will be kept in the call area after testing, in a paper bag or equivalent, and the umpire of the match will hand the racket to the players only at the table.

Rackets not presented for testing in the call area before the match

- will be tested immediately after the match (after match test).
- the umpire will be informed if there will be an after-match test and shall only check for other irregularities (e.g. damage to the racket coverings, covering extends to the limit permitted).

A detailed inspection of rackets will be done after the match (see racket testing in the call area).

The umpires may detect manufacturing imperfections or illegalities (such as pimple geometry) that are not included in the Laws or Regulations but are contrary to the specifications of the Technical Leaflet (T9); these must be referred to the referee, who will inform the ITTF URC, who may then inform the Equipment Committee if considered necessary.

Section 4: Voluntary and compulsory racket control

Before the tournament the referee will inform all delegations and officials, including umpires, of the details of the racket control procedure.

This information includes:

- voluntary and compulsory testing,
- procedures for testing,
- necessity to air new rubbers correctly,
- location of the racket preparation area,
- location of the call area and RCC, and
- sanctions to be imposed in case of a racket failure

If the player has covered the side of the blade and the sponge with trimming, the umpire may cautiously and carefully remove enough of the trimming necessary to perform the tests, while remembering that the umpire will have to attach it correctly afterwards. If the player or coach is present, the umpire may ask him/her to remove the trimming.

Voluntary racket testing

- Voluntary testing is available on the day before the tournament, as well as during the tournament, where testing must not interrupt the compulsory racket testing process. Players should liaise with the assigned deputy referee about a convenient time for a voluntary test. Generally, each player may bring only two rackets for one test each or have the same racket tested twice during a tournament, however the assigned referee can allow additional tests.
- The rackets submitted will be examined carefully.
- Voluntary tests will be recorded to check the number of voluntary tests by each player; only the name of the player will be recorded and not the result.
- No disciplinary action will be taken against a player whose racket fails a voluntary test.

Compulsory racket testing

Racket testing is compulsory during the tournament and shall usually be done before the match. Only rackets which are not presented in the call area to the umpires before the match, and within the time limit, will be subject to an after-match inspection. Players who choose not to present their racket before the match must be aware of the consequences.

Individual events

Players have to submit their rackets to the umpires in the call area at least 20 minutes before the scheduled match time.

Team events

All nominated players of the team match have to submit their rackets to the umpires in the call area at least 20 minutes before the scheduled team match time.

General

- When collecting rackets, umpires will cautiously take the rackets by the handle, add a note with the name of the player, and keep them in the call area once the testing before

the match has been completed. The rackets are then taken by the match umpires to the playing area, where the rackets are given back to players at the match table.

- If a racket is not accepted by the assigned referee, the player may use a replacement racket, which will be tested after the match. If the replacement racket fails the after-match test, a sanction as set out in Section 5 will be applied by the Referee.
- If it is necessary for a player to change his/her racket during play, the umpires must collect the replacement racket(s) used, which will then be subject to an after-match test.
- If a player brings the racket late to the call area before the match, the racket will be tested after the match. For **after-match tests**, the match umpires will collect the score sheets together with the racket control form and bags **before the match**. Players must leave all rackets used in the match, including the original one which may have been replaced, on the table when the match finishes, and the umpires must collect the rackets of players subject to an after match test immediately. The match umpires will cautiously take by the handle the rackets used in the match and place them in separate paper bags or equivalent, marked with the player's name, and take them to the RCC. Players may collect their rackets at the call area 10 minutes later.
- In an unplayed match, no rackets will be tested, unless the Referee decides otherwise.
- In case of failure the assigned referee will be informed immediately.

Section 5: Consequences of failures in compulsory racket control

Before the match

In case of a failure of a compulsory racket test before the match, the referee will decide that the racket cannot be used and must be replaced by another one, which also will be tested after the match. The following will be recorded as failures in the referee log:

- VOC
- Flatness
- Thickness

After the match

In case of a failure of a compulsory racket test after the match, the referee will decide that the player forfeits the match.

If this match is in a group round robin system, the player shall be deemed to have lost the match and he/she shall gain 0 points instead of 1 point for this loss.

If the after-match test concerns rackets of the decisive (3rd or 4th) individual match of a team match, the teams shall be asked to wait at the match table until the racket test is finished. If the racket passes the racket test, no further action is required and the match result stands. If the racket of the winning player fails, then the referee will decide that the player forfeits the match, the result will be reversed and the next scheduled match will then be played.

Repeated failures and penalties applying after each racket control failure

a. Failure regarding VOC

- Forfeit of the individual match for any first failure in an after-match test.
- Forfeit of the individual or team match where a player fails two times at any time.
- Disqualification from the tournament where a player fails three times at any time.

b. Any other failure (thickness, flatness)

- Forfeit of the individual match for any first failure in an after-match test.
- Forfeit of the individual match where a player fails two times at any time.
- Forfeit of the team match where a player fails three times.
- Disqualification from the tournament where a player fails four times.

Remark: VOC infraction is accumulated with other types of failures.

c. Failing to present the racket before a match

- The racket is tested after the match.

Section 6: General policy on accumulated failures

Following 4 accumulated failures on any aspect of racket testing covered above in a period of four years, the player may complete the event, but subsequently the Executive Committee will suspend the offending player for 12 months.

Notes:

1. If a player fails two tests during one racket control, this counts as 1 failure i.e. a player will have one failure if one racket fails both thickness and VOC test during the same testing procedure;
2. After each tournament, the player's association will be informed by ITTF of the failure and number of failures accumulated by a player;
3. Any player who fails a racket test during compulsory testing will be registered on the database on ITTF's website;
4. Following 4 accumulated failures on any aspect of racket testing in a period of 4 years, the player may complete the event, but subsequently the Executive Committee will suspend the offending player for 12 months
5. ITTF shall inform the player and the Association in writing of such suspension.
6. The suspended player may appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport within 21 days of the receiving of the letter of suspension; should such an appeal be submitted, the player's suspension would remain in force.
7. ITTF shall maintain a register of all racket control failures.
8. This register began on 1 September 2010.

Effective date: 1 September 2012

Umpires & Referees Committee.