

HOUSTON TENNIS UMPIRES ASSOCIATION

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ROVING OFFICIALS

1. Review the Friend at Court the night before the tournament to refresh your memory regarding the rules of tennis, rest breaks, medical time outs, etc.
2. Arrive at least 30 minutes before start time, neatly dressed in the approved USTA uniform, in order to measure the nets, remove any trash on the courts, tighten loose nets if possible, and insert singles sticks, if available.
3. Approved Uniform:
 - a. The official USTA shirt.
 - b. Predominantly white sneakers and white socks.
 - c. Khaki pants or shorts. Cargo pants are NOT acceptable and shorts should be of a professional length. Wear long white socks if you are wearing pants.
 - d. USTA jacket, vest, sweatshirt, if needed. Plain navy blue is also acceptable but no logos other than the current USTA logo
 - e. Khaki or tan visor or hat. Again, no logos other than the current USTA logo. You may wear the USTA Circuits hat at Circuits events. When roving, the USTA safari hat or straw hat is permitted but these should not be worn when doing chairs or lines.
 - f. Tan or black belt.
 - g. Please note that a referee MUST wear the USTA official's shirt unless the tournament has authorized the wearing by the referee of another shirt that is distinctive and readily identifies the referee.
4. Know the guidelines of the tournament:
 - a. Add or no-add scoring
 - b. Consolation and type (first match loser, first round loser, feed-in, etc.)
 - c. Will 10-point match tiebreak be used in lieu of the 3rd set. (If so, there is no 10-minute rest period between the 2nd and 3rd set and no new balls. Juniors will have a 3-minute rest period with coaching allowed.)
 - d. Ball changes and number of balls in play.
 - e. Coman tiebreak used for all matches except juniors.
5. Whenever possible, meet the players at the net to briefly go over the rules of the tournament. Always have a large coin in your pocket to flip for service choices.
6. Whenever possible, measure the warm-ups and changeover times, giving the appropriate “three minutes,” “two minutes,” “one minute,” and “time” announcements.
7. Call footfaults if you are in direct observance of the court and see them clearly.

8. Measure the nets throughout the day, preferably between matches. Net height can change throughout the day depending on the temperature and humidity.
9. Spend as much time as possible roving the courts and be at or near the net post in order to make a ruling. Overrules should only be made on “good” balls that are called “out,” and only if it is a clear error. If you are not certain, then the call stands. If players are playing a few balls that are out, then they are giving their opponent the “benefit of the doubt,” which is what they should be doing when making calls. They are being a good sport, so don’t interfere with “out” balls that are called “good.”
10. Do not spend time at the tournament desk, chatting with other officials, or talking on your cell phone. All officials should be on the court and visible to the players whenever possible. You have been trained and paid to be a roving official—not a site director.
11. Always be fair and unbiased when dealing with players. Do not socialize with parents, coaches, or players while in uniform to avoid the appearance of favoritism.
12. When it is necessary to take a break, if possible work out a schedule with the other official(s) so that only one official takes a break at a time.
13. Bring plenty of food and drinks in case they are not available at your site.
14. Smile! You are there to ensure that matches are played fairly for both players. You are not there to bully or scare the players. Whenever enforcing a rule, do so kindly with a smile.
15. Always notify the referee, deputy referee, or site director if you need to leave the site for any reason. Be sure to let them know when you leave at the end of your assignment.
16. After the tournament, immediately e-mail to the referee (or chief of officials) the days and hours you worked. Report to the referee any code of conduct penalties that were required, including the name of the player, opponent, age division, infraction.

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