



## **Guide for WSF Senior Assessors**

**April 2008**

## **GUIDE FOR WSF SENIOR ASSESSORS**

### **A. PART ONE – GENERAL**

#### **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this Guide is to provide WSF Senior Assessors with a standard format for the training and assessment of WSF Assessors. WSF appoints Senior Assessors to carry out this training and assessment.

The WSF CBTA Programme for the training and assessment of referees requires that WSF Assessors be fully familiar with the principles on which the Programme is based. The WSF Squash Assessor Manual (the Manual) is a comprehensive reference document providing Assessors with all the information they need to perform a competent assessment. However, in order to ensure that WSF Assessors have fully understood the Programme and the Manual, before any current WSF Assessor is confirmed in that capacity, or a candidate to become a new WSF Assessor is accredited, they must attend a seminar conducted by a Senior Assessor, during which the major elements of the Programme are discussed and the candidates given the opportunity to ask questions. This seminar must then be followed by a practical examination during which the candidate is formally assessed by a Senior Assessor while assessing a referee.

#### **2. The WSF Squash Assessor Manual**

A copy of the WSF Squash Assessor Manual must be given to each candidate at least two weeks before the seminar takes place.

The Senior Assessor must be fully familiar with all aspects of the WSF Squash Assessor Manual and the CBTA Programme before conducting a seminar. All relevant sections of the CBTA Programme are contained in the Manual as appendices to Appendix 1 – Guidelines for WSF Assessors.

#### **3. The Seminar**

The seminar provides the opportunity for the Senior Assessor to establish that the candidate has understood the principles of the Programme and the Manual before conducting an assessment.

Since the candidate must be observed and assessed conducting an assessment by a Senior Assessor, the seminar should take place immediately prior to the event at which the candidate will be observed. Obviously, this event must be of a sufficiently high calibre to present the candidate with the opportunity to assess a referee at the appropriate level (see “Programme for the Appointment of WSF International Referees”, Appendix 5.1; and “WSF Squash Assessors Manual”, page 13: “Description of match”).

The seminar should take place in an appropriate environment – preferably a quiet room, with all the audio-visual and other facilities that the Senior Assessor requires

for the seminar. The candidates must have chairs and tables, as well as sufficient paper and pens.

Senior Assessors should be aware of the need to include breaks in the seminar, where appropriate.

A Powerpoint presentation, "Assessment Training Presenter Slides" is available as an aid to the Senior Assessor.

## **B. PART TWO - COMPETENCIES**

On completion of training and assessment, candidates will be competent to:

### **1. Plan the Assessment Process**

This competency covers preparation prior to carrying out the assessment.

### **2. Assess the Competence of WSF Assessors**

This covers:

- Conducting the assessment
- Recording and Reviewing the assessment
- Following the *Guidelines for WSF Assessors*, including competencies and assessment standards

## **C. PART THREE – TRAINING**

### **1. The Seminar**

The seminar will follow the format of the Manual. Since the candidates will have studied the WSF Squash Assessor Manual before attending the seminar, there is no need to present the entire contents of the Manual at the seminar. However, the major elements of the Manual should be discussed, and candidates should be given ample opportunity to ask questions and clarify their knowledge. In addition, the seminar Senior Assessor should seek to establish that the candidates have fully understood the principles on which the CBTA Programme and the Manual are based, especially by having the candidates undertake the Exercises and discussing the appropriate answers within the group.

The Senior Assessor should confirm with candidates that they have studied the Manual and, if any have not, adjust the content of the Seminar accordingly.

The following are the major elements that the Senior Assessor should discuss:

(N.B. Extracts from the Assessor Manual are reproduced below in italics.)

## 1.1 General

### i. Knowledge of responsibilities

Before undertaking an assessment the Assessor should be fully aware of the following responsibilities:

**a. Confidentiality and privacy** - *information about assessments must be kept secure and confidential, and only made available to authorised personnel.*

N. B. There must be no discussion of assessments with third parties (unless authorized, e.g. Tournament Referee).

**b. Anti-discrimination** – see text from Assessor’s Manual: *“Candidates should not be discriminated against during the assessment process as a result of their physical abilities, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, language or any other personal bias of the Assessor.”*

**c. Conflict of interest** – *the Assessor should not conduct an assessment if any conflict of interest exists (for example, a family relationship with the candidate).*

**d. WSF Code of Conduct** – *The WSF Code of Conduct applies to both referees and Assessors.*

(A PowerPoint slide of the WSF Code of Conduct here.) (The WSF Code of Conduct is available on the WSF website as Appendix A to the “Tournament Referee Guidelines”.)

In particular, stress:

i. “General: #5: “... must conduct themselves in an ethical and professional manner”; and

#6: must “maintain complete impartiality”.

ii. Also Dress Code (especially item 4 “inappropriate attire”).

iii. “When refereeing at an event...” (most of the provisions).

## 1.2 Planning the Assessment Process

### i. Evidence in assessment

Under CBTA principles the Assessor should make an assessment of a Referee only on the basis of evidence (i.e. no “guesswork” or automatic assumptions that a Referee meets or does not meet the standards).

*The most crucial role of the Assessor is to look at the evidence provided by a candidate, and make a decision whether the candidate has achieved the required level of competence. There must be sufficient evidence for an Assessor to make an accurate judgement.*

Many matches do not meet the required standard (this tends to be particularly true in the qualifying or early rounds of a tournament). In such cases the Assessor must abide by the CBTA principles:

*Assessors will encounter matches that do not provide enough evidence to assess a candidate. In such cases, the Assessor should inform the candidate about what evidence is lacking and how the candidate might satisfy the requirements.*

Refer also to “Guidelines for Assessors”, p. 2: “...a guideline for a match that meets the International standard of difficulty might be one that lasts at least four games and in which the candidate had to make at least 25 decisions, of which a significant number were difficult rather than easy.

*In addition, in assessing the difficulty of a match, Assessors need to pay attention to the quality of the players, their world ranking, their behaviour on court, and the importance of the match”.*

## **ii. Informing the candidate**

There must be no assessments without prior notification as this undermines the entire purpose of the CBTA Programme. Such assessments will be considered invalid. The candidate’s signature at the end of the debriefing process is a guarantee of consent (see also last section of seminar).

*The candidate must:*

- a. be informed that an assessment is scheduled.*
- a. not be pressured to undertake the assessment if the candidate does not feel ready.*
- b. be adequately informed about the assessment process.*

## **1.3 Assessing the Competence of WSF Assessors**

### **i. Creating a supportive environment**

This is a key element of the Programme: the Assessor has a responsibility to help the candidate achieve the optimum performance.

*The assessment process should be designed to reduce the stress on the candidate as much as possible. Therefore, the Assessor should be positive and supportive in order to encourage a good performance, and:*

*Show consideration and regard for the candidate.*

*Communicate clearly and effectively with the candidate, in a friendly manner.*

The “supportive environment” should continue after the match during the debriefing process. The Assessor should:

*Respect the candidate’s right to have views that may differ from those of the Assessor.*

Discuss with the group the issue of the candidate's views, if they differ from those of the Assessor. Some questions to be asked (and answered):

- i. How do you react if the candidate (referee) expresses views about the match that differ from yours?
- ii. How much latitude do you give the candidate?
- iii. At what point do you draw the line and insist that your view is correct?
- iv. What do you do if the candidate is adamant?

*While candidates should be involved in as much of the assessment process as possible, there will be aspects that are not open to negotiation. The context and circumstances of the assessment will determine this. Assessors should make clear to the candidate which parts of the assessment process are open to input and modification, and which are not.*

Discuss with the group what kinds of elements would not be open to discussion.

At this point invite the group to complete Exercise 1 in the Manual (Appendix 2), and when they have done so, discuss the answers with the group. Aim: to develop a model answer, based on the group responses, plus the Senior Assessor's own input.

## **ii. Applying the criteria**

After the completion of the match, the Assessor examines the Assessment Form and tabulates the evidence according to the criteria listed on the page: "Rules Interpretation and Decision-Making", bearing in mind the Assessor Guidelines, in particular the "Key to Decisions". After completing this page, the Assessor is in a position to make a judgement.

*The Assessor needs to make an overall judgement about whether or not the candidate has achieved the required standard. The stages of the process of making an assessment judgement are:*

1. *Follow the Assessor Guidelines when completing the practical assessment form, then*
2. *Make the decision as to whether the necessary competence has been achieved.*

## **iii. Making a judgement**

*No decision can be made without a degree of informed, subjective judgement on the part of the Assessor based on evidence. When making the final judgement, the Assessor must document the reasons for the decision. This will form the basis for the feedback to the candidate.*

Stress the importance of a *detailed* summary of the evidence in the box: "Assessor's Comments". General statements such as "Reached IR standard" are neither informative nor helpful.

*If the Assessor is unable to make a final decision following an assessment (for example, if there is insufficient evidence on which to base a final judgement), the candidate will be required to undergo a further assessment.*

#### **iv. Conducting the debriefing**

Since this is an extremely important element of the assessment process, the Senior Assessor should spend some time ensuring that the fundamental principles (cf. “Creating a supportive environment”) are also understood in this context. In particular, the three Exercises and the discussion that should follow will enable the Senior Assessor to establish that the appropriate approach has been fully understood by the group.

#### **v. Giving feedback**

*In assessing performance, it is important that the candidate receive honest, fair and constructive comments from the Assessor.*

*The first step is to encourage the candidate to assess his or her own performance*

*Asking the candidate for self-assessment provides useful information and may help the Assessor gauge the mood of the candidate and decide how feedback should be presented. For example, when a candidate has done well, an opening question such as: ‘How do you think you performed?’ is a good way to start the feedback process. However, this may not work when the candidate has performed poorly, particularly where the candidate fails to recognise this, and should not be used in this case.*

At this point it might be fruitful to discuss this approach with the group.  
In what circumstances might this approach not be productive?  
In such circumstances how should the Assessor proceed?

#### **vi. Guidelines for providing feedback**

*The Assessor should:*

- *Choose an appropriate time and private place to give the feedback.*
- *Give honest, clear and constructive feedback.*
- *Focus on performance rather than on personal characteristics.*
- *Not overload the candidate with information.*
- *Use the “sandwich” technique. i.e:*
  - *Outline the candidate’s positive achievements.*
  - *Give constructive feedback on any ‘gaps’ or errors.*
  - *Finish with a supportive statement.*
- *Suggest ways of overcoming any gaps in competence.*
- *Be confident – if the decision of “Not Yet Competent” is based on a proper assessment process, there is no need to ‘apologise’ for the result.*
- *Offer suggestions for future goals / training opportunities.*
- *Encourage the candidate to ask questions and discuss the assessment decision*
- *Give the candidate time to read and sign the assessment sheet.*

At this point invite the group to complete Exercise 2 in the Manual (Appendix 3), and when they have done so, discuss the answers with the group. Aim: to develop a model answer, based on the group responses, plus the Senior Assessor's own input.

#### **vii. Delivering a “Not Yet Competent” message**

This can be an area with which Assessors feel uncomfortable. The purpose of this segment is to give Assessors the tools to be able to handle the task of delivering a negative assessment in an appropriate manner.

*It is sometimes difficult for an Assessor to tell candidates that they have not performed to the standard expected. This can be especially hard when the Assessor has established a good rapport with the candidate.*

*It is very important that the Assessor offer the candidate the chance for re-assessment at a later stage where available. Candidates should be encouraged to gain further experience through practice and mentoring before they are reassessed.*

*When giving feedback, Assessors need to:*

- *Be precise about the gaps in the candidate's competence*
- *Suggest strategies to the candidate for further learning or practice to fill the gaps*
- *Be as positive as the circumstances permit, without raising false expectations*
- *If possible, arrange opportunities for the candidate to receive further experience or mentoring before attempting to complete the assessment requirements.*

*Not surprisingly, many candidates who are not assessed as competent will feel disappointed or unfairly dealt with. Some candidates may wish to appeal against an assessment decision and this is their right.*

At this point invite the group to complete Exercise 3 in the Manual (Appendix 4), and when they have done so, discuss the answers with the group. Aim: to develop a model answer, based on the group responses, plus the Senior Assessor's own input.

Further discussion might be useful here: ask the group whether or not they still anticipate difficulties in communicating a negative assessment, and attempt to resolve those difficulties.

## **1.4 Recording and Reviewing the Assessment**

### **i. Recording the decision**

After the debriefing, the candidate must be given the Assessment Form to sign.

Discussion: What does the Assessor do if the candidate refuses to sign the Form?  
(Answer: Record that fact under “Final Comments (by Assessor)”.)

What does the Assessor write, if anything, in the box “Final Comments (by Assessor)”?

Answer: Perhaps a comment about the candidate’s attitude during the debriefing. Or a comment about the candidate defense of his decisions.

Invite the group to make other suggestions, based on their experience.

1. *Assessors should keep records to assist in clarifying any queries or appeals that may arise.*
2. *The candidate has the right to receive a copy of the assessment.*
3. *The original assessment sheet must be forwarded to the WSF Office within one week of the end of the event.*

### **ii. Reviewing the Assessment.**

A good Assessor will perform a self-evaluation after every assessment, analyzing the good and bad points of the exercise and formulating strategies for improvement.

## **1.5 Following the *Guidelines for WSF Assessors***

### **i. Knowledge of CBTA Principles and Standards**

It is essential that all WSF Assessors be fully conversant with the principles on which the CBTA Programme is based. Thus the Senior Assessor should present and discuss in a thorough manner the list of “competencies” and standards for International and World Referee. These can be found in Appendix 1 to the *Guidelines for WSF Assessors*, also included as Appendix 1 to the Assessor’s Manual.

A PowerPoint slide of the “competencies” and standards should be shown at this point, so that each category may be discussed with the group in detail.

Since this is fundamental to the Programme, the Senior Assessor should spend enough time on this element to ensure that the group fully understands it.

## **1.6 Duration of Seminar**

The length of the seminar will vary depending on the candidates and the extent to which they have studied the Manual. As a guide, 3 hours should be set aside to complete it.

## **D. PART FOUR – ASSESSMENT**

### **1. Seminar Exercises**

Three exercises are contained in the Manual. These are completed during the seminar and form the basis for discussion of the topics that they cover. The Senior Assessor should collect and review the Exercises when discussion on them is complete. Feedback should be given to individual candidates if the results indicate that the topics have not been fully understood.

### **2. Final Assessment**

Final assessment is carried out by the Senior Assessor while the candidate is assessing a referee on a match of appropriate International standard.

The Senior Assessor should follow the principles of assessment contained in the Manual when carrying out this assessment.

Candidates are entitled to copies of the completed assessment forms. Senior Assessors should keep copies of forms in case of queries or appeals and forward the original to the WSF Office within a week of completion of the tournament where the assessment was carried out.

#### **2.1 Requirements for a Successful Assessment - The Assessment Form for Assessors**

On the principle of “no surprises” candidates for WSF Assessor should be made aware that they will be assessed based on all of the following criteria, which correspond to elements of the competencies:

The Assessor:

Used the correct assessment tool and recorded evidence.

Made the assessment decision based on the evidence collected.

Delivered the assessment decision in a sensitive and constructive manner.

Provided constructive and knowledgeable feedback on the referee’s performance.

Displayed the ability to deliver a message on aspects of poor performance.

Used questioning techniques to get the referee to explain his or her decisions.

Gained feedback from the referee demonstrating that advice has been understood.

Actively listened to the referee.

Provide advice on improving performance.