

Guidelines for the Application of Rule 17 (Conduct on Court)

Rule 17 mandates that in the event of unacceptable behaviour on court the Referee “shall penalize the player.” However, the severity of the offence and the nature of the penalty are left to the discretion of the Referee. This has led over the years frequently to the imposition of different penalties (or none at all) for similar offences, depending on who is refereeing. On the one hand, a harsh (inappropriate) penalty might be assessed for a single or mild offence; while on the other hand, a serious offence is penalized lightly, or not at all. The players do not know in advance what standards will be applied, and the referees are left individually to set their own standards.

The development of these Guidelines is an attempt to bring some order to the existing chaos, and to offer both referees and players some guidance on the application of Rule 17. If referees follow these Guidelines fairly closely, then players will know in advance what the standards are in relation to Rule 17. This is, in effect, no different from the desirability of knowing what the standards are for the application of the rules concerning interference: a greater measure of consistency is the aim. The achievement of such consistency will greatly benefit the sport of squash.

Referees will apply the following Guidelines in the appropriate circumstances. While the Referee under Rule 17 retains discretion in deciding whether or not there has been an offence under that Rule, once the Referee has decided that an offence has occurred, the following actions must be taken:

Abuse of equipment (racket or ball or other equipment):

Minor offence (e.g. throwing the racket onto to floor after losing a game, hitting the ball hard after the rally is over): **Conduct Warning**

Major offence (e.g. deliberately breaking the racket; smashing the racket against the wall; hitting the ball or throwing the racket out of the court): **Conduct Stroke**

Audible or Visible Obscenity:

Minor offence (e.g. muttered expletive; blaspheming): **Conduct Warning**

Major offence (e.g. audible obscenity): **Conduct Stroke**

Time-wasting

Minor offence (e.g. a few seconds late back on court; taking excessive time to serve): **Conduct Warning**

Major offence (e.g. very late back on court; prolonged discussion with Referee): **Conduct Stroke**

Dissent:

Minor offence (e.g. questioning a decision): **Conduct Warning**

Major offence (e.g. prolonged or repeated questioning of or disagreement with decisions): **Conduct Stroke**

Abuse of Official:

Minor offence (e.g. unflattering comments about official or decisions): **Conduct Warning**

Major offence (e.g. pejorative comments about official or decisions): **Conduct Stroke**

Severe offence (e.g. hitting ball at official or into spectators; throwing racket at official or into spectators): **Conduct Game or Match** (depending on the severity of the offence and the danger caused)

Excessive physical contact:

Minor offence (e.g. running into the opponent): **Conduct warning**

Major offence (e.g. physical abuse of the opponent): **Conduct Stroke**

Severe offence (e.g. deliberately injuring the opponent; dangerous play that injures the opponent): **Conduct Game or Match** (depending on the severity of the offence and the extent of the injury caused)

Unsporting conduct:

Minor offence (e.g. making negative comments to the opponent): **Conduct Warning**

Major offence (e.g. repeated negative or pejorative comments to the opponent; any attempt at intimidation of the opponent): **Conduct Stroke**

Severe offence (e.g. extreme behaviour that brings the game into disrepute): **Conduct Game or Match** (depending on the severity of the offence)

Coaching:

First occurrence: **Conduct Warning**

Second occurrence: **Conduct Stroke and expulsion of offending person**

Repeated and excessive bad conduct:

When, in the Referee's opinion, the player is guilty of repeated acts of unacceptable conduct on court following the imposition of the penalties outlined above, the Referee may impose for the next occurrence of the offence either the same penalty for the second offence or a more severe penalty than the one already imposed. However, if a Conduct Warning has been given for both the first and the second offences, for the third offence of a similar nature a Conduct Stroke must be applied. (Example: If a player has received a Conduct Warning for Dissent, on the next occurrence of this offence, either a Conduct Warning or a Conduct Stroke may be imposed. On the third occurrence, however, a Conduct Stroke is mandatory.)