

LTA Coaching and Evaluation Guidelines

The coaching/evaluation process is intended to give officials who work at professional tennis an opportunity to work with a higher graded official over the course of a tournament with the overall aim of improving the quality and consistency of officiating that is provided to the players at events. The coaching/evaluation process is one of listening, testing, questioning, helping, improving and learning. **It is not a process run with the aim of catching people out – it is one of education and improvement.**

The following guidelines are intended to assist officials assigned a coach/evaluator in getting the most out of working with that person at professional events in the UK. It also serves as a framework for the coach/evaluator within which to work so as to ensure there is consistency in the coaching/evaluation process. It therefore sets out from both sides of the process the things that are expected from those involved.

Certified officials already work to guidelines issued by the ITF/ATP/WTA in connection with the undertaking of coaching and evaluations, but the following points are hoped to be of additional help:

- Coaching/evaluation assignments at professional events in the UK are made by Kelly Rask and Robert Balmforth, who act to oversee the LTA's evaluation programme at professional events.
- Officials of a higher grade will act as coaches/evaluators to officials of a lower grade.
- The Chief Umpire and Supervisor will be informed of the proposed coaching/evaluation schedule in advance of the event by email having confirmed which officials eligible to work in the chair are attending the event.
- The Chief Umpire and Supervisor will try their best to schedule match assignments so that the coach/evaluator will be off court to watch their official.
- The coaching/evaluation schedule will also confirm whether evaluations or coaching notes are to be undertaken at the end of the event.
- Not all chair umpires will be assigned a coach/evaluator at an event, although the intention is to ensure as many working officials as possible have the opportunity of benefiting from the process. A schedule of coaching/evaluations is maintained by Kelly Rask and Robert Balmforth with the aim of ensuring parity in the coaching/evaluation schedule as well as giving officials the opportunity of working with different coaches/evaluators during the year.
- At the **beginning of the week**, the coach/evaluator and the official should make contact and then speak regularly **during the event** to discuss the matches that have been worked or watched. The official will be informed by the coach/evaluator or Chief Umpire as to the identity of their coach/evaluator for the week.
- At the initial meeting, the coach/evaluator should find out from the official whether there is anything they want to work on during the current event.
- During the week, the coach/evaluator will watch as much as possible of the matches umpired by the official with the aim of giving them feedback and advice during the event.
- Any debriefs by the coach/evaluator should take place in private and should be conducted at an appropriate time i.e., not just before the official goes on court for a match.

- Working with a coach/evaluator is a two-way process for all those concerned. The coach/evaluator may often be very busy during the event umpiring matches and watching other officials. This may mean that they may not be able to watch every moment of every match.
- The official being coached/evaluated should make the most of this opportunity by watching matches and asking questions to their coach/evaluator about situations that they have seen on court.
- The official being coached/evaluated should not just watch matches officiated by their coach/evaluator, but they should go and watch matches where they think they can learn something even if someone else is officiating the match.
- At the end of the coaching/evaluation period, the coach/evaluator will undertake a final debrief of the official followed up by either a written evaluation or set of coaching notes forming a reminder of the matters discussed and worked on during the week.
- Coaching notes should be produced in the current word format and cover not only areas where improvements could be made, but also highlight things that went well.
- When completed, coaching notes should be emailed to Kelly Rask or Robert Balmforth who will check them for consistency. Following this, the coaching notes should be emailed in pdf format directly to the official concerned.
- **Evaluations should be emailed in draft to Kelly Rask or Robert Balmforth and Matthew Morrissey before the given deadline and they will ensure that the evaluations prepared are consistent as to final mark awarded with the guidelines regulated by the ITF and other governing bodies, particularly with the BIG format. Following approval of the evaluation, it should be uploaded onto the ITF Officiating Portal by the coach/evaluator as soon as possible.**
- All coaching notes or evaluations should be completed by the Wednesday after the completion of the tournament so that they can be forwarded to the official within two weeks.

All coaches/evaluators should read through the sections of the *Evaluation Zone* on the ITF Officiating Portal before undertaking their coaching/evaluation assignment. This section of the ITF Officiating Portal contains information on how to evaluate effectively, how to debrief properly and how to write up an evaluation correctly. It can be accessed from the ITF Officiating Portal homepage by clicking on *My Officiating* -> *Evaluations* -> *Evaluation Zone*.

We hope you find the coaching and evaluation process helpful in improving the quality of officiating both on and off court at professional tennis events in the UK as well as helping officials develop individually.