

Tournament Officials Guidelines

September 2025 V1



Table Tennis Officials' Guidelines for Dealing with Misbehaviour at Events

Following ITTF Rules

This document supports Tournament Officials with guidance for dealing with misbehaviour at competitions. Tournament Officials should act in accordance with the guidance outlined in this document.

The sanctioning scheme for controlling misbehaviour by player has been reviewed and modified to support tournament officials understand and act if or when required. The sanctioning scheme is designed to discourage players from misbehaviour but unfortunately in the heat of play, misbehaviour can sometimes happen. Misbehaviour can take many forms and it is impractical to lay down precise rules and setting and applying acceptable standards of conduct is more a matter of judgment and common sense than of factual decision.

Try to avoid over-reaction to possibly unintentional instances of unseemly behaviour, for this could lead to resentment and animosity that will undermine your authority as the umpire. When you act always try to do so in a way that does not make the situation worse, either by drawing undue attention to an incident that may not have been generally noticed or by appearing to victimise a player.

1 Understand the Relevant ITTF Rules

Familiarize yourself with these sections of the ITTF Handbook:

- 3.5.2 – Players' Conduct
- 3.5.3 – Misbehaviour
- 3.5.4 – Control of Matches

2 Types of Misbehaviour

Officials should recognize these forms of misconduct:

- Verbal abuse or offensive language
- Deliberate damage to equipment
- Delaying play without justification
- Unsportsmanlike conduct (e.g. shouting excessively, refusing to play)
- Coaching during rallies
- Throwing racket or hitting the table in frustration
- Disrespect toward officials or opponents

3 Step-by-Step Disciplinary Procedure

(a) First Minor Offence – Verbal Warning

- Action: Inform the player their behaviour is unacceptable.
- Tool: No yellow card required for verbal warnings.
- Note: Document the incident.

(b) Formal Warning – Yellow Card

- Action: Show yellow card for persistent or more serious misconduct.
- Trigger: Repeated delays, minor verbal abuse, racket toss, etc.
- Consequence: Next offence will lead to point penalty.

(c) Second Offence – Red Card + Penalty Point

- Action: Show red card (with prior yellow card) and award 1 point to the opponent.
- Process: Notify both players and the umpire must report the incident post-match.

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(d) Serious Misconduct – Direct Red Card

- Action: For very serious misbehaviour, show a red card without prior yellow, and award a point to the opponent.
- Examples: Physical aggression, repeated foul language, intentional damage.

(e) Severe Offence – Expulsion (Disqualification)

- Authority: The referee (not the umpire) decides disqualification.
- Action: Remove player/team from match or event.
- Examples: Assault, extreme abuse, repeated offences.

4. Documentation and Reporting

- Record all warnings, penalties, and expulsions.
- Include player name, time, nature of the offence, and action taken.
- Submit a report to the TTW Competitions Committee

5 Communication and Professionalism

- Maintain a calm and impartial demeanour.
- Use clear gestures and verbal explanations.
- Avoid escalating tensions—focus on de-escalation.
- Support younger or less-experienced players with understanding.

6 Roles and Responsibilities

- Umpire: Handles on-table misconduct (warnings, point penalties).
- Referee: Oversees overall discipline; handles disqualifications and appeals.

7 Preventative Measures

- Brief players before matches on expectations.
- Encourage good sportsmanship and respectful behaviour.
- Maintain firm but fair control from the outset.