

COCTALES

BWF

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Technical Officials – SATHIO Group Australian Badminton Open 2026.



REFEREE UPDATE

By Gretha Prinsloo, Chair – BWF Referee Assessment Panel

See
Page 3

UMPIRE UPDATE

By Gilles Cavert, Chair – BWF Umpire Assessment Panel



See
Page 5

BWF Umpire – Su Xiaofeng at the TOYOTA Thailand Open 2026.

Technical Officials and BWF Staff at the TotalEnergies BWF Thomas & Uber Cup Finals 2026.



HEAD OF TECHNICAL OFFICIALS UPDATE

By Lynne Nixey, Head of Technical Officials

One year ago, I wrote my first article for COC Tales as the newly appointed Head of Technical Officials for the BWF. One year in and I have already seen a lot of changes in officiating and see many challenges of change ahead of us. I am always impressed by the level of adaptability of all of us as we move forward and I look forward to seeing what the next year has to offer with a new scoring system, new calendar and tournament structures, the Time Clock and other technological advances to come.

The system of technical officials is made up of a massive amount of moving parts, all of which must work together to achieve our ultimate goal of producing a tournament that leads to a finals day where we have all performed at our best. If any of those moving parts cease moving – or move in a different direction – then we are left scrambling to find out why, how and where the issues occurred. One of the largest moving parts is getting us all to the tournament and being there on time and we should acknowledge Selena Lim and the work that she puts in ensuring our appointments are made and that we know when we are supposed to be where we should be.

That is why, it is really important that if any of us want to do something slightly different then Selena is kept informed and first contact for anything like this should always be with Selena. So – if you want to stay a few extra days, bring your loved ones, ask for a pass to the tournament for your companions or anything else, please contact Selena in the first instance. I know that we all have friends at tournaments (especially if we have been there many times before) and have contacts with tournament organisers or tournament managers, but please send your request to Selena so that there are no surprises for anyone along the way.

Lastly, I would like to congratulate and thank Gilles Cavert (FRA) who has passed the position of Chair of the BWF Umpire Assessment Panel to Kelly Hoare (AUS). Gilles took over as Chair of the BWF Technical Official Commission 10 years ago and when that commission was disestablished with a structure change, he continued on as Chair of the Umpire Assessment Panel. Gilles is always willing to share his knowledge with us all and we are glad that he will continue sharing that knowledge as a member of the Assessment Panel. Thank you Gilles for everything that you have done for Umpires and we welcome Kelly into the role.



Technical Officials at POLYTRON Indonesia Masters 2026.

REFEREE UPDATE

From Page 1

FROM THE CHAIR BY
**GRETHA
PRINSLOO**

BWF Referee – Artur Zaluzhnoi (EST) at the TOYOTA Thailand Open 2026.

Changing Times

It is that time again when we have a restructure of the tournament calendar with Member Associations having put forward their preference for tournament dates, particularly with the 2028 Olympic qualifying period in mind.

In 2027 we are looking at significant on court changes such as the new scoring system starting at the Malaysian Open. We will also see the Super 1000 tournament being held over a period of 11 days using the format of group stage and knock-out rounds. All matches will be broadcast globally. The Time Clock System will come into effect in late 2026 which will have a considerable impact on the way play is handled on court.

Preparation is underway to assist CC Referees to be ready for the BWF Accreditation Workshop being conducted early in 2027. The “Bridging the Gap” online workshops will be held to give candidates every opportunity to understand the level of knowledge expected of them when they attend the formal workshop. Candidates must come to the workshop well prepared, and we seek your assistance to reach out and offer mentorship to your CC colleagues. The BWF Referee Assessment Panel does as much as possible to provide training and assistance, but nothing beats face to face mentoring, especially from a colleague they know well.

Referee Assignments

Changing BWF assignments after confirming attendance poses us with a few challenges. We understand that life throws

curve balls and sometimes there is no option but to withdraw from appointments with little notice.

It has been exceedingly difficult to find replacements, and I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to those of you who have gone the extra mile to ensure that our BWF tournaments are run successfully. As an example, I had to approach 9 referees and unfortunately all had to decline.

To alleviate our problems please check your visa and work requirements before accepting the assignments. Whilst we appreciate your commitment to your Member Association or your Continental Confederation, it would help if you could prioritise BWF tournaments when accepting assignments for the next year.

■ Continued on next page



Referee Team at the TotalEnergies BWF Thomas & Uber Cup Finals 2026.

■ From page 3

Communications and Logistics

We are in the fortunate position of having our colleague, Lynne Nixey, as Head of Technical Officials, representing us in the BWF Office. Communication channels for all technical officials regarding any issues is Lynne, and me in my role as Chair of the Referee Assessment Panel.

However, when it comes to logistics regarding tournaments (e.g. flights, accommodation, inclusion of family members at hotels and extra accreditation required), all these matters must be arranged by Selena Lim, BWF Assistant Tournament Manager. Under no circumstances are referees to contact other BWF Staff, the Tournament Manager, or the host directly to seek assistance with the above.

On Court Incidents

A recent on-court incident with a player throwing his racket that almost hit the service judge required the referee to go to court. Although this was not a BWF appointed Referee, it highlighted the need for strong communication between referees and umpires. When briefing your umpire team, advise them that if there is an incident they have not managed before and

they need help, call the referee. It is important the umpires understand there is no shame in having to call the referee as they may be anxious about showing they do not know what to do.

Ensure umpires understand that the correct handling of an incident is paramount and this enables the game to move on without attracting attention because the problem has been quickly solved.

Working with our Umpires

Whilst we have improved our working relationship with our fellow technical officials, particularly the umpire team, there is still work to do.

Standing in front of your umpires telling them to improve their control of time wasting on court is all very well but you need to give examples of where you are seeing a problem. Give definitive direction of what you want.

Effective communication with your umpire team will ensure that there is no confusion when it comes to umpire selection for finals. Be honest and clear with how they are performing all week and if they are not performing up to standard to secure a finals position, then share this with them in a

positive manner so they can look to improve for the future. If you have sufficient umpires who have performed at the required level, spread the appointment of finals duties as wide as possible

For those umpires who still need more experience, have a quiet word of encouragement with them so they can leave the tournament with pride in the job they have completed.

Remember, our umpires are at the frontline and television and social media is relentless. We need to keep them safe and give them an environment that enables them to perform at their highest level.

We are a team.



BWF Referee – Eric Lissillour (FRA) at the YONEX US Open 2026.

UMPIRE UPDATE

By Gilles Cavert,
Chair – BWF Umpire Assessment Panel

Mandatory Umpiring (R)evolution

With the recent addition of new regulations such as ITTO 5.10.3, as well as the future implementation of the Time Clock system, umpiring is clearly at a crossroads, leading to new perspectives on the importance of court management.

It is crucial for the umpire (and the umpire assessor) to change his/her mindset, and essential to develop and implement solid soft skills to ensure continuous play, understanding that some situations can lead to longer than 25 seconds in between rallies without any consequence for the players (e.g. card).

For an efficient management of the Time Clock, and because the receiver has to play to the pace of the server (ITTO 5.10.3), the umpire must continuously monitor and control the receiver and the server and monitor the time left on the clock in between each rally.



BWF Umpire Manfred Shum (HKG)
at the KFF Singapore Open 2026.

■ Continued on next page



Umpire Assessment Panel meeting, Tokyo, Japan. L to R, Gretha Prinsloo (Chair, Referee Assessment Panel), Sven Serre, Gilles Cavert, David Turner, Kelly Hoare, Michael Fyrie-Dahl, Lynne Nixey (Head of Technical Officials), Chris Trenholme (Events Director - Technical Operations).

■ From page 5

It is essential to pay attention and understand the body language of the players, and to consider the following:

- ◀ Is the server challenging the receiver (for example rushing to his/her position), or just adjusting?
- ◀ Is the server challenging the umpire, or just adjusting before taking his/her position?

In this context, strong communication skills are required to manage this new, dual mandate in between rallies.

The umpire should inform, advise, or warn the players depending on the situation:

- ◀ To answer the players requests (while careful not to frustrate the players);
- ◀ When calling the players to the chair, the umpire should explain in a concise manner what is going on, and in case of misbehaviour, what will be the consequences if they continue to act this way; and

- ◀ When “pushing” the players back on court.

Repeating “Play” should be avoided.

Use a sentence and ensure your communication is clear and well understood by the players. If you have a microphone, it will also allow stakeholders (e.g. coaches, referees, spectators, tv commentators and tv viewers) to better understand the situation.

Hence, more than ever, “alertness” and “commitment” play a key role in umpire performance. At the same time, the umpire should have a high feeling for the game, being able to anticipate and avoid future tricky situations, showing empathy to the players, and using his common sense.

These are all key factors of umpiring high performance. And remember, at the end, the game is for the players!



Gilles Cavert (FRA) recognised for his service as Chair of the BWF Umpire Assessment Panel.

Side of the Wheelchair.

PARA BADMINTON UPDATE

By Carmen Martínez, BWF Referee

Let's keep improving

Time flies, and we have already reached the halfway point of the 2026 competition season. It is an important year, as we are currently going through the learning process associated with the integration of the technical delegate role into the referee role. We hope this transition has been a positive experience for everyone involved.

In this edition, we would like to revisit a number of general aspects which we sometimes take for granted, but which are worth reminding ourselves of from time to time. We will also share some of the new initiatives that we have had the pleasure of experiencing over the past few weeks.

2026 World Abilitysport Youth Games

Last June, in the Turkish city of Mersin, we experienced our first international Para badminton **Youth Games** event, held under the umbrella of the World Abilitysport, the international federation for people with physical disabilities, and a member of the International Paralympic Movement.

This first edition proved to be highly successful, and we hope to establish it as a regular event in future editions, with even greater participation from U21 athletes.

The competition provides the perfect environment for young players and emerging talents to make their first international appearance in Para

badminton. Beyond the competition itself, the atmosphere allows athletes to grow alongside other young people who share the same aspirations, while building friendships and connections from the very beginning of their competitive careers.

Without a doubt, it was a fantastic experience, offering us the opportunity to apply the regulations with greater flexibility to provide the best possible competitive experience for the athletes. Minor adjustments to the event programme and competition formats enabled us to better meet the needs of the participants. We are already looking forward to the second edition in 2028!

Specific situations for umpires

Many of these situations arise regularly in para badminton competitions and have been discussed in previous editions. However, as some of them are not specifically covered in either the PBGCR or the PBITTO, we believe it is important to continue developing a consistent framework that promotes standardised practice across all events.

As we all know, Section 4.1.7. *Additional equipment for Para badminton* states:

A player's feet must be fixed to the footrest of the wheelchair.

It is important to remember that the term **fixed** refers to a method of securing the feet that prevents a player from gaining an advantage by using foot movement to generate additional force. Simply placing the foot beneath a velcro strap is therefore not sufficient; the foot must be properly secured.

Similarly, article 25.3.7 of the PBGCR states:

*Additional equipment for Para badminton, such as wheelchairs, prostheses and crutches, **may carry identification** of the manufacturer as generally used on products sold.*

This provision also gives rise to frequent questions during competitions. How many logos are acceptable? What size is permitted? Where may they be positioned? These are questions for which we do not yet have definitive answers. They will be discussed internally within the BWF Para badminton Commission, and we hope that clear guidance will be available in the near future.

■ Continued on next page

■ From page 7

With regard to drying prosthesis, two distinct situations should be considered:

- ◀ **During the intervals**, players should be encouraged to begin drying their prosthesis as quickly as possible from the very beginning. Otherwise, the process may take too long when it is time to resume play.
- ◀ **During play**, the umpire is authorised to suspend play (Law 16.3.1 – *Suspension of play*) for as long as is considered necessary. However, this should only apply when a prosthesis has come loose unexpectedly. In all other situations, the player should be asked to wait until next interval in order to prevent any potential gamesmanship, and to ensure fairness towards the opponent.

Practical tips for referees

Where **space at the meeting point** is limited, introducing a 10-minute offset between the start times of Standing and Wheelchair matches can significantly improve the flow of athletes and technical officials, while reducing unnecessary stress for everyone involved. In such cases, we should consider using this “tool”.

It is also good practice to observe the flow of movement within the meeting point, and ensure that wheelchair players are always **given priority in terms of space**. For example, if wheelchair players enter the meeting point from the left-hand side, it is advisable to keep them on that side, rather than asking them to cross through the area. Court number signs do not have to be arranged in numerical order on the floor. Let's keep the process as simple and practical as possible.

Colour of court lines

As there is no single standard playing surface for WH courts, we may encounter wooden floors, hard sports flooring or rigid synthetic surfaces, it is worth including this point in the organisers' checklist. Where white or yellow lines do not provide

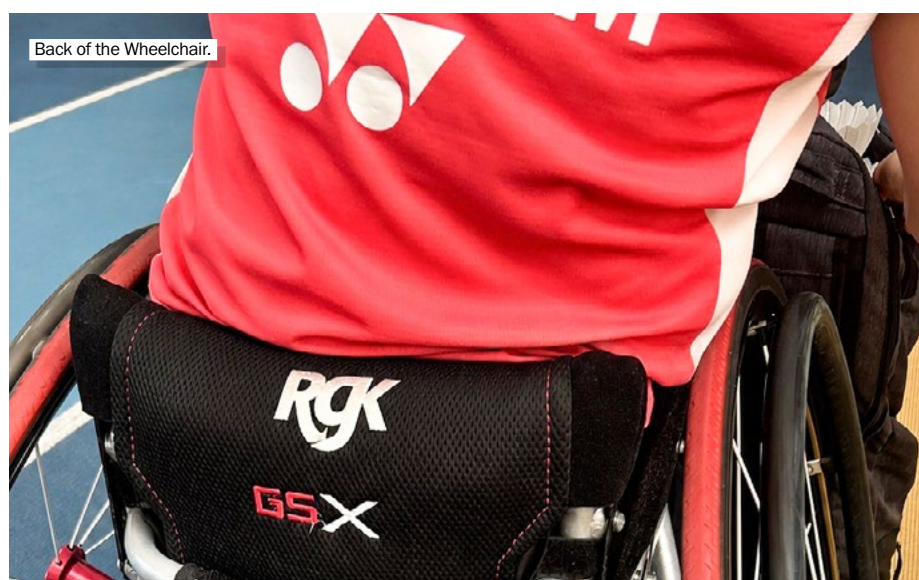
sufficient contrast against the floor, alternative colours may be required to ensure good visibility. Players should always feel comfortable and confident within the playing environment.

2027 Calendar and TD Training

Finally, for those who will not have the opportunity to complete their TD training

this year the 2027 competition calendar is now available on the BWF website.

It is a well-balanced calendar, with events scheduled throughout almost every month of the year, offering plenty of competitive opportunities for our athletes, as well as valuable learning experiences for our technical officials. Let's keep improving!



LINE JUDGE UPDATE

By Marisa Baird,
Badminton Scotland Line Judge
Coordinator/BEC Line Judge
Representative

Memories and reports from the BWF Thomas & Uber Cup Finals 2026, held in Horsens, DEN 24 April – 03 May 2026.

I want to thank Peter Chiu (SCO), Jyrki Kalevi Krzywacki (FIN), Irma Andrea Ruiz Coral (PER), Frederique Marie Monique Vossier (FRA) and Ma MinJing (NZL) for their contribution to this edition. I hope you will enjoy reading about their experiences at this tournament.

Peter Chiu (SCO)

This is my second time participating in the BWF Thomas & Uber Cup Finals, and the biggest difference from the last time is the atmosphere of the venue! Due to the BWF Thomas & Uber Cup Finals 2021, held in Aarhus, DEN, had only recently lifted their COVID-19 lockdowns, so there were still many restrictions in place, and many other countries were still under lockdown, resulting in fewer technical officials being able to attend. Eight out of the 10 days of competition lasted until 1:00am, so I was very worried that this time it would be like last time.

Fortunately, this time only two out of the 10 days of competition lasted until the early hours of the morning. There were a total of 36 line judges (10 of which were BWF Line Judges), and we were split into six teams on three courts, giving us more time to rest during shifts. Thanks to the Danish Badminton Association for the arrangements; the hotel was only a 10-minute walk from the venue, so we had ample time to go back and rest or stroll around the city center after each session.

Spring in Denmark is sunny and plentiful, but the temperature difference between day and night is significant—it can be in the 20s Celsius in the morning and drop to zero at night. So, I always brought a coat to the venue each day to wear for the last match completed and walk back to the hotel. The Horsens arena isn't very large, so spectators and players had close contact.

The enthusiasm of the audience and the various tools each team used to cheer themselves on created a noisy atmosphere that made me need to wear earplugs for the first time while playing a match. I believe

that the vast majority of technical officials have been brainwashed into thinking about these chanting methods, and even when they return to their hotels at night, they can still hear the chanting "Er Ah, Er Er Er Er Ah!"

The atmosphere of a team competition is quite different from a regular badminton match. Normally, after a match, players would do cool-down exercises and leave the venue to get more rest and better prepare for the next match. But in this competition after their individual matches, team players would stay to cheer on their teammates. Sometimes, you'd even see players playing events they weren't good at. For example, it was my first time seeing Indian women's singles player PV Sindhu play women's doubles, and I saw Danish mixed doubles player Alexander Boje play women's doubles. Having hosted two cup finals in just ten days felt like time flew by. I hope there'll be another chance to officiate in the BWF Thomas and Uber Cup Finals in 2028.



BWF Line Judge Peter Chiu (SCO) at the
BWF Thomas & Uber Cup Finals 2026.

■ Continued on next page

■ From page 9

Jyrki Krzywacki (FIN)**Easy (but not quick) travel from Finland**

I was happy and honoured to be appointed as a Line Judge in the BWF Thomas & Uber Cup Finals 2026 in Horsens, DEN. Unlike many of my international colleagues, I had a couple of easy options to travel, as there are also nonstop flights from Helsinki to Billund, and the flight takes less time than the longest matches in Horsens. I still chose the other option, where after flying to Copenhagen it took me five nights, about ten museums and several other attractions before I managed to board the train towards Horsens. In other words, I had a few relaxing leisure days with my wife in the Danish capital before the tournament.

The BWF Thomas and Uber Cup Finals, taking 10 tournament days, is one of the longest tournaments in the calendar. Combined with the pre-holiday, I stayed out of the office and everyday life for two and a half weeks. I also very much enjoyed just being a line judge in the event, because back home I usually end up managing line judges, and get to do way fewer matches than I'd like to do.

Nature and countryside views

Horsens, where I had never visited before, turned out to be a city of reasonable size, with a beautiful centre and surrounded by nature, in the end of a fjord (a narrow bay in the sea). All around the centre and all the way to the venue, shuttles painted in the street were guiding the way to the arena. On the other side of the centre, the harbour area and shores beyond that were worth walking to and admiring. The Danish spring time was just speeding up during our stay, which also meant that the sea water still felt freezing.

The accommodation for line judges was arranged in a hostel, and right behind the place there was a natural area with coastline forests and especially a lot of birds, which you could hear loud and clear if you opened the window in your room. Some nice pathways back and forth in the forest invited to take a walk in the nature. The location of the hostel was quite optimal, offering a 10-minute walk to the tournament venue. Also during that walk



Entrance to BWF Thomas & Uber Cup Finals 2026 venue in Horsens, DEN.

the scenery was relaxing, mostly countryside and nature, with an occasional rabbit or deer to be spotted. The short distance also made it possible to return to the hostel for a rest between match sessions, if the session break turned out to be a long one.

Hygge lounge and duties

Our home at the arena was a lounge in the backstage area, right next to our line-up point for the matches. It was furnished with just enough seats and table space for everyone, including three (too) comfortable couches in Danish "hygge" style. The volunteers from catering made sure that we had coffee, fruit and cake all day. The sign at the entrance called it umpire and line judge lounge, but we didn't often see umpires spending their time there. Anyway, they knew where to find us before and after the matches.

In the line judge group we had 24 Danish and 14 international line judges (including 10 BWF Line Judges). With almost all of the locals also staying the whole time, the roster was solid and good to manage. Our two line judge managers, Ole and Allan, did a good job in giving us the frames for our work. The allocation of duties was equal and fair. After each match you already knew which court to watch for your next match. Every line judge had both long and very short breaks between sessions, and also evenings

finishing early and close to midnight were equally allocated. During and after the longest sessions, we couldn't help speculating how the schedule would have turned out with the new 3x15 scoring system, which was agreed on during the tournament.

Memorable matches

For a line judge who was available from day one until the finals, the duties covered about 50 matches. All of them were of course unique, with different characteristics rising up. For me personally, the most appealing were the women's singles in the semifinal (Wang vs. Yamaguchi) and final stage (Wang vs. An). With no tactical shuttle changes, unauthorized towelling's or unnecessary mopping requests, they respected their opponent and the spirit of the game. It was very rewarding to witness that from a line judge seat.

My own short history with international team tournaments continued unbreakable: after one Sudirman Cup and these Thomas and Uber Cups, I have every time been doing the match where the final tie has been decided. And those are very special moments in an individual sport like badminton, when a whole team wins the trophy and gets to celebrate. I wish I can still have new opportunities to be around when that happens.

■ Continued on next page

■ From page 10

Irma Coral (PER)

First of all, I would like to express my deepest gratitude for being selected by the BWF to participate in the BWF Thomas & Uber Cup Finals. As this was my first time officiating at this specific major team event, it was an absolute honour and a privilege to represent the Pan American area and especially my country, Peru.

Regarding my on-court experience, I had the privilege of officiating in three of the tournament finals. Despite the high tension and the immense pressure that comes with matches of this magnitude, I am pleased to report that my performance was solid, and there were no mistakes or overturned calls on my part. The intensity of the matches was exceptional, and maintaining maximum concentration was key to delivering a successful performance throughout the event.

The organisation and hospitality were outstanding, and our coordinators, Ole and Alan, did an incredible job being highly responsible and supportive at all times. The strategy of assigning leaders for each team proved to be very effective, as it allowed us to work smoothly. Furthermore, thanks to the excellent management of the coordinators, our schedules were organised in a way that allowed us to get sufficient rest, which was crucial for ensuring we were mentally and physically prepared for every single match.

Having previously officiated at major events such as the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, Paris 2024 Olympic Games, the Buenos Aires 2018 Youth Olympic Games and the recent Pan American and Parapan American Games, I deeply appreciated the unique atmosphere of this tournament. It was a wonderful opportunity to reunite with long-time colleagues and witness the continuity of experienced officials, alongside the successful integration of new faces who continue to make badminton grow worldwide. Seeing the integration of line judges, umpires, referees and co-ordinators working together for a televised, world-class event was highly rewarding.

I am extremely proud to have represented Peru and the Pan American region in this tournament, and I look forward to the opportunity of officiating at an event of this magnitude again in the near future.

Frederique Vossier (FRA)

I was very happy to be appointed for the BWF Thomas & Uber Cup Finals 2026, because I had never taken part of in this tournament before.

The tournament took place in Horsens, in Denmark, a small city surrounded by the fjords and nature. The hotel was near a nature reserve, and at breakfast i could see a roe deer and a rabbit by the window. It was lovely to see these animals!

The arena, was 10 minutes by walking from the hotel. The fresh morning air was lovely for starting the day, and it was also pleasant in the evening after a long day of matches (52 matches all over the week).

The more the tournaments advanced, the more the matches are tight... Each player is encouraged by their team and there is lots of noise in the arena... The days were filled with the sounds of horns, tambourines, songs, cries and applause... Every player wanted to win the match, both for themselves and for their team... I like tournaments with team spirit... It is wonderful! On the last day, it was the day of the finals, and the atmosphere was very intense... After the final matches, we watched the medal ceremony: players, coaches and staff had received a medal, a scarf, a frame and a duck of Denmark. The flags were raised in the air and the country's anthem sounded in the arena. It was very nice to watch it all.

One day, we had one session off, and I visited the town centre of Horsens, visited the famous prison museum in the city, walked near the fjord and explored the natural reserve.

In conclusion, it was a very nice tournament, the atmosphere in the arena was incredible and it took place in a nice city.



Photo by Preben Dan: The BWF appointed line judges with a couple of others, from the left: Jyrki Krzywacki (FIN), Dietmar Barten (GER), Frédérique Vossier (FRA), Ma MingJing (Amanda) (NZL), Irma Corla (PER), Virge (EST, not BWF app.), Zhu Chunhong (CHN), Ahmed Shady (EGY), Peter Chiu (SCO), Maja (SUI, not BWF app.) and Claudio Di Mauro (ITA).

■ Continued on next page

■ From page 11

Ma MingJing (Amanda) (NZL)

"In" or "Out": A New Zealand Line Judge's Journey to the BWF Thomas & Uber Cup Finals in Horsens, DEN

For most badminton enthusiasts, the BWF Thomas & Uber Cup Finals is a global spectator feast. But for me, travelling from New Zealand to Horsens, Denmark, it was the ultimate test of my officiating career. When the invitation from the BWF arrived, confirming my selection as a Line Judge for this prestigious team championship, my heart skipped a beat.

This wasn't just an 18,000-kilometre trek across hemispheres; it was a journey to a place where decisions are measured in milliseconds and millimetres. Leaving the crisp autumn air of Auckland behind, the journey to Denmark is a test of endurance that every international technical official knows all too well. After a long-haul flight via Singapore, I finally touched down at Billund Airport. Then I got picked up and took the van to Horsens. I was attracted by the mild European spring sunshine; my mind forced itself to switch from the relaxed "Kiwi pace" to the ultra-sharp focus required for world-class badminton.

One of the greatest rewards of this journey was the camaraderie in the Technical Officials' Lounge. I found myself surrounded

by colleagues from Asia, Europe, and the Americas. Between sessions, we drank coffee, spoke in a range of English accents, and dissected tricky situations or positional nuances from the previous matches.

Seeing the mutual respect among officials was an incredibly rewarding experience. From my Chinese background, I built deep relationships with Peter Chiu (SCO) Zhu Chunhong (CHN) and Lily Lin (DEN). We went on a sightseeing trip around the Arena and tried the city's famous hot dogs.

While the days on court were gruelling, Horsens provided the perfect, peaceful antidote to the high-stress environment of the stadium. I was surprised by the atmosphere of badminton in Horsens, no matter where I went, I can see the element of badminton. The warehouse with the mini exhibition of rackets, shuttles, and the history of badminton in Denmark. The wall graffiti and the outside badminton trail net. The sign of the Thomas and Uber Cup Finals is everywhere to acknowledge where it was held and when.

The Arena, where the tournament was held, is big and beautiful. It is next to a football court, and the way from the hotel to the Arena is full of nature. Every day I felt the breeze and sunshine, smelled the natural

fertiliser and watch bird flew, it woke me up in the morning and released me from the busy schedule.

The city of Horsens is beautiful but small; people are nice and welcoming. While walking on the street, it always brought me surprise with some unexpected views and attractions. I saw the traditional houses of Denmark at the seaside, a church in the city centre and a water tower uphill just around the corner. All these beautiful sights are becoming my memories and will remind me of this journey when people talk about Denmark in the future.

As the final points were won, the trophies lifted, and the closing ceremonies drew to a close, it was time to pack away line judge duty.

This journey halfway around the world taught me so much about resilience, focus, and the beautiful global community of badminton. Boarding my flight back to New Zealand, carrying tournament badges and unforgettable memories, I knew I was returning as a better official.

The margins on the court are razor-thin, but the passion that gets you there spans oceans. Until the next tournament!



Technical Officials – TotalEnergies BWF Thomas & Uber Cup Finals 2026.



LINE CALLS AND CONTROVERSIES

By Torsten Berg (DEN)

Line calling is probably the issue which has given rise to most discussions and conflicts on and behind badminton courts worldwide during the 150+ years history of the game. Lately, modern technology was introduced and has more or less solved the problem at the top level, but as the vast majority of badminton is played without the Instant Review System (IRS) - or even without technical officials involved - the controversial issue has not gone completely away. Here we shall review the background and development throughout the history of badminton and look into the future.

When playing without technical officials it was always in the ethics of badminton that a player shall call the shots on his own side of the net and accept the opponent's calls on whatever happens on the other side of the net. When I started badminton in 1959, I was taught that a shuttle falling so close to the line that I could not clearly see the floor paint between the line and the shuttle

was a good shot from the opponent and should be called in. This is also what I hear my grandchildren learn nowadays. Normally that ethical approach works well, and the game is decided on the skills of the players. However, sometimes it does not. You see your smash landing on the line, but the opponent calls it out. Once. Perhaps twice. Or more. Could it be human error? (we shall come back to the limits of eyesight). It could also be biased. It could even be wilful cheating.

What can one do? Sometimes in lower-level tournaments, it may be possible to request an umpire. Most often there is not much else to do than to accept and play on. The experience is that hardly anything but trouble comes out of starting a discussion.

Umpires were a part of the game from the early days. There is a lovely photo from the All England 1899 with umpires - or were they mere scorers? - standing on simple chairs between the courts. The name "umpire's chairs" remain, but at least

nowadays the umpires sit in their chairs. The principle was always that *an official's decision shall be final on all points of fact for which that official is responsible* (current Law 17.5). So, if there is no line judge (formerly known as linesmen) appointed, the umpire shall have the onerous task to be in charge also of line calls, which is difficult from the position in the chair at courtside. However, the umpire is considered to be neutral, so any erroneous line calls should presumably be randomly distributed among the opponents.

With line judges the situation becomes much better. Line judges - to a maximum number of 10, but often three or four taking care of the back boundary lines and the sidelines - was for a long time considered the ideal solution. However, with prize money coming in and quite rapidly increasing from the 1980s, the competition on court became even more fierce, and sometimes sportsmanship and fair play was forgotten. 'Patriotic' calls by line judges - nearly always local - became an issue.

■ Continued on next page

■ From page 13

With Law 17 in place as above, there was in those days not much else to do for a referee than to observe the calls, standing behind the line judge, and if convinced that something was wrong, to replace the line judge, and quite often with another one showing the same attitude. As a consequence, in 2002 BWF appointed a small Working Group of Charoen Wattanasin (THA) and me to look into the issue and come up with a proposal. Our solution emerged into Law 17.5.1: *If, in the opinion of the umpire, it is beyond reasonable doubt that a line judge has clearly made a wrong call, the umpire shall overrule the decision of the line judge.* A good step forward, as the umpires always were considered neutral and often appointed or accepted by the International Federation. The introduction in 2011 of a BWF workforce of experienced international line judges was yet another major step forward for the fairness of line calls.

Technology provided the next important step forward with the introduction of IRS in use for the first time in the SuperSeries Finals 2013 in Kuala Lumpur. The new Law 17.5.2 treats this and reads: *If an Instant Review System is in operation, the system*

in operation shall decide on any line call challenge unless an inconsistent or obviously incorrect decision is given by the system in which case the Referee shall instruct the Umpire how to proceed.

High speed IRS cameras, taking 200+ frames per second can within a short time give an accurate line call if a player under Law 17.5.2 challenges a decision from a line judge or umpire. The human eye is limited to some 25 frames per second. That explains why even a seasoned and unbiased line judge occasionally is overruled by the IRS. And - moreover - it also explains at least some of the controversies over line calls that we all have experienced during our life in badminton. A spinoff, I think, is that the IRS in most cases just confirms the call given by the line judge and thus can boost their confidence, but also occasionally tells us that even the best one may give a wrong call because of the natural limitations of the human eye.

The only major problem of the further developed system which incorporate AI is the cost of operation that limits the use to the TV courts of the most prestigious BWF and Continental Championships and the

HSBC BWF World Tour. Nevertheless, to avoid discussion on line calls in the most important tournaments and badminton's most important connection to the worldwide television audience and our most ardent fans, is a giant leap forward for our sport.

What is next? If you look at tennis and other sports, technological progress may make automatic line calls a possibility in a not-too-distant future. Top level matches played with automatic line calling, without line judges and without challenges? If such a system will be less expensive, because of less need for skilled manpower, or if the technology may be even more costly, is left to be seen. Surely, we have not seen the last development!

While enjoying the progress and the solutions emerging at the top level, we shall remember that - now and forever - the large majority of even the competitive international game is played without IRS (or other technology of the future). There will always be a need for line judges - and there will always be a need for ethical line calling and fair play in our own games in the hall down the street.

BWF Umpire Henrik Boas Olsen (DEN) at
the TotalEnergies BWF Thomas
& Uber Cup Finals 2026.

CALL FOR SUPPORT

LET'S WRITE THE HISTORY OF BWF TECHNICAL OFFICIALS TOGETHER

By Bert Vanhorenbeeck – BWF Umpire

A reminder that Bert is co-ordinating a historical record of officials that served as Technical Officials at the highest level tournaments.

Your Help Is Essential

We're calling on all current BWF referees and umpires: help us rebuild our collective history. Think of your own journey, your former colleagues, and reach out to retired officials across all continents – no matter the era. Every name, every memory, every document helps.

How You Can Contribute

Please provide the available information preferably to your **Continental Representative**, even if some details are incomplete:

- ◀ Full name and nationality of the official
- ◀ Year of accreditation/certification and the year they retired (ie. the last year they officiated as a IBF/BWF official)
- ◀ Championships they officiated (ideally with dates)
- ◀ Roles held during each tournament (umpire or referee)

- ◀ Finals officiated (which final, tournament, umpire or service judge)
- ◀ Optional: photos, anecdotes, or memories

We will verify, organise and structure the information into a timeline that will eventually be made available to the BWF officiating community and wider badminton family.

Continental Representatives

Please contact Bert and he will assist you with co-ordinating this effort.

Contact & Contributions



Please send contributions to:

BWF: Lynne Nixey, l.nixey@bwf.sport

Africa: Diraj Gooneadry, dev120369@gmail.com

Asia: Yau Lin Na, Inyau@hotmail.com

Europe: Bert Vanhorenbeeck, bert.vanhorenbeeck@skynet.be

Oceania: Peter Cocker, petercwa@iinet.net.au

PanAm: TBC



First submission deadline
August 1, 2026



BWF Umpire Mateuzs Wrobel (POL)
at the KFF Singapore Open 2026.

2026 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS, WORKSHOPS AND APPRAISALS

As of August 2026 – calendar subject to change

Date	Meetings, Workshops and Appraisals	Location	Country	Tournament
28 Jul – 02 Aug	Referee Appraisals	Taipei	TPE	YONEX Taipei Open 2026
17 Aug – 23 Aug	Umpire Appraisals	New Delhi	IND	BWF World Championships 2026
01 Sep – 06 Sep	Referee Appraisals	Shenzen	CHN	LI-NING China Masters 2026
01 Sep – 06 Sep	Umpire Appraisals	Shenzen	CHN	LI-NING China Masters 2026
01 Sep – 06 Sep	Referee Appraisals	Pontianak	INA	POLYTRON Pontianak Indonesia Masters 2026
08 Sep – 13 Sep	Referee Appraisals	Ho Chi Minh	VIE	YONEX SUNRISE Vietnam Open 2026
05 Oct – 10 Oct	Umpire Appraisals	Cairo	EGY	BWF World Junior Championships 2026
06 Oct – 11 Oct	Umpire Appraisals	Vantaa	FIN	CLASH OF CLAN Arctic Open 2026 powered by YONEX
13 Oct – 18 Oct	Referee Appraisals	Kuala Lumpur	MAS	Malaysia Super 100 2026
20 Oct – 25 Oct	Referee Appraisals	Paris	FRA	YONEX French Open 2026
03 Nov – 08 Nov	Umpire Appraisals	Yeosu City	KOR	Korea Open 2026
17 Nov – 22 Nov	Referee Appraisals	Hong Kong	HKG	Hong Kong Open 2026
17 Nov – 22 Nov	Umpire Appraisals	Hong Kong	HKG	Hong Kong Open 2026
09 Dec – 13 Dec	Umpire Appraisals	Hangzhou	CHN	HSBC BWF World Tour Finals 2026