

Fine Line: Primary Duties of the Line Judge

Line judges make critical decisions during a match, just like the referees. There are four primary calls for which line judges are responsible.

SERVER FOOT FAULTS (A)

Line judges are responsible for watching servers on their side and for calling foot faults. At the time of service contact, the server must not contact the end line or contact the floor outside the hash marks on the side of the service zone; a jump server's last contact with the floor before serving must be behind the end line and within the service zone marked by the hash marks. If a line judge sees a foot fault, the signal is made by pointing to the end line

with one hand and waving the flag overhead with the other. In (A), Katie Bates, Chicago, keeps close watch on a server.

ANTENNA FAULTS (B)

Each time the volleyball is sent to the opponent's court, it must go over the net in the *crossing space*. The crossing space is defined by the antennas, so if a ball goes over or outside an antenna, or contacts an antenna, an *antenna fault* has occurred. Sometimes, antenna faults are not obvious, and play continues. In that case, the line judge must maintain the antenna fault signal until seen by the referee. Remember that either line judge can call a fault on either antenna.

Calling the fault in (B) is Joe Gustafson, Mokena, Ill.

TOUCHES (C)

One of the most difficult responsibilities that line judges have is to see touches by the defending team. Remember that a touch is contact by one or more defenders followed by the ball going out of bounds on the defensive team's side. Line judges must focus on the blocker's finger tips when the ball is attacked, and then (if the ball is hit toward one of their lines) they must try to beat the ball to the line with their eyes, so that an in/out decision can be made as well. Also, not all touches are at the net; the line judges must be alert to contacts by defensive players away from the net as well. It's a challenge to make accurate touch calls! The calling official in (C) is Ken Corum, Kansas City, Mo.

IN/OUT DECISIONS (D AND E)

Each line judge is responsible for the end line and the entire sideline that intersect near the line judge's base position. Line calls need to be made with confidence and crisp signals. Signaling in (D) is Michal Ann Watts, Castle Rock, Wash; in (E) the official is Rodante Seballa, Irvine, Calif. □

