



The National Collegiate  
Athletic Association

and

Professional Association  
of Volleyball Officials



## 2019 Line Judge Best Practices

This document is a supplement to the line judge training video, manual, clinic, and PAVO Women's Volleyball Officiating Manual. It outlines several protocols and techniques that are advocated for use by top-tier line judges. Complete line judge training tools and certification opportunities can be found on the PAVO website ([www.pavo.org](http://www.pavo.org)).

### **Pre-Match**

- Pre-match preparation begins at home and should be routine. One's affect, health, attire, and appearance are all factors that create a presence which can be indicative of how we approach and perform during the match.
- During the pre-match briefing, the first referee assigns the line judges to their positions, unless they have previously been assigned.
- It is recommended the line judges go to the court in uniform at least 30 minutes prior to the match start time.
- In a tournament setting, it is not necessary to be courtside 30 minutes prior to match time, after your first match.
- Take time to assess the surroundings, such as: court markings, amount of free space, obstructions, determine where center line extension leads into the bleachers, TV cameras, lighting, etc.
- The line judges take a position behind the scorer's table until it is time for the line judges to warm up.
- Maintain a professional demeanor before, during and after the match. Avoid showing any facial expressions and overly familiar contact with spectators, players or coaches throughout the event.

### **Warming Up**

- This exercise is an opportunity to observe the court surface and markings, types of arm swings and shot selections, the speed of the ball and types of serves. It provides stimulus to mentally prepare for the match.
- Say to yourself "in", "out", "touch" as you watch the teams warm up.
- It is appropriate to stand upright or in a low position during this pre-match exercise.
- The line judges do not signal or use flags at this time.
- At the 11-minute mark, many teams engage in a hitting drill for their last 5-minute segment of on court warm up. During that time, both line judges take their base positions on their assigned corners. Often, part of a team's warm up may be to serve during the last portion of their five minutes. Be aware of where players are serving from during this drill. If they are near you, it would be best to take a position on the end line extension.
- There is no prescribed length of time to warm up; however, during the pre-match conversation, the line judges should agree on a time to return to their designated area.
- Observe both teams for some part of their pre-match warm up.

## Position During Lineup Check

- In the event where players, coaches, or cheerleaders are in the area ten feet from the end line along the sideline extension, it is best to move back along the sideline extension until the line judge is out of the way. Once the players, coaches, or cheerleaders move, then resume the ten-foot distance from the corner.
- If a four-ball rotation is used, LJ1 takes two game balls to their starting position.
- After the second referee rolls the ball to the server, line judges roll the ball to the nearest ball retriever. In a four-ball rotation, LJ1 gives the second ball to the retriever located behind the first referee. If the facility set-up makes getting the ball to the middle retriever difficult, give both balls to the nearest ball retriever.

## During the Match



- When a server takes a position away from you, keep your feet in base position and simply turn your upper torso, focusing on the end line and watching for a foot fault. Do not square up to the server or end line.

- When a player is 4-5 feet from you, take an upright position 2-3 steps from the corner, along the extension of the end line, with your left foot slightly in front of your right foot so that you can return quickly to base position. As soon as the server contacts the serve and moves into the court, quickly return to base position using a step and pivot motion to be prepared to make a call on your sideline.



## During the Match Continued

- In between plays, line judges may need to “reset” their position and focus for the next rally. Be sure to re-engage in the match prior to the next service authorization.
- Get your eyes to the spot on the floor where you expect the ball to land before the ball gets there. The line judges’ eyes must beat the ball to the floor.
- Maintain your vantage point as a line judge. Do not take a position that is too low on an attack going away from you, or the attacker and/or ball may block your view of the blockers’ hands, making it difficult to see a touch.
- When a team is chasing an errant ball beyond the end line (not toward you), do not automatically move with the player(s) unless there is a reason to move to see the play. If the player’s only chance at making a play is a pancake, you may follow the player to make sure that the ball does not hit the floor. Return to your corner as quickly as possible, if the ball remains in play. If the player has a legitimate opportunity to play the ball by staying on her feet to pass the ball and there are no obstructions, do not move with the player.
- Be alert to a player or players coming toward you to chase a ball. Avoid going in the same direction as the ball. Try to move in such a way that you can stay square to the court and be able to judge if the retrieved ball will go over or outside the antenna.
- Stay with the ball that is coming near your position. If time permits, take a step back, maintaining a good sight line with the ball and line. If necessary, use your free hand to block the ball if you feel it will contact you.
- If you have information about a touch, antenna fault or pancake, make a signal regardless of where the play occurred. If you do not have an opinion, do not mimic your partner’s signal, but do make eye contact with the first referee.
- Make your movement purposeful and keep in mind what you are giving up when you move.
- If you must leave your base position, be cautious not to move too far from base position, especially if one of your lines of responsibility is still in play. Return to your base position quickly in case you need to call a ball landing near a line.
- To indicate an antenna fault committed by the team on the near side of the net, give the antenna fault signal and then extend the right arm along the end line, with the flag or an open hand. If the team on the opposite side of the net committed the fault, extend the left arm straight out along the sideline, with the flag or an open hand.
- Anticipate pancakes by reading the tip, off-speed shot, short serve or ball coming off a block. Move like a defender in order to get a good look at the pancake. Typically, you do not need to move more than two or three feet. Refrain from moving unnecessarily to avoid being a distraction. If it is necessary to move, return to your base position as quickly as possible.
- If there is a potential for a touch by a backrow player, stay with the ball as long as possible, but try to beat the ball to the line. There are three other referees that can judge whether or not the ball was touched.

## Inside Out Technique

The inside out technique is an advanced training technique and can initially seem counterintuitive. However, learning and applying the inside out technique can improve your ability to judge close plays more accurately.

- On sideline and end line shots, position your head so you are looking at the line from the inside of the court out (with some body lean). This will allow you to more easily see the small gap between the back of the ball and the court boundary line on balls that are just out.
- When you look from the outside of the court to inside the court, balls that are just out seem to be touching the line and often times leads to an incorrect call.



### “Presenting” Signals:

1. Make the call,
2. Present by bringing the feet together and your posture fully upright,
3. Make eye contact with the R1.

In the case of LJ1, it is not necessary to turn the entire body to face the R1 after making an IN call. Instead hold your call, stand fully upright while bringing the feet together, turn the upper torso only, and make good eye contact with the R1. To help “sell” a line call, hold the call momentarily and then look at the first referee while still holding the call.

When making a TOUCH or an OUT call as the LJ1, pivot and then present the touch or out call to the first referee by maintaining the signal and making eye contact with the first referee. If you are already turned to capture the angle, which puts you in a position already facing the R1, just follow the three-step method above.

### Intermission Between Sets 2 and Set 3

- If an intermission is used between sets 2 and 3, the standard protocol for between sets is used.
- The first referee may join the line judges as they walk across the court and deliver the game balls to the scorer’s table.
- An intermission exit plan and end-of-match exit plan should be discussed during the pre-match briefing with the R1.

### Position During the Deciding Set Coin Toss

- After gathering the game balls, the line judges move to their time out position, straddling the second hash mark from the sideline and wait until the coin toss is complete.
- If the teams are switching courts, the line judges wait until all participants have changed benches and then take the game balls to the scorer’s table.
- If teams do not switch courts, wait until the area near the scorer’s table has cleared and then take the game balls to the scorer’s table.
- The line judges then take their between-set positions.

## **Position During Injury**

- Use common sense.
- Move away from the area and stay away until the injury is resolved.
- If it appears that the injured player cannot be moved quickly, both line judges should take their timeout position on the first referee's side of the court.
- If the injury is near the timeout position, move nearer to the referee stand or back up along the attack line extensions as appropriate.
- If medical assistance has been called, creating an extended delay, go to your between-set positions.
- During the pre-match briefing with the referees, determine if the first referee or the line judges will initiate the movement to the timeout position or to the between-set positions.

## **General Reminders**

- Occasionally, the first referee may overrule a call by a line judge. Remain poised, drop the signal and prepare for the next play.
- Do not snap the flag after the call.
- Individual style is good, but show-boating is unacceptable!
- Refrain from engaging in social media regarding the match, including the officials, teams, coaches or any controversies.
- If a player other than a server is habitually outside the court markings, it is appropriate to tell the first referee during a timeout. Provide the player's number and location. It is not one of the line judges' responsibilities to signal when a non-serving player is touching the floor outside the court.
- It is important to take advantage of the interval between sets to discuss with your partner which servers tend to serve near the line judge's base position, and which are close to the end line when they serve.

## **2019 Challenge Review System Rule (CRS)**

- For those line judges working a match where CRS is used, after a challenge is accepted (whistled/signaled) by the second referee, both line judges move to the timeout position near the first referee.
- After the review and with the second referee's whistle/signal to the first referee, both line judges return to their base positions.
- When on the attacker's side, be more aware of touches. If you see a touch and a ball lands near a line that you are not responsible for, hold the touch signal until a referee acknowledges your signal.

Suggestion: Cut along this line and take with you to matches.

---

### **PRE-MATCH QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE**

#### **Questions to ask the referees in the pre-match conference:**

- Are flags provided at the venue?
- Will there be a 3 or 4 ball rotation?
- What are the R1 and R2's preference regarding antenna fault secondary signals?
- What is the R1's "wave off" signal for pancakes?
- If the referee calls one line judge to the stand, should the second go to the stand as well? OR should the second line judge wait until the referee calls him or her to the stand?
- How should unsporting conduct be communicated to the referees?

#### **Questions to ask your fellow line judge:**

- Warm up time? 11:00-2:00?
- Flags in front or behind?
- Where to sit between sets?

#### **Questions to ask yourself:**

- Where is the invisible center line extension in the stands so that you know when to call a touch vs an antenna fault?