

Referee Guidelines for Officiating the Under 9 Age Group.

The U9's, both Individual and Mixed, is a relatively new age category for England Squash Referees to officiate but is becoming more popular and is featuring more regularly at England Squash Junior Events. In view of the players being so young it requires a slightly different approach when managing their matches.

Matches within this age category are often fast and furious with the players focused on the ball rather than being aware of the proximity of their opponent. They can also be highly emotional due to their age and immaturity, and you will occasionally experience amusing mimicry as they emulate the mannerisms of their favourite player.

The Referee's role is not only to officiate but also to educate and encourage them on their journey into competitive Squash.

- **Match Announcements** - The standard WS match introductions must be used, including Surnames.
- **Referee Decisions and Explanations** – When the Referee gives a decision, and an explanation is required, it should be short, simple and in a language easily understood by the player. Likewise, with any direction given i.e. “please be careful of your opponent when playing the ball”.
- **Code Of Conduct** – Must be applied, however, a degree of leniency should be given, and unofficial warnings (direction) given prior to formally applying a Conduct Warning (several times if appropriate).

When addressing a player for either Code of Conduct or direction, the player should be addressed by their **first name** with a softer tone of voice being adopted by the Referee. The Referee should also seek clarification from the player that they understand the situation and, in the case of CoC, what the consequences are if repeated.

It is also important that, should the referee be required to speak to the player between games, or if an injury has occurred, that they must do so in the presence of the player's Parent, Guardian, or Coach. It is also recommended that when addressing the player that you reduce your stature ideally to the height of the player by sitting, crouching, or kneeling. This reduces the child's feeling of intimidation and encourages them to listen and be more receptive to the conversation. Again, seek clarification that both they and the Parent, Guardian, or Coach understand the situation.

Referees should always carry a copy of the “Bleeding, Illness, Disability or Injury” Guidelines with them to assist when explaining to both the player and their Parent, Guardian, or Coach the ruling and associated timing of the incident i.e. “Contributed Injury by the accidental action of both players” - 15 minutes Recovery time.

Referees should, at their discretion, also consider using the above when officiating at U11's Matches (Boys U11 & Girls U11), particularly in the early rounds of a Tournament. However, this would not be deemed appropriate for Main Draw matches from “Round of 16” onwards.

General Notes

- The match should be played with a single yellow dot ball.
- Matches should be played on a standard court, this includes Finals.
- Mixed U9 matches may be Boy vs Girl, Boy vs Boy or Girl vs Girl