



*Overrules* is the official quarterly newsletter for all tennis officials in USTA Northern. Items included in each quarterly issue are upcoming news and notes, trainings/evaluations, rules and procedures updates, milestones, introductions to new officials and a showcase about an official working in our Section. Ideas and information is always welcome. If you have anything you would like to add, please e-mail Kristi Bushinski at [bushinski@northern.usta.com](mailto:bushinski@northern.usta.com).

### A Message From Our Chair of Officials ... Tim Kurtt

This is the first edition of "Overrules," a newsletter dedicated to the officials in USTA Northern. Its creation is a direct result of your feedback wanting more frequent communications concerning officiating in the Section. I would like to thank **Kristi Bushinski** for taking the lead on this project, along with help from **Lisa Mushett**. I encourage you to take an active role in submitting new content, comments and questions for future editions. Help us continue growing the long and well-respected tradition of tennis officiating in USTA Northern and across the nation.

### Upcoming Trainings/Evaluations

#### **April 27, 2014**

Level I Chair Clinic: 9:00 a.m. – 12 Noon at Baseline Tennis Center

#### **May 18, 2014**

Level I Chair Clinic: 9:00 a.m. – 12 Noon at LifeTime Fitness - Fridley

#### **June 8, 2014**

Level II Chair Clinic: 9:00 a.m. – 12 Noon at Baseline Tennis Center

Please email **Kristi Bushinski** at [Bushinski@northern.usta.com](mailto:Bushinski@northern.usta.com) to register.

During the past six weeks, **Heather Landrus** and **Doug Miller** have been conducting evaluations of current officials. If you would like to be evaluated, please contact Heather at [hlandrus@comcast.net](mailto:hlandrus@comcast.net) or Doug at [dwmiller76@hotmail.com](mailto:dwmiller76@hotmail.com).

### News and Notes

**Calendar/Schedule Blocking** – Thank you to everyone for keeping their calendars updated with their availability in Arbiter. College season is wrapping up the first week of

May, but that leads us right into the busy summer months. Please continue to keep your calendars updated.

***Who is Working Higher Level Events Outside of the Section?*** – Look at all the USTA Northern officials who are working professional events around the country. For more information on how you too can apply to work professional events, please contact **Tim Kurtt** at [timkurtt@aol.com](mailto:timkurtt@aol.com).

- **Ron Jacobus Jr.** worked the \$10,000 Men's Pro Tournament in Sunrise, Fla., in February and the International Spring Championships in Carson, Calif., April 3-6.
- **Tim Kurtt** worked January 23 – February 3 in Palm Coast, Fla., at the Men's 10K as Deputy Referee/Chair; February 12-24 in Boynton Beach, Fla., at the Men's 10K as Deputy Referee/Chair; March 7-17 in Bakersfield, Calif., at the Men's 15K as Deputy Referee/Chair; March 17-24 in Baton Rouge, La., at the Wheelchair Tournament as Referee; April 5-14 in San Juan, PR at the Fed Cup as Chair and ongoing April 30 – May 11 in Orange Park, Fla., the Men's 10K as Chief/Chair; May 21-June 2, 2014 in Hilton Head, S.C. the Women's 10K as Trainer/Chair; June 12-23 in Buffalo, N.Y. the Men's 10K as Deputy Referee/Chair and June 26-July 7 in Pittsburgh, Pa., at the Men's 10K as Deputy Referee/Chair.
- **Doug Miller** worked the Men's \$50,000 in Osprey, Fla., in March and is working the week of April 21 the Men's \$50,000 in Savannah, Ga.
- **Vyasachar Mohan** worked the Dallas Men's 100K Challenger in February, and in March the Dallas 125K ATP Challenger, as well as the Miami ATP/WTA Master Series.
- **Jan Schreier** worked in Midland Mich., at the Women's \$100K in February, as well as the Delray Beach, Fla., ATP event also in February and in Indian Wells, Calif., at the Combined ATP/WTA in March and coming up in June in Winnetka, Ill., at the Men's \$50K.
- **Tony Stingley** will be officiating at the Big 10 Men's Conference Tournament April 24-27 in Lansing, Mich.
- **Mike Yates** has been selected to attend the USTA Chair Academy in Hilton Head, S.C. May 22-26. Congratulations and good luck!

Way to go Northern Officials, keep up the great work! Please forward information for future newsletters to **Kristi Bushinski** at [Bushinski@northern.usta.com](mailto:Bushinski@northern.usta.com).

## Rules/Procedures Updates

### ***Reminder About: Spectator Policy***

#### **SPECTATOR POLICY GUIDELINES - OFFICIALS**

These points will help guide you through the process in how and when to handle a spectator situation should it arise at a sanctioned tournament you are officiating.

#### **WHAT TO DO IF YOU ENCOUNTER THE FOLLOWING:**

**COACHING** - Unless it is between the 2nd and 3rd set or between the 2nd set and match tiebreak or after/before matches are played, coaching is not allowed by anyone. Should coaching occur during match play, please take the following steps:

Let the individual(s) in violation know that coaching is not permitted during match play. Should they continue to coach after the first warning, their child will then be penalized for the parent/spectators actions under "**Code Violations**" **within Friend At Court (FAC)** -

**1st offense = Point 2nd offense = Game 3rd offense = Default.** Should you get to this point, let the child know that they are being coded because of the actions of the parent(s)/spectator(s).

**Reminder:** During Level 7s and 10U tournaments, you may see this occur more often. This is due in large part to the fact that a number of these parents and players are new to the game and simply do not know the rules. Use this as an educational opportunity via point #2 above. If they continue to violate the rules after being educated, then follow point #2 in assessing penalties.

**QUESTIONING AN OFFICIAL, PLAYER OR TOURNAMENT STAFF ON A RULING DURING MATCH PLAY** - Within the guidelines of our spectator policy, this will not be tolerated. If someone does question you on a line call or a ruling, you have the right to remove them/ask them to leave the playing area. Should they refuse to leave the playing area, let them and the player know that the player will now receive a code violation related to this action and will continue to do so until either one of two things occur - **A.** The parent/spectator leaves the area **B.** The player reaches his or her 3rd code violation and is defaulted from match play.

**PARENT/SPECTATOR CONTINUES TO BE UNRULY** - These are grounds for immediate removal from the playing area and facility. Should they refuse to leave the premises, and having gone through Code Violations, then do not hesitate to contact security or the police to have them removed. Safety of the players, officials, tournament staff and facility staff always comes first.

**SHOULD AN INCIDENT OCCUR** - If something does take place, please complete the incident form and attach it in an email to the Section office c/o **Pat Colbert** at [colbert@northern.usta.com](mailto:colbert@northern.usta.com).

### ***Reminder About: Complaints and Grievances Against An Official***

There are times when a player, coach or parent will confront you about your actions on court. Also, there may be times when a player, coach or parent will engage you in a discussion about another official in which they feel has acted inappropriately in some way on court. In either of these cases, you should communicate to them that they are welcome to e-mail the Sectional Chair of Officials and **Kristi Bushinski** with their concerns. They must be specific with the tournament location, player's names, date, time and official's name if possible. Reassure them that there will be follow up on each and every e-mail.

It is your job to officiate to the best of your ability. You are not perfect and will make mistakes. Players, parents and coaches are inherently biased in their view of a situation. I want to reassure you that each concern will be reviewed and the parties involved, including the official, contacted so that we have a clear understanding of what happened on court. Once we have an understanding of the situation, we will find solutions to help the official avoid the situation in the future or communicate to the player, coach or parent the reasons why the official took the actions he or she did. The bottom line is this should be a consistent message from every official. To have extended conversations about officials or happenings on court with players, coaches or parents may and does have the appearance of bias. We must do our best to distance ourselves from these types of discussions and to convey a consistent method for resolution for the player, coach or parent. The general rule of thumb for on-court questions is to give two responses or explanations to a question; if the player is not satisfied, you must move forward with the

match. This applies for off-court questions from players, coaches and parents as well. Be professional and courteous at all times, knowing that there are others listening and watching.

### ***Reminder About: Junior Code Violations***

One of the toughest jobs in tennis is controlling a match. Junior tennis can be especially challenging because of the age and experience of the players, as well as the influence of parents and coaches. It is important that we are consistent in our officiating when dealing with junior players and understand that their behavior must meet certain standards and we must follow certain protocols in order to ensure that the behavior does not continue or become a regular occurrence.

As a general rule, most of the referees and tournament directors I talk with believe that we are too lenient, and most times, do not issue code violations when they are deserved. My philosophy is to say something when you feel something needs to be said and issue a code if the message has not been understood or the action deserves a code from the start. How you communicate with the player is very important. Sometimes it is best to be straightforward and sometimes it is best to use patience. Experience will tell you which to use. The hardest part is to take action in some form to control the match.

Once you have issued the code, your work is just getting started. You must take quick notes of the match score, players, score, exact verbiage the player used and/or specific actions the player made. At the end of your shift, at the site or at home, you must write up the code using the Code Violation Form available on the USTA Northern website and e-mail it to **Pat Colbert** at [Colbert@ustanorthern.com](mailto:Colbert@ustanorthern.com) along with the tournament director and/or referee. You should add the time it takes to write up the code violation to the time you report to **Kristi Bushinski** for your shift. You will be paid for the extra time taken to write up the code violation. This must happen each and every time without exception. It is not your job to decide what codes are written up and what codes are not.

**Pat Colbert** is charged with reviewing the code violations and issuing suspension points for the player. We are not a part of the suspension point process and this should not be a part of your thought process when officiating a match. As I stated earlier, the player is responsible for his or her actions and the consequences. We are responsible for knowing the Rules of Tennis, local ground rules and controlling the behavior of players while we are officiating their match.

Please feel free to contact **Tim Kurtt** at (651) 260-4853 or at [timkurtt@aol.com](mailto:timkurtt@aol.com).

### ***Reminder About: Conflict of Interest Guidelines***

Officials are to avoid all conflicts of interest, should it be real or perceived. Each official should follow "The Officials' Code of Conduct" listed on the back page of the *Friend at Court*. Every attempt will be made to assign officials so that there are no conflicts of interest; however it is the responsibility of the official to determine if there is a conflict of interest, and either withdraw and/or find an approved substitute. A general list of guidelines adopted by USTA Northern is listed below.

#### **On-Court Officials**

- 1) On-court officials should not officiate in an adult tournament in which a family member is playing. They may consider officiating after all family members have been eliminated from the adult tournament.

- 2) On-court officials with children playing in junior tournaments, should not officiate junior tournaments that have the same age division(s) (if playing up) and gender of their children (Section wide). Special care should be given to avoid possible issues with brothers and sisters of the child's opponents.
- 3) On-court officials with children playing college tennis should not officiate in the same division as the child's college or university. For example, an official with a child attending a NCAA Division III school should not officiate at the NCAA Division III level for the entire season or until the child's team has been eliminated for the season. The official may officiate at the NCAA Division I and NCAA Division II levels in this example.

#### **Referees and Off-Court Officials**

- 1) Referees and off-court officials may work tournaments in which family members are entered. It is recommended that a Deputy Referee be appointed to handle all on- and off-court issues dealing with family members.

USTA Northern follows the diversity guidelines as established by the USTA.

## **Milestones**

Birthdays this Quarter:

Ron Jacobus Jr. – April 5  
Patty Kregness – May 13  
Mike Yates – May 23  
Mike Woelffer – June 3  
Ron Jacobus III – June 26  
Vyasachar Mohan – June 26

Happy Birthday to all!!

## **Getting To Know USTA Northern Official ... Tim Kurtt (Chair of Officials)**

### ***How long have you been an official?***

I first became certified about 15 years ago. I started running tennis tournaments in Iowa when I was 17 years old and defaulted my first player 30 minutes after the tournament started.

### ***How and why did you get started?***

I love tennis, the rules and organizing events. I consider myself a good listener and a good problem solver. Officiating tennis was a great way to use all of my skills and challenge myself every day.

### ***What are the best reasons to become an official?***

There are so many different avenues to pursue within tennis officiating including roving, calling lines, refereeing, serving as a chief for grassroots, professional, college, wheelchair, Fed Cup, Davis Cup, high school, etc. etc. If you find your niche, it can be very rewarding.

### ***What has been your biggest highlight as an official?***

There are so many ... I do remember one of my first Minnesota State High School Tournaments chairing the last doubles match in the small school division. The dual was decided and the kids were playing in front of everyone for pride. The final set was decided 13-11 in the tiebreak. This was their US Open final, and one they would never

forget. On the professional side, I would have to say it was opening up Centre Court at Wimbledon for the first time. The first match of the tournament, the grass is perfect and the anticipation is electric. So amazing!

***Why should someone else become an official?***

Because they enjoy people and want to create a special environment for athletes to excel in. To me, officiating is all about the level of play and the special things that happen on court.

***What advice would you give young officials who are looking to advance to the professional level?***

Write down your goals, find a good mentor and focus on being a professional.