

Referees -

I've received questions about the role of line judges in retrieving the ball for the serving team.

There is no rule that states it's the line judges' responsibility to retrieve the ball for the serving team. While we often see this done as a courtesy, it's ultimately each team's responsibility to get the ball for the next rally.

From an officiating standpoint, DO NOT tell your line judges that it's their job. You'll find that most times, the line judges will do this on their own. If they don't, then tell the teams that they need to retrieve the ball. If you tell the line judges that they need to do it, you're going to find that they'll run after the ball before they give you the in/out/touch signal, and then we have to wait for them to return to get their information. Don't go there. It creates more problems.

This doesn't need to be a major point of emphasis for you, so don't make it an issue. If you encounter a line judge(s) who doesn't retrieve the ball, ask the teams to do this. After all, they're the ones who hit it out of bounds three courts away.

There is no need to involve sanctions if you handle this properly -- and definitely NO sanctions for the work team! Likewise, I'd be hard pressed to say that a playing team should be sanctioned for a delay if they don't retrieve the ball. Just facilitate the process -- whoever can get the ball to keep the match flowing is fine. Don't be overly officious with this. Ask the teams for help, and I'm sure you'll get it.

Thank you!

Brian Hemelgarn  
OVR Referees' Chair