



OFF-COURT COACHING GUIDELINES

International Blind Tennis Association Events

1. Purpose

To define when and how coaching may take place during international blind tennis matches, ensuring fairness, consistency, and respect for all players and officials.

2. Core Principles

- **Fairness:** Equal coaching opportunities for all players.
- **Independence:** Players make their own on-court decisions.
- **Respect:** Coaching must never disturb play or the opponent's focus.

3. When Coaching Is Permitted

- **At changeovers** (between games).
- **At set breaks** (between sets).
- The **coach may enter the court** to provide advice.
- Coaching may include tactical or motivational input, hydration, and basic equipment checks.
- The coach must **remain next to their player's seat and leave the court immediately when the umpire calls "Time."**

4. When Coaching Is Not Permitted

Coaches **must not communicate in any way:**

- During rallies or active points.
- **Between points** within a game.
- Between first and second serves.
- During tiebreaks (except at set breaks).
- From the stands or spectator areas.
- During medical or toilet breaks (unless authorised by the referee).

5. Communication During a Point – Hindrance Rule

Any coach communication **while the ball is in play** will be treated under the **Hindrance Rule**:



- **First Occasion:**
 - Treated as *accidental hindrance*.
 - **Soft warning** issued.
 - **Let played**, point replayed.
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- **Second and Subsequent Occasions:**
 - Treated as *deliberate hindrance*.
 - **Point awarded to the opponent**.
 - **Formal warning** issued to the coach.
 - Further breaches may lead to **removal of coach by the Referee**

6. Coach Conduct

- Communication must be calm, respectful, and brief.
- No gestures, signals, or sounds during play.
- Coaches must comply with all official instructions.

7. Officials' Responsibilities

- The **chair umpire** manages coaching intervals and calls "Time."
- Officials ensure all coaching follows these rules.
- Any communication during play must be handled under the Hindrance Rule.

8. Summary Table

Timing	Coaching Allowed?	Coach Location	Notes
During points	<input type="checkbox"/> No	—	Treated as Hindrance – 1st = Warning + Let; 2nd+ = Deliberate Hindrance
Between points	<input type="checkbox"/> No	—	No communication
Changeovers	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	May enter court	Must leave when umpire calls "Time"
Set breaks	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	May enter court	Must leave when umpire calls "Time"
Suspensions	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	Off-court	Full coaching allowed
Post-match	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	Off-court	Debrief and feedback allowed

Issued by: IBTA Tournament Referee – Martin Etheridge

Applies to: All accredited coaches and officials

Effective: November 2025