

OBSERVER'S HANDBOOK

In the 1980's, the rules of Guts were revised to incorporate the use of impartial observers who would be asked to make the call in case of a dispute that could not be resolved by the teams involved. The wording of the rule could be considered somewhat ambiguous, and section "B. Disputes" was never expanded to mention the option of using observers as described in the new section "C. Observers".

This *Observer's Handbook* is intended to clarify and provide greater detail on the recommended role and actions of an official observer during a game of Guts. It will be subject to periodic review and revision by the USGPA Rules Committee.

From the current WFDF Rules governing play at all USGPA sanctioned events:

303.07. Judging:

A. General:

The players shall generally make the calls in the match. Usually the thrower shall make calls on the throw and the receiver shall make calls on the catch.

B. Disputes:

In the event of a dispute, the team captains shall meet to discuss and resolve the dispute. If the dispute cannot be resolved, the throw attempt shall be repeated.

C. Observers:

At their discretion, the captains, or the captains and the tournament director, may decide to select up to three experienced individuals, who are not participating in the game, to act as observers. The duty of the observer is to carefully watch the action of the game for the sole purpose of rendering a decision in the event of a dispute that cannot be resolved. Observers shall remain passive and shall not make any calls on their own initiative.

(1) When a dispute arises, which cannot be resolved by the players involved or their captains, the observers may be called upon by the captains to make the call. The observer with the best view of the play makes the call. If the observers choose, they may discuss the play among themselves before rendering a decision.

(2) By calling in the observers, the teams agree to abide by the observers decision.

(3) Use of observers will be based on the observer's handbook.

History

The use of Observers, rather than Officials, was adopted in keeping with the ideal of the sport of Guts. The use of Observers enables games to be played in a timely manner, keeps the fans actively engaged, and allows players to concentrate on playing the game.

The original Observer Handbook was written by Buck Buchanan and published in 1981. The USGPA Rules Committee comprised of Mike Colden, David Conley, David Leeds, Ryan Scott, Steve Taylor, Dan Thornton, David Trauger, Steve Trauger, Tim Trauger, and Jeff Warren has revised this updated version, published in 2007.

Observer Guidelines

Once assigned to a match, the Observers will inform the captains of the two teams the procedure that will be followed during the game/match, to which the captains must adhere:

1. That they, the Observers, will remain passive until called upon to make an official ruling, and that their decision will be final, and accepted without further protest.
2. When the two teams do not agree on the outcome of a particular exchange, or play, only the team captains will meet at center court to discuss it. If the disagreement cannot be resolved quickly and quietly between the captains, either one or both captains may appeal to the Observers for a ruling.
3. Observers may respond only to an appeal by a team captain.
4. The Observers, having been informed that they are being asked for an official ruling, should restate the appeal to the team captains for exact clarification.
5. Once the team captains are satisfied that the Observer understands what is being requested, the captains must immediately return to their respective sides of the court and await a ruling.
6. The Observers will confer, announce their decision to the scorekeeper, and then inform the team captains of their ruling.
7. The Observers decision is final.

Observer Responsibilities

Philosophy

Being an Observer is a very important position, and it is not easy. It is your responsibility to appoint an unofficial scorekeeper, keep track of the score yourself (in writing), and to keep the flow of the game moving. You may be asked to judge early round games, which may involve newer, less-experienced players who may need occasional rule clarification. You may also be asked to judge big games and finals matches. EACH is equally important. To be a good Observer, you must apply the same concentration as you would if you were playing. Observers will approach their games with a non-biased attitude towards either team. Observers should not fraternize with any player(s) on either team during the game. The Golden Rule of Observing: Observe in the manner in which you would want a fellow Observer to judge your game.

Positioning

Proper positioning is paramount and the key to successful observing. If you are in the right position, you will be able to make the correct call 99% of the time. **Calls underlined denote specific ownership.**

Offensive Positioning for Observer (Calls underlined denote ownership)

1. Position yourself as close to the center of the offensive line as possible; you may have to crouch, or squat, so as to not impede the vision of the defensive team.
2. Stay behind and/or off to the side from where the thrower will release his/her shot.
3. Stay close enough (8-12 feet) so as to clearly be able to see Foot Faults.
4. Once the foot placement has been visually marked, judge the shot. Watch for Vertical, High, and Wide shots.
5. Once the defensive team has made initial contact and bobbling has begun, move, and keep moving, to give yourself the best view to watch for Traps.
6. When an exchange has been completed, immediately move to the Observer Defensive position.

Defensive Positioning for Observer (Calls underlined denote ownership)

1. Position yourself in front of the defensive line about 4 feet off parallel and far enough off the court so as not to impede pursuit of deflections by the defensive team.
2. Watch for Short shots and for Wide shots on your side.
3. Once the defensive team has made initial contact and bobbling has begun, move, and keep moving, to give yourself the best view to watch for Traps.
4. When an exchange has been completed, immediately move to the Observer Offensive position.

Types of Calls

When asked to make a ruling, simply speaking, there are just four (4) possibilities to consider in determining your decision:

- A. Was the shot good?
 - B. Was the shot illegal?
 - C. Was the catch good?
 - D. Was the catch illegal?
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1. It is your absolute responsibility to confer with your fellow Observer and report exactly what you saw, when asked – regardless of the ramifications. As an Observer, YOU are being asked to make the call, to determine the outcome of a disputed exchange. Make the call. An Observer in proper position will be able to make a judgment on the dispute. A Throw-Over call should be used only as an absolute last resort.
 2. When both Observers are in mutual agreement on the call, then that shall be the decision.
 3. When both Observers do not agree, then the call goes to the Observer with ownership. (See Offensive and Defensive Positioning for Observer). Both Observers have ownership for Traps.
 4. When the Observer with ownership cannot make a decisive call because he/she was blocked from the action, or out of position, then a Throw-Over call should be made. Make every attempt to not let this happen.

Replacement of an Observer

The replacement/removal of an Observer shall only occur as follows:

1. When both team captains decide that an Observer is unacceptable, or that both Observers are unacceptable, they may appeal to the Tournament Director and request a replacement, or replacements. Observer replacement because of unacceptability can happen only once in a match, per Observer.
2. When an Observer sustains an injury, which hinders his/her effectiveness as an Observer, an Observer not on the list may be named to replace him/her.

Helpful Hints on Being an Observer

1. Once assigned to a game or match, contact the team captains and discuss the start time. It is your job to get the game going, as then agreed, or specified, on time.
2. Locate a responsible spectator to act as the unofficial scorekeeper. (One of the two Observers will be the official scorekeeper.)
3. Smile.
4. Be, ALWAYS, in the proper position.
5. HUSTLE.
6. Call what you see and stick with it.
7. Make your decision to the unofficial scorekeeper, and then to the team captains.
8. Keep score manually.
9. Do not fraternize with the players or spectators during the match.
10. Always be aware of your position relative to the nearest exit.