To all the Participants

Hi, I am Massimo Sanapo, Chairman of the IBSA Showdown Sport Committee.

I am really happy to be here today to speak about a very unique sport discipline.

The will of a blind athlete to play without assistance gave the birth to Showdown.

The table and the game were originally designed and created for visually impaired players to be completely autonomous and independent in playing.

Indeed Showdown has no correspondent in other disciplines and is not an adaptation of existing sports.

This will of independence is the heart of Showdown and the table is an instrument to let people with different disabilities (or, why not, also able-bodied) play together in total autonomy.

I would like to thank you to dedicate your time to Showdown by participating to this course.

IBSA Showdown Sport Committee Chair
Massimo Sanapo
Showdown

07.02.2020

14:00 – Presentation

14:15 – Athlete’s Eligibility and Classification

15:00 – Game rules explanation

15:30 – Referee’s role

16:00 – Coach’s role

16:30 – Basic coaching techniques

17:30 – Organization and event management

18:00 – Questions and answers

Lecturers
Dr Jose Doria – IBSA International Classifier
Massimo Sanapo – IBSA Showdown Sport Committee Chair
Classification for VI Athletes

Agenda
-Sports for VI Athletes, International Organizations, Key dates
-Sports for all > From school to Elite competitions
> Rehabilitation and Integration
-VI Sports Classification > What, Why, How
-Know about: VI Sports, Adapted rules, Supportive aids
-Classification steps: > Safe Health Condition
> Eligible Permanent Impairment
> Minimum Disability Criteria
> Class
-Current VI International Classification: Classes and Status
-National Classification / National Classifiers
-VI Sports Classification

IBSA (International Blind Sports Federation). Purpose: to provide a unique identity in order to further develop, promote and increase the number of the sports for the blind and visually impaired. Encouraging the blind and visually impaired people to get involved in different sports and physical activities, from school sports to elite level championships.

IPC (International Paralympic Committee) and International Sport Federations

Vision Impairment (VI) occurs when there is a damage to one or more of the components of the vision system: - Impairment of the eye structure and light receptors
- Impairment of the optic nerve and optic pathways
- Impairment of the visual cortex
- More complex pathologies and syndromes with visual connections

Athletes competing in VI sports have a vision impairment that leads to a competitive disadvantage in sport.

VI Sports should be as close as possible to the “normal” Sport. It is done introducing:
- Adapted rules
- Supportive aids

There are also some sports specific for the VI: Goalball, Showdown …

VI Sports Classification
A system is needed to minimize the impact of the impairment on the sports performance. A system to ensure the success of an athlete is determined by the skills, fitness, power, endurance, training and tactical ability: The VI Sports Classification

VI Sports Classification for the athletes provides the structure to ensure a fair level on playing for the competing athletes.

VI Sports Classification is done assessing athlete’s visual parameters (visual acuity, visual fields …) and grouping the athletes into different Classes, according to the impact of the impairment in each sport, and into status - the valid classification period

VI Sport Classification is not:
- Making diagnostic
- WHO, Medical, Legal or Social Classification
**Classification steps**
Safe Health Condition and no Eye risks > Eligible and Permanent Impairment > Minimum Impairment criteria > Class and Status Allocation

**National Classification**
VI Sports Classification (National Classification) is also helpful / needed to athletes, coaches, sport teams and Federations, providing information about:
- Rehabilitation and social integration.
- Athlete pathology and the specific vision capabilities
- The. Impairment progression and possible Classification changes
- Health and ophthalmic risks. Safe sport practice
- The athlete’s National Sport Classification and Updates
- Prepare International VI Classification
- Avoiding frustrations and expenses.

Dialogue: National Classifier <> Athlete, Coach, Federation

**MDF (Medical Diagnostic Form)** – sent 6 weeks before the International Classification

**Current Classification**
- Monocular
- Best Eye with better optical correction
- Based in Visual Acuity and/or Visual Fields ….. (other visual functions)

**International VI Sport Classification**
To Compete at International (IBSA / IPC) Competitions all athletes need to have an International Classification

Current VI Sports Classification is the same across all the VI sports. Researches are ongoing to change the VI Classification into Sport Specific.

**Current International Sport Classes and Status:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>IBSA IPC Class by VA</th>
<th>IBSA IPC Class by VF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monocular</td>
<td>Monocular (Stimulus III/4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE</td>
<td>NE Cannot compete</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>B3 LogMAR 1.0 to 1.4</td>
<td>And/Or B3 Less than D 40° (R20)°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>B2 LogMAR 1.5 to 2.6</td>
<td>And/Or B2 Less than D 10° (R 5°)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>B1 Log MAR Less than 2.6 to NLP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**STATUS**
- Review
- Fixed review
- Confirmed
REHABILITATION

Considering physical activity as rehabilitation tool is not reinventing the wheel as a matter of fact sports for people with disability were historically born for this purpose. During post-war many sports were born to help veterans who had become physically impaired. Specifically, Showdown was born in 1977 from an idea by the Canadian athlete Joe Lewis (whom I personally met at an international tournament held in Milan!).

In general, sports education builds a healthy personality in the individual, educates to respect the rules, encourages fair play and develops creativity, having fun in the meanwhile.

As for the rehabilitative aspect, sport is not simply physical education which aims to improve the musculoskeletal-tendon structure, but also psychological which aims to improve firstly and foremost self-esteem.

The combination of these two important aspects not only gives to the athlete physical security, by giving the awareness that through training things initially considered unthinkable are possible, but also increases self-esteem, by acknowledging that the ability to reach new goals is still intact despite the disability.

To encourage, motivate and set out new goals gives to the athlete a new energy helpful not only in everyday life, but also in the new motor skills.

Moreover sport contributes to alleviate and overcome the isolation caused by the disability, by getting the athletes in the game and at the same time by bringing them in new groups of people with same interests where they can establish new human relationships.

As for our sport, unlike other disciplines for VI athletes where the help of a sighted person is needed (i.e. running or skiing with sighted guides), Showdown allows total autonomy at the table. Together with total autonomy, another positive aspect that justifies the great diffusion of this sport is the possibility of being practiced by anyone of any level of physical and motor skills.

Showdown is a game within the reach of all, athletes can start playing initially just for fun but it can also become a highly physical sport at a competitive level. Just consider that over the years I have seen games last an hour and a half with the ball running more than 170 km/h.
**THE COACH**

In sport, the relationship between athlete and coach is a privileged channel that greatly affects the individual. The role of the coach is really stimulating but also of great responsibility because not only the coach is responsible for the athletic development of the player but also influences the formation of the athlete's sports values.

The position of the coach is essential in every discipline. In showdown specifically the greatest difficulty encountered is the management of the group. This is an individual sport, but we always move in a team which is normally composed by both male and female athletes with different general physiological and psychological traits. Consider that during a tournament very delicate situations can happen like, for example, having athletes of the same team playing against each other for the win to get to the following tournament stage.

The attitude of the coach needs to be authoritative and fair, but firstly and mostly he/she must be sincere and always be her/himself. Consider how useless could be to imitate the hardness of our coach idol if this is not our way of being!

Moreover, the coach needs to have good communicative abilities. It is important to be clear and simple to the players and in some cases, for example in front of a critical issue, be determined. He/she has to keep his/her emotions to him/herself and be able to balance the players feelings by calming them if agitated, encouraging them if unmotivated or depressed.

The coach must define a common and clear vocabulary to communicate with the players in order to understand each other well both in training and during the game. Consider that a time-out lasts one minute, 60 seconds are enough but not long! That's why player and coach need to understand each other quickly but at the same time clearly without any kind of misunderstanding that could influence the outcome of the game.

During the tournaments, a team leader meeting takes place before the start of the matches where the playing system of the tournament, the location of tables, match office, referees' room and other additional details are illustrated. It is responsibility of the coach to be present to this meeting and report all the contents to the players. The players' clear perception of the information depends on the coach's communication ability, based on his/her experience in relationships with the blind, to report the locations of the spaces by taking into account the perceptual references of VI person.

**TRAINING**

The first step for a coach is programming, this means always having a map to follow otherwise training becomes random.

It is important to write this program in all its components: from the annual program, mesocycle and microcycle up to the single training session for both high level athletes and beginners. For every session the coach must set the objective(s) of the training.

Remember that the objectives of a single training session must be not more than two otherwise the result will be poor.
Also very important is to prepare tests in order to have precise tools for evaluating players' improvement.

Obviously preparation must be calibrated on the athlete's level and readjusted during the season according to the achieved (or not) improvements.

Training, as in any other sport, must include an initial warm up and a final cool down, in addition it will be necessary to add muscle strengthening and proprioceptive exercises.

With the beginners initially it will be necessary to get familiar with the playing table by touching in order to have in mind all its parts and to build a mental image of it. This helps the players to have a good idea of the distances between the areas, necessary to find the right measures in the shots.

Athletes have to accustom to the playing equipment, as a natural extension of their body. The grip of the bat is essential as the position of the body which will be set at the same time.

The first workouts will be dedicated to control the ball by moving it and by performing exercises with increasing difficulty and speed of execution.

Then it will be necessary to proceed with differentiated training for defense and attack. In this phase players will face various types of shots with the assistance of the coach who will give them points of reference on where to start and address the shot. If the athlete is partially sighted the visual residue will initially be used to have an immediate feedback and to evaluate the outcome of the shot. If the player is totally blind, the coach will immediately give the feedback on the outcome of the shots and how correct it.

The objective of the training is to create automatisms through repetition to allow fast responses not engaging the conscious mind of the athlete. Thus the player can focus on the tactics to be implemented in the game and does not waste energy by thinking about technique and movements.

EXPERIENCE

Both for players and coaches gaining experience will lead to qualitative improvements.

So far we talked about theory but on the field you will experience the great difference with the practice.

I give you two small emblematic examples of what happened to me over the years. I trained two blind players from birth and through the trainings I realized that one of them did not know how letters look/feel like and the other did not have any idea of what an angle is. At this point you can be the best student in the world, know the manual perfectly, but what makes the difference is your sensitivity and your ability to adapt your techniques to specific situations.

Each athlete is a person and each person is unique and different from anyone else. The general traits will certainly be a good starting point, but the ability to adapt to individual variables will make the difference.

Try to get to know your athletes the best way possible also and above all from a psychological point of view in order to bring out the best from them. Learn this during individual sessions in order to have the best tools to help them during the delicate situations during the game.
Milan, January 25, 2020

Prof. Marco Spinelli

Physical Sciences Doctor
Showdown Refereeing Essentials

Showdown is a fast sport and to referee is a **challenge** and a **responsibility**.

The referee is there for the players and to assure that the rules are followed.

Therefore the first responsibilities of the referee are to know perfectly the **Rules of Play**, to be **precise** and **clear**.

We always have to keep in mind that we have to make sure that the rules are respected but also that we are umpiring matches between blind players but this doesn’t mean that we have to treat them with pity or welfarism.

The attitude we should have is to treat them with **respect**, therefore to treat them on field as **athletes**, as they are. Of course, if and when they will need our help, we should give them a hand.

**Referee’s role**

The referee is the professional who has the task to evaluate the match impartially and objectively, and to guarantee that the game rules are followed.

During the match the referee has to do her/his best to judge every situation in the best way.

The referee sounds a whistle to conduct the game. When the referee recognizes a fault or a goal, he/she must whistle as soon as possible.

Once he/she has whistled it is necessary to explain in the clearest and most concise way what just happened and to say who gets the point.

The referee conducts the game standing on one side of the table near to the centreboard screen.

The referee can take a step forward during the service to evaluate its regularity, and then he/she can come back one or two steps to have a better visual perspective of the game.

In addition to conduct the game, he/she must handle the spectators and make sure to guarantee the silence.

When managing the audience:

1) **Announce that no disorder will be tolerated.** Spectators must keep silence during the play and mobile phones and electronic devices must be switched off. If a device rings during the play the referee must stop the game and ask the owner to switch it off. If the owner of the device is the player or her/his coach the referee must issue 2 points penalty.

2) **The referee is allowed to send out of the room anyone (supporters, coaches etc.) in case of unfair misconduct.**

3) **Audience should stay at least 2 steps away from the table, leaving enough space to the referees and players.**

4) **After referee’s whistle spectators can cheer.** The referee must ensure silence before the play is resumed.

**Before the Game**
1) Before every match the referee must check players’ equipment: eye protection, hand protection, bats and attire.

2) The referee has to introduce her/himself, scorekeeper, players, coaches and interpreters.
   a) The referee must conduct the match in official tournament language.
   b) Players who cannot understand the official language can use an interpreter, but he/she must announce her/him prior to the match.
   c) The player has the responsibility to announce her/his coach to the referee before the warm up even if the coach is not present. The coach can enter/leave the room only when the set is over and the referee must open the door.

3) Before the first set players can freely practice with each other and get used to the table.
   a) The amount of time for warm up is usually 60 seconds but can be changed by the referee if he deems appropriate.
   b) Warm up can also be completely omitted if both players ask for that.
   c) If only one player wants to do the warm up, he/she has the right to do it. The opponent can have a non-active role.
   d) During the warm up talking between player and her/his coach is not allowed.

4) Prior to the start of the warm up the referee will toss a coin for the service. The first player on the list will be asked to choose head or tail. The player winning the coin toss will be given the choice of taking or giving away the first serve to her/his opponent.

5) The referee will roll the ball to the serving player and ask both players (first the receiver then the server) if they are ready to play. When the referee receives positive acknowledgement (“Yes”) from both players, the referee announces the score and the number of the serve. Then the referee will signal the beginning of play.

6) The referee sounds a whistle to conduct the match.
   a) Play will be started and stopped with one blast, one to start or stop.
   b) A double whistle for a goal.
   c) A long whistle when the set/match is over. At the end of the set/match the referee must announce the winner and the score of the set/match.

**Referees’ conduct**

All the referees must keep an appropriate behaviour to the role they are playing, for all the duration of the tournament.

They also commit themselves to fulfil impartially and scrupulously the duties assigned to them and to align to the technical standard for implementation.

All the referees must abstain from declarations or appreciations harmful to the dignity of referee’s category.

All the referees must also abstain from commenting the refereeing with strangers, players, coaches etc....
All the referees must have a correct attitude; they can eventually explain with firmness and politeness the reason of their decision talking with clear and firm voice.

At no time during a tournament should a referee show his/her nationality. They should not wear anything to show their nationality.

Dr Elena Santini

IBSA International Referee Lecturer
Showdown Tournament Organization Essentials

To organize a Showdown tournament is a great experience, there is nothing like a good sports event to promote **sportsmanship** and **friendly competition**.

Sports events bring a range of advantages to all participants, like players, coaches, officers and staff.

There are several Showdown events that can be organized: promotional and regional events, national or international tournaments, top twelve, national or continental or world championships.

Whichever Showdown event you would like to set up, the organization is made up of 4 phases:

1. **Planning**: feasibility study, set up team and plans, partner and sponsors scouting
2. **Organizing**: event implementation, communication coordination and control
3. **Execution**: competition
4. **Post-Event Analysis**: evaluation

**Planning and organizing** are the 2 preparatory phases and represent the **60% of the jobs connected to event organization**.

The preparatory study for a sports event takes much more time and energy than the execution itself.

The tasks of the Organizing Committee in these first 2 phases are:

- determine **feasibility** of the event finding partners for accommodation and venues, analyzing budget and finance and find, if it's possible, sponsors;
- determine the date of the event, avoiding to be in conflict with other Showdown events;
- provide information about the event to the Showdown Community;
- have good communication with all the people involved (athletes, coaches, referees, staff etc...).

**Feasibility** of the event is based on economical and organizational factors.

The choice of the partners is very important to create a successful event. The economical and service agreement LOC establishes with its partners is crucial for the good outcome of the event.

The **partners** needed for an event are:

- **Hotel** - The accommodation plan is more than a question of securing the necessary numbers of rooms. It is about using the available facilities to create the best possible living, playing and working conditions during the event for each of the various groups involved.
- **Venue** - It would be surely ideal if the location of accommodation and the competition venue were in the same building (e.g. hotel with meeting rooms or proper rooms for play). If that is not possible, the location of the accommodation should not be so far from the competition venue but if the locations are quite far, LOC should provide a transfer service between the two. The venue should be provided of enough rooms to play in. Room must be big enough (minimum 4x7 meters) for the play.
• **Transfer** - It will be necessary to find some partners in order to supply the transportation service. The Organizer has to provide the transfer for all the participants to/from nearest Train Station or Airport to/for the Hotel and/or Venue.

Then it is necessary to analyze the other organizational costs, normally including:

- playing rooms' rent,
- playing tables' rent,
- referees' hotel accommodation, full board and travel costs,
- referees' per diem (only IBSA sanctioned events),
- match office operator (if not volunteer),
- technical delegates' hotel accommodation, full board, travel costs and per diem (only IBSA sanctioned events),
- classifiers' hotel accommodation, full board, travel costs and per diem (only IBSA sanctioned events),
- anti-doping (only IBSA sanctioned events).

Considering the costs to support and an estimated number of participant, the Organizer defines the **participation fee** and communicates it to the participants in the invitation with all the details for payment.

**Communication** is also very important. Gathering and giving the right information is a **key-moment** for the organization.

It is strongly recommended to:

- Prepare a good invitation with detailed tournament description,
- Prepare a good entry form with detailed information needed by LOC,
- Prepare a good transfer form with detailed information needed by LOC.
- Prepare a detailed program of the event.

It is important to have a **e-mail address dedicated to the event** with an **high reactivity** to the participants' messages.

Between the planning of the event and its execution there is a delicate phase: **planning the technical details of the Tournament**.

Organizer has to decide how many tables will be used. Based on that it has to invite the proper number of International Referees, to set the Playing System according to the Guidelines, to prepare a web platform to have online results etc...

All these information have to be communicated to the participants in the clearest way possible.

If everything we said until now it is properly settled you will proceed smoothly until the beginning of the event.

The following phase is the **execution** and takes **30% of the whole work of event organization**. LOC has to put into practice the planning and organizing work done previously.

The main tasks of execution:
- Transfer of the participants from airport/station to hotel,
- Check-in and accreditation of the participants,
- Orientation of participants (explain services, position of the rooms etc...),
- Smooth start of the event (opening ceremony),
- Information of participants (technical meeting),
- Follow the course of the event (competition phases),
- Assure transfer between venue and hotel (if needed),
- Closing the event (Closing and prize giving ceremony),
- Check-out of the participants,
- Transfer of the participants from hotel to airport/station.

At the end of the Event, the Organizer must self analyze its work by: reporting good and bad situation occurred, getting information from the participants about their satisfaction, having a feedback from the service suppliers/sponsors, preparing financial report.

All these info are indispensable to get better for the next events.

Dr Elena Santini
Event Manager and Tournament Organizer