

Indicating Where to Stroke or Spark a Ball

It is not appropriate for captains or other players to hold Gateball sticks, laser pointers or anything in the hand above the court [outer-field and inner-field] to indicate where they wish a player to stroke or spark a ball.

All Gateball referees in Australia are expected to ask anyone who is doing so to cease. Players are expected to follow this instruction from referees. Holding a piece of equipment in this manner, will be deemed as entering the court and players are reminded that, according to Q171 this is “*absolutely inappropriate behaviour*” (WGU Q&A 2019 p179) In those cases where an outside line is not marked players are asked to remain at least .5m from the inside line. This allows linespersons and the recorder to walk around the court without obstruction. The Rules also define a stick as a piece of equipment for stroking and sparking. No other use is condoned.

If a player was entitled to point with a stick, a referee would have to make sure that balls and officials were not touched. This would divert a referee's attention from their prime task of concentrating on the balls and the the stroker's actions. A referee has the power to deal with this under play interference rules (*Article 19, Play Interference: Clause 1, Play Interference*)

Referees are also obliged to identify competition hazards, assess risks and incorporate risk control strategies. Holding a stick in the court is a hazard and to ensure the safety of players and officials is not permitted (eg Community Officiating General Principles, Sports Australia.) Where there is any safety concern a referee may be required “*to make decisions to problems arising during the game that are not included in the Game Rules*” (*Article 23, Referees, Clause 2. Rights of the Chief Referee*)

Action by the referee in a situation where a players points with a stick or other device is governed by *Article 19, Play Interference: Clause 1, Play Interference* . This states “*The following will be regarded as play interference: (1) When a manager or player does not comply with the essential rules governing the manager and player as prescribed in Article 4, Clause 4, and, even though the referee gives warnings, a member of the same team does not follow the instructions of the referee. (2) When the referee determines that a manager or player is interfering with the game*”.

Finally, players and referees are reminded that games should be played in a respectful manner. Article 4, Manager and Players Clause 4 Basic Conditions to be Observed by the Manager and Players, demonstrates the spirit within which a game should be played:.

2. “*Those who are involved in the game must accept the decisions of the referee in the spirit of true sportsmanship*”.

3. “*The manager and players must treat the other teams, teammates, referees, and spectators in the spirit of fair play, and communicate with courtesy*”.

If a person involved in a game indicates by holding a handheld device above the court where to stroke or spark a ball, the referee should first warn the player not to do so. If the person or another person within the same team involved in a game repeats the action, play interference sanctions should be applied if player(s) fail to take note of the warning.

The captain is to verbally describe where the player is to stroke or spark the ball to, and, may indicate by using his hand, from outside of the court.