



## **ANALYSED - THE SIX INCIDENTS FOR WHICH MOSTAFA ASAL WAS BANNED**

### **MITIGATION**

(1) For each and every incident, the PSA have accused and found Mostafa Asalguilt of breaking the squash rules “**deliberately**”. This is possible in Squash, at times, when a “movement” which caused the problem is “inconsistent” with a movement which could be deemed to have correct and with fair intent and within the interpretations of the rules and, also, perhaps more importantly, different from all the movements he has made in the patch prior to the incident. After all, the “offending movement worthy of a ban must be significantly different from all the movements that, so far, the referee has not commented on.

**However, if it could remotely be argued that said movement could have been consistent with correct and fair intent and within the interpretations of the rules, then it really is not proper, right or fair to deem it to have been “deliberately” improper.**

You will see that in each and every case, bar one, it is possible to argue that his actions were consistent with correct and fair intent and within the interpretations of the rules. The “bar one”, you will see, was an action after the completion of a match and so not a playing incident involving another player.

(2) For each and every incident, the opponent’s movements in relation to the incidents should also be taken into consideration and related to the ensuing incident to establish whether their movement contributed to the incident and/or, at the very least, provided for mitigation.

As these decisions impact so heavily on the accused player, the search for mitigation should be exhaustive.

In my opinion, the PSA made no search for mitigation whatsoever.

### **INCIDENT 1**

OCTOBER 2021 PSA accuse Mostafa Asal of “deliberate physical abuse” for what is clearly an accidental collision with a huge degree of mitigation.

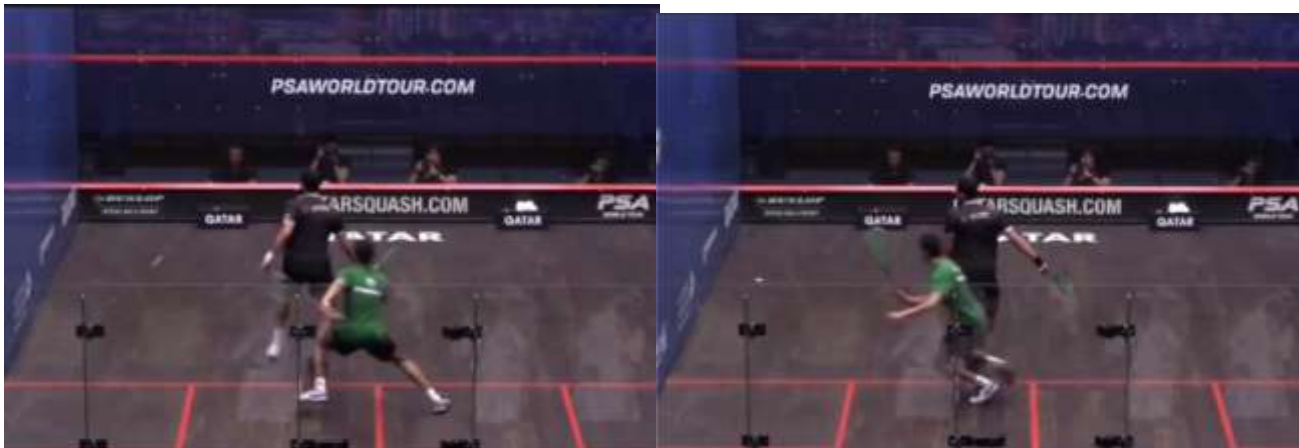
As both players are right handed, the side walls will be referred to as forehand and backhand walls.

STILLS FOR YOU TO STUDY (followed by link to video)



1

2



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Link to video: <https://youtu.be/r3K6ZHR6zWo>

Mostafa Asal is in black and striker.

- (1) STILL ONE - Mostafa Asalis in front of his opponent in the front backhand side of the court (not central) and UNUSUALLY (this is important as it adds to the mitigation) has taken up a position facing the forehand wall, so the his left foot is in front of him with both feet parallel to the forehand wall and his back completely to the backhand wall.

He has done this to indicate to his opponent that he is most likely to play a shot to the forehand side as he is facing that way giving him the option of a disguised shot to the backhand side.

- (2) STILL 2 – Mostafa Asal then uses this positioning as disguise for an unexpected shot around himself short into the front BACKHAND hand corner hoping, at the very least, to wrong foot his opponent.
- (3) STILL 3 - His opponent **is temporarily fooled** enough to make a small move to his forehand side as hoped for by Mostafa Asal, before radically having to change his direction towards the front backhand corner
- (4) STILL 4 – Mostafa Asal executes the only real movement open to him in order to at the very least start facing the front wall and make some recovery towards the T. This type of movement is what would be expected and is perfectly normal.

**MITIGATION:** - However, with these relative body positions, this movement caused a problem. Mostafa Asal was further towards the backhand side than normal and his opponent was initially wrong footed and still with a foot well into the forehand side of the court, late, off balance and desperately lunging for a difficult ball to reach near the front backhand wall.

This combination of two players in unusual positions but playing as expected resulted in an accidental collision.

SPECIFICALLY, MOSTAFA ASAL's leg movement. As said earlier, his leg movement is perfectly normal and the one he would be expected to make.

The important factor that makes it a normal movement is that at no time does his left recovery leg move away from being directly (or near enough) underneath his left shoulder. Standing or moving in such a way that your feet are "shoulder width" apart is your PERSONAL SPACE, and it could be argued that the opponent has run into Mostafa Asal's personal space.

### **FINAL ANALYSIS**

For a leg movement to be considered abnormal, it must at the very least be:

- (a) clearly moving outside of its expected range (ie sticking out) and certainly well out from the "shoulders' width apart" range.
- (b) look stupidly obvious.
- (c) Player has his back to his opponent and has no idea where he is and therefore could not execute a deliberate trip.

**PSA SANCTION** – 1 MONTH'S PLAYING SUSPENSION AND £1000 FINE AND AN ILLEGAL SUSPENDED SUSPENSION OF ONE MONTH SUSPENDED FOR 52 WEEKS.

## INCIDENTS 2& 3

These are combined as the PSA combined them into a dual accusation with separate sanctions possible for each.

SEPTEMBER 2022 PSA accuse Mostafa Asal of two incidents “deliberate dangerous play” with what are clearly an accidental collisions with a huge degree of mitigation particularly in relation to the movements of his opponents.

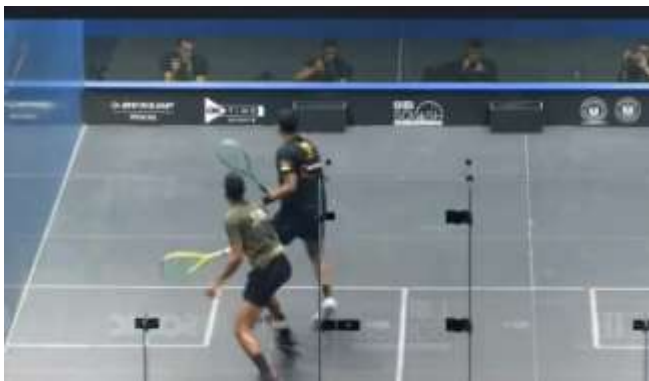
Mostafa Asal is in black and striker.

As all players are right handed, the side walls will be referred to as forehand and backhand walls.

### Incident 2

Mostafa Asal is accused of deliberate use of his **LEFT** leg to block his opponent from getting to the ball AND a dangerous and excessive swing

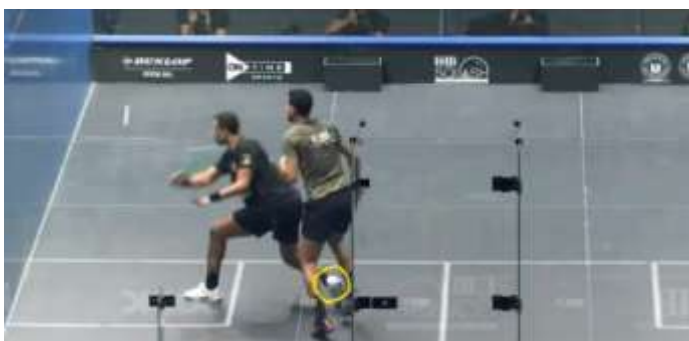
STILLS FOR YOU TO STUDY (followed by link to video)



1



2



3



4



5

Link to video:<https://youtu.be/-QrzPk68PZM>

#### CONTEXT FROM THE VIDEO:

Mostafa Asal was clearly moving from side to side in front of his opponent having complete control of the T and the rally. The movement that resulted in the collision was a continuation of the movement in front of his opponent, so IN CONTEXT, was normal and expected. His opponent simply wished it stop and placed himself behind his opponent with no real chance of getting the ball simply to stop Mostafa Asal's dominance.

STILL 1 –Mostafa Asal is presented with an easy volley to play IN FRONT of his opponent and on the short line giving him a huge positional advantage.

STILL 2 – As Mostafa Asal prepares to volley, his opponent begins to move up BEHIND him in an effort to negate his positional disadvantage.

STILL 3 –His opponent is so desperate to negate the positional disadvantage he has put himself in, that, PRIOR TO MOSTAFA ASAL's strike, he places himself directly behind him and LESS THAN A FEW INCHES FROM HIM and clearly STRADDLING Mostafa Asal's rear standing leg (see yellow circle), making it impossible for Mostafa Asal to even stand up.

This is known as "crowding" and is an offence in the rules of squash.

STILL 4 – Mostafa Asal strikes the ball and does the absolutely standard movement which is a recovery onto his rear leg prior to a clearing movement towards the T.

Every man and his dog would have expected this movement and been prepared for it as would have his opponent.

STILL 5 – Two different players showing what a dangerous and excessive swing really looks like!

THE REAR LEG (Right not left – see below)

Compare stills 3 and 4 – between the strike and contact with his opponent, the rear leg has not moved AT ALL – NOT ONE MILIMETRE. The PSA have accused him of “shooting the **LEFT** leg out as a deliberate blocking action.” This is quite clearly FALSE and INACCURATE on TWO COUNTS.

(1) **His left leg is one yard away from his opponent and makes no contact with his opponent**

(2) His right leg does not move at all.

FURTHERMORE, the video puts the movement into context showing it to be very much part of an ongoing pattern of movement which both players could recognise but which Mostafa Asal's opponent chose to himself BLOCK as it was a losing pattern for him. So apart from it being his opponent who used crowding to block the normal movement that was going on, there was CLEARLY NO DEVIATION from that normal movement by Mostafa Asal. ie no sudden change in what he had been doing up to the incident and certainly no unusual leg movements.

AND YET, he was found guilty as charged – of “shooting his **LEFT** leg out in order to deliberately block his opponent”. This is quite extraordinary as apart from there being no shooting of either leg in any direction, certainly his left leg made no contact with his opponent.

THE ARM

Shamefully, the referee in charge did not recognise the classic “safety arm lift” that good players execute when they realise that their opponent is so close that they might get hit by the racket. This safety manoeuvre is the lifting of the racket VERTICALLY and TO FULL EXTENSION to ensure that the racket head finishes well away from the opponent's head. Mostafa Asal executed this perfectly and as you can see managed to make his racket head finish several feet away from his opponent's head.

**Look at STILL 5 to see for the definition of a dangerous and excessive swing**

Yet, he was still found guilty as charged of a dangerous and excessive swing.

MITIGATION

The mitigation in this case is quite obvious. The opponent has entered Mostafa Asal's personal space, by straddling his rear leg PRIOR to his strike and is guilty of serious and

dangerous crowding of Mostafa Asal, giving Mostafa Asal no possible exit from his shot without a collision resulting.

**PSA SANCTION** for incidents 2 and 3 combined – 2 MONTH'S PLAYING SUSPENSION AND £2000 FINE AND AN ILLEGAL SUSPENDED SUSPENSION OF ONE MONTH SUSPENDED FOR 52 WEEKS.

### Incident 3

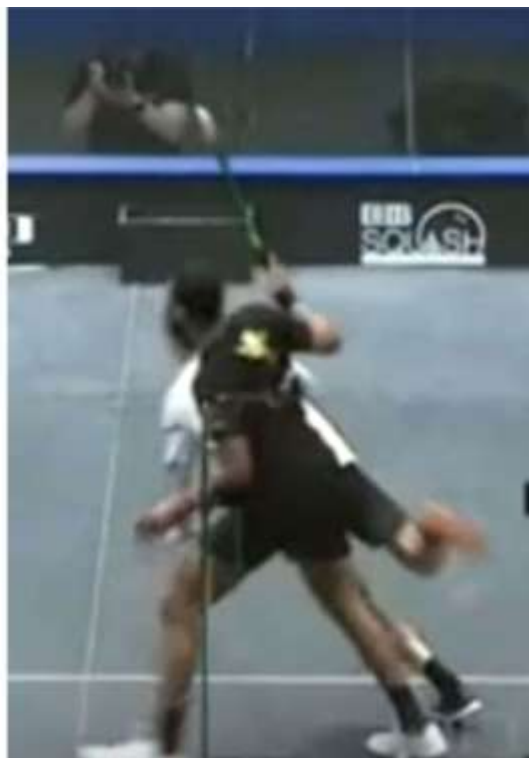
Mostafa Asal is accused of deliberate use of his **LEFT** leg to block his opponent from getting to the ball.

STILLS FOR YOU TO STUDY (followed by link to video)

Mostafa Asal is in black and striker.

As all players are right handed, the side walls will be referred to as forehand and backhand walls.





2

Link to video: <https://youtu.be/6GkTiQgFR1E>

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STILL 1 – shows Mostafa Asalon the T in front of opponent who has presented Mostafa Asal with an easy backhand drop shot and who has surrendered all positional advantage.

Mostafa Asal simply puts out his left out as his weight bearing leg to play a simple drop shot.

The still also shows that Mostafa Asal's last point of refence of his opponent's position just prior to focusing on his strike was that his opponent was behind him and on his BACKHAND side.

Any player from this position would feel it reasonable to play the drop shot and recover onto his back leg in order to give his opponent clear unobstructed access to the ball on his backhand side, which is exactly what Mostafa Asal does.

Unfortunately, for both players, his opponent was not happy to surrender the positional advantage and makes a folorn dash to try and regain it by attempting to run around Mostafa Asal as he is clearing from his strike exactly as you would expect him to do and exactly as his opponent would have expected him to do.

His opponent would have know exactly the risk he was taking.

The direct line was to Mostafa Asal's backhand side and Mostafa Asal obeyed all the rules by clearing that direct path but his opponent broke the rules of taking the direct line – as required by the rules – and took a hugely indirect line that Mostafa Asal could not have

known as he had his back to him at all times.

STILL 2 – shows that Mostafa Asal's rear RIGHT leg does not do anything at all other than place its heel down. There is absolutely no shooting of any leg, left or right. Into the opponent's path.

#### MITIGATION

The mitigation is:

- 1) His opponent plays an atrocious shot into the middle of the court which Mostafa Asal can play from the T towards the front of the backhand wall without moving. His opponent has surrendered 100% of the positional advantage and in his desperation to negate his now terrible positional disadvantage, attempts to go round the front of Mostafa Asal while he is playing his shot and clearing with no real chance of doing so without creating an incident.
- 2) quite clearly that Mostafa Asal is simply obeying the rules and, with reference to his last known knowledge of his opponent's position, clearing a direct path to where he has hit the ball and doing that by initially standing back on to the rear leg WITHOUT MOVING IT! The video does show a second movement, but that movement is still consistent with clearing the direct path to the ball and therefore still consistent with obeying the rules even if it is argued that that was misguided. Overtrying to obey the rules is not an offence of any sort, let alone one that carries a suspension.

Bear in mind that the PSA found Mostafa Asal guilty of shooting his **LEFT** leg out to block his opponent, a more ridiculous finding could not exist.

**PSA SANCTION** for incidents 2 and 3 combined – 2 MONTH'S PLAYING SUSPENSION AND £2000 FINE AND AN ILLEGAL SUSPENDED SUSPENSION OF ONE MONTH SUSPENDED FOR 52 WEEKS.

#### **Incidents 4, 5 and 6**

These are combined, because the PSA combined them as evidence of "aggravated behaviour" which carry bigger automatic sanctions

Incident 4 – accused of "Abuse of Racket or Equipment and/or O. Unsportsmanlike Conduct" for kicking the front wall as part of an after match winning celebration

Incident 5 – accused of "Physical Abuse and/or P. Dangerous Play" by deliberately hitting his opponent with his racket head

Incident 6 – accused of "Unsportsmanlike Conduct" by grabbing his opponent's playing hand.

**Incident 4** – accused of "Abuse of Racket or Equipment and/or O. Unsportsmanlike Conduct" for kicking the front wall as part of an after match winning celebration

Video link: [https://youtu.be/IC3sG\\_U4qAw](https://youtu.be/IC3sG_U4qAw)

**We can dismiss** this incident in passing. Yes. Mostafa Asal is guilty of a marginally inappropriate victory celebration. However, a victory celebration does not affect the outcome of the match, does not impinge on the opponent in any way and is not confrontational with any referee. It's just a moment of releasing pent up emotions.

At no time should ever be considered as reason for suspending a player for UP TO A YEAR.

**Incident 5**- accused of "Physical Abuse and/or P. Dangerous Play" by deliberately hitting his opponent with his racket head.

VIDEO LINK in REAL TIME ONLY as SLOW MOTION used by TV dramatically distorts the element of time: <https://youtu.be/fRtXGBDO3q4>

Mostafa Asal is in red and is the non-striker

As all players are right handed, the side walls will be referred to as forehand and backhand walls.

Points to take from the video:

- 1) Mostafa Asal's opponent plays a very poor shot right into the middle of the court and is actually in Mostafa Asal's way when he wants to strike the ball, so is breaking a basic squash rule.
- 2) This shot and the resulting awkward situation it created was TOTALLY UNEXPECTED and could not have been ANTICIPATED. This is the most vital relevant point because Mostafa Asal is being accused of DELIBERATELY hitting his opponent with his racket. To do so, necessarily requires afore-thought planning followed by execution of plan.

In real time, it is quite evident that Player had no time to plan anything other than strike the ball when in a very awkward situation with his opponent blocking a free swing.

- 3) At all times, Mostafa Asal's eyes stay fixated on the ball and never look forward at any time (to find his opponent's head)
- 4) The execution required impossible accuracy to provide a strike on the head just enough to off-put but not break the skin and draw blood. Just not possible in the time given – tenths of a second.
- 5) The actual racket movement is a total natural one. (a) his wrist was cocked and needed uncocking and he was bringing it down to rest in his normal preparation position for his next shot, like all good players, in front of his chest.

As this downward movement is a perfectly normal movement to make from that position, mitigation must be considered as there is no extraordinary, unusual or circumspect movement that “reaches out to look for his opponent’s head”.

In short, Mostafa Asal, apart from being impeded in his shot prior to strike, simply did not have the time ( $1/10^{\text{th}}$  of a second) to plan and execute any such suggested deliberate act.

It is quite simply and obviously an accidental contact.

**Incident 6**– Mostafa Asal is accused of “Unsportsmanlike Conduct” by grabbing his opponent’s playing hand when his opponent is passing BEHIND him!

Mostafa Asal is in red and is the non-striker

As all players are right handed, the side walls will be referred to as forehand and backhand walls.

STILL FOR YOU TO STUDY (followed by link to video)





Video Link: <https://youtu.be/WNp-9WDbbo>

### **THE PUSH and the natural counteraction to it**

The still clearly shows Mostafa Asal's opponent pushing him in the back. This causes Mostafa Asal's back to rotate anti-clockwise forcing his left arm and elbow into his opponent's racket path and causing the elbow to travel upwards and backwards as he attempts to counteract the forward momentum imposed on the top half of his body by the push.

### **THE THREADING OF THE RACKET UNDER MOSTAFA ASAL'S NOW RAISED ELBOW**

It is clear from the still that Mostafa Asal's opponent, as he is pushing him, is about to bring his racket and playing handup through the now present gap between the now raised elbow and Mostafa Asal's body. This will happen in a flash.

### **TENSE and UNGIVING ARM**

Mostafa Asal's arm will naturally be tense and ungiving as he is using it to purposefully counteract the push in the back and regain balance.

### **MITIGATION**

There is clear mitigation for the resulting the push in the back created an instinctive counterbalancing movement by Mostafa Asal of raising his left elbow backwards, thus resulting in his opponent threading his racket through and under the elbow.

**PSA SANCTION** for incidents 4, 5 and 6 combined – 3 MONTH'S PLAYING SUSPENSION AND £5000 FINE.

## **SUMMARY**

### **MITIGATION**

As said at the outset, if there are mitigating circumstances with movements that can be found to be consistent with the playing circumstances and the rules, and no movements that are VERY OBVIOUSLY AND OVERTLY INCONSISTENT with the playing circumstances and the rules, then the accusations of DELIBERATE foul play CANNOT and SHOULD NOT BE UPHOLD. Furthermore, if it is possible to say in any way, that the opponents' movements were in any way contributory, then any accusations of a deliberate act should be withdrawn and the incidents should be deemed accidental.

In Incident 1 – the players' positions were unusual and contributed to the incident with his opponent initially going the wrong way

In Incident 2 – his opponent was guilty of serious crowding

In Incident 3 – his opponent took an indirect line to the ball that Mostafa Asal could not have anticipated

In Incident 4 – a marginally inappropriate victory celebration can never warrant a playing suspension

In Incident 5 – his opponent was crowding throughout

In Incident 6 – his opponent pushed him in the back causing Mostafa Asal's body position to change unexpectedly, further causing Mostafa Asal's left arm and elbow to raise behind him and stiffen in an effort to recover his balance from the push.

If any of the above can remotely be argued as being true, then all these incidents should have been deemed accidental and not even worthy of strokes never mind a ban