

UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

Intramural Sports



RACQUETBALL RULES HANDOUT

ELIGIBILITY RULES:

1. You must have a University of Tennessee ID to participate. NO ID, NO PLAY...NO EXCEPTIONS!
2. No Person shall play on more than one team per sport. If caught doing so by supervisor or official, Player shall be suspended for remainder of season and that game shall be forfeited. It may result in a game and one-half lost. Opposing team does not have to protest if caught by supervisor or official.
3. No person shall use false identification in order to participate. If caught, person will be suspended from Intramural Sports and possibly RecSports for a period of time determined by the Intramural Program Coordinator.

THE GAME

1. Game time is forfeit time. Any individual or team missing the Captain's Meeting will be removed from the bracket.
2. Racquetball is played by two or four players. When played by two, it is called singles and when played by four, doubles. A non tournament variation of the game that is played by three players is called cut-throat.
3. Racquetball is a competitive game in which each player uses a strung racquet to serve and return the ball.
4. The objective is to win each rally by serving or returning the ball so the opponent is unable to keep the ball in play. A rally is over when a player (or team in doubles) is unable to hit the ball before it touches the floor twice, is unable to return the ball in such a manner that it touches the front wall before it touches the floor, or when a hinder is called.
5. Points are scored only by the serving side when it serves an irretrievable serve (an ace) or wins a rally. Losing the serve is called a side out in

- singles. In doubles, when the first server loses the serve, it is called a handout and when the second server loses the serve, it is a side out.
6. A match is won by the first side winning two games. The first two games of a match are played to 15 points. If each side wins one game, a tiebreaker game is played to 11 points.

COURTS AND EQUIPMENT

The specifications for the standard four wall racquetball court are:

1. **Dimensions.** The dimensions shall be 20 feet wide, 40 feet long and 20 feet high, with a back wall at least 12 feet high. All surfaces shall be in play, with the exception of any gallery opening, surfaces designated as out-of-play for a valid reason (such as being of a very different material or not in alignment with the back wall), and designated court hinders.

2. **Markings.** Racquetball courts shall be marked with lines 1 1/2 inches wide as follows:

1. **Short Line.** The back edge of the short line is midway between, and is parallel with, the front and back walls.
2. **Service Line.** The front edge of the service line is parallel with, and five feet in front of, the back edge of the short line.
3. **Service Zone.** The service zone is the 5' x 20' area bounded by the bottom edges of the side walls and by the outer edges of the short line and the service line.
4. **Service Boxes.** The service boxes, used in doubles play, are located at each end of the service zone and are designated by lines parallel with the side walls [see 4.2(b)]. The edge of the line nearest to the center of the court shall be 18 inches from the nearest side wall.
5. **Drive Serve Lines.** The drive serve lines, which form the drive serve zones, are parallel with the side wall and are within the service zone. For each line, the edge of the line nearest to the center of the court shall be 3 feet from the nearest side wall.
6. **Receiving Line.** The receiving line is a broken line parallel to the short line. The back edge of the receiving line is five feet from the back edge of the short line. The receiving line begins with a line 21 inches long that extends from each side wall. These lines are connected by an alternate series of six inch spaces and six inch lines. This will result in a line composed of 17 six inch spaces, 16 six inch lines, and 2 twenty-one inch lines.
7. **Safety Zone.** The safety zone is the 5' x 20' area bounded by the bottom edges of the side walls and by the back edges of the short line and the receiving line. The zone is observed only during the serve.

SERVE

1. The server will have two opportunities to put the ball into play.
2. The player or team winning the coin toss has the option to either serve or receive at the start of the first game. The second game will begin in reverse order of the first game. The player or team scoring the highest total of points in games 1 and 2 will have the option to serve or receive first at the start of the tiebreaker. If both players or teams score an equal number of points in the first two games, another coin toss will take place and the winner of the toss will have the option to serve or receive.
3. The server may not start the service motion until the score or "second serve" has been called. The referee shall call the score as both server and receiver prepare to return to their respective positions, shortly after the previous rally has ended--even if the players are not ready. The serve is started from any place within the service zone.
4. Neither the ball nor any part of either foot may extend beyond either line of the service zone when initiating the service motion. Stepping on, but not beyond, the line is permitted. However, when completing the service motion, the server may step beyond the service (front) line provided that some part of both feet remain on or inside the line until the served ball passes the short line. The server may not step beyond the short line until the ball passes the short line.

OUT SERVES

Any of the following results in an out:

1. Two Consecutive Fault Serves or a single fault serve in one serve play.
2. Missed Serve Attempt. Any attempt to strike the ball that results in a total miss or in the ball touching any part of the server's body, including the foot. Also, allowing the ball to bounce more than once during the service motion.
3. Touched Serve. Any served ball that on the rebound from the front wall touches the server or server's racquet before touching the floor, or any ball intentionally stopped or caught by the server or server's partner.
4. Fake or Balk Serve. Any movement of the racquet toward the ball during the serve that is non-continuous and done for the purpose of deceiving the receiver. If a balk serve occurs, but there is no deceit was involved, the option of declaring "no serve" and having the serve replayed without penalty can be exercised.
5. Illegal Hit. An illegal hit includes contacting the ball twice, carrying the ball, or hitting the ball with the handle of the racquet or part of the body or uniform.

6. Non Front Wall Serve. Any served ball that does not strike the front wall first.
7. Crotch Serve. Any served ball that hits the crotch of the front wall and floor, front wall and side wall, or front wall and ceiling is an out serve (because it did not hit the front wall first). A serve into the crotch of the back wall and floor is a good serve and in play. A served ball that hits the crotch of the side wall and floor beyond the short line is in play.
8. Out of Court Serve. An out of court serve is any served ball that first hits the front wall and, before striking the floor, either goes out of the court or hits a surface above the normal playing area of the court that has been declared as out-of-play for a valid reason.
9. Safety Zone Violation. An immediate loss of serve shall result if, after the serve has been struck, the server or doubles partner steps into the safety zone, before the served ball passes the short line.

RETURN OF SERVE

Receiving Position

1. The receiver may not break the plane of the receiving line with the racquet or body until the ball either bounces in the safety zone or else crosses the receiving line.
2. The follow through may carry the receiver or the racquet past the receiving line, but neither may break the plane of the short line unless the ball is struck after rebounding off the back wall.
3. Any violation by the receiver results in a point for the server.

Defective Serve. A player on the receiving side may not intentionally catch or touch a served ball (such as an apparently long or short serve) until the referee has made a call or the ball has touched the floor for a second time. Violation results in a point.

Legal Return. After a legal serve, a player receiving the serve must strike the ball on the fly or after the first bounce, and before the ball touches the floor the second time; and return the ball to the front wall, either directly or after touching one or both side walls, the back wall or the ceiling, or any combination of those surfaces. A returned ball must touch the front wall before touching the floor.

Failure to Return. The failure to return a serve results in a point for the server.

CHANGES OF SERVE

A server is entitled to continue serving until one of the following occurs:

1. Out Serve.
2. Two Consecutive Fault Serves or a single fault serve in one serve play
3. Failure to Return Ball. Player or team fails to keep the ball in play as required by.
4. Penalty. Player or team commits a penalty hinder which results in an out. Side out. Retiring the server in singles is called a side out.
5. Effect of Side out. When the server (or serving team) receives a side out, the server becomes the receiver and the receiver becomes the server.

PENALTIES

A penalty results in the loss of the rally. A penalty does not necessarily have to be an intentional act. Any of the following results in a penalty:

- 1). Failure to Move.** A player does not move sufficiently to allow an opponent a shot straight to the front wall as well as a cross-court shot which is a shot directly to the front wall at an angle that would cause the ball to rebound directly to the rear corner farthest from the player hitting the ball. In addition, when a player moves in such a direction that it prevents an opponent from taking either of these shots it is a penalty.
- 2). Stroke Interference.** This occurs when a player moves, or fails to move, so that the opponent returning the ball does not have a free, unimpeded swing. This includes unintentionally moving in a direction that prevents the opponent from making a shot.
- 3). Blocking.** Moves into a position which blocks the opponent from getting to, or returning, the ball; or in doubles, the offensive player who is not returning the ball hinders or impedes either defensive player's ability to move into a position to cover the pending shot.
- 4). Moving into the Ball.** Moves in the way and is struck by the ball just played by the opponent.
- 5). Pushing.** Deliberately pushes or shoves opponent during a rally.

6). Intentional Distractions. Deliberate shouting, stamping of feet, waving of racquet, or any other manner of disrupting one's opponent is a penalty.

7). View Obstruction. A player moves across an opponent's line of vision just before the opponent strikes the ball.

8). Wetting the Ball. The players, particularly the server, should ensure that the ball is dry prior to the serve. Any wet ball that is not corrected prior to the serve shall result in a penalty hinder against the server.

9). Apparel or Equipment Loss. If a player loses any apparel, equipment, or other article, play shall be immediately stopped and that player shall be called for a penalty hinder, unless the player has just hit a shot that could not be retrieved. If the loss of equipment is caused by a player's opponent, then a replay hinder should be called. If the opponent's action is judged to have been avoidable, then the opponent should be called for a penalty hinder.

TIMEOUTS

Each player or team is entitled to three 30 second timeouts in games to 15 and two 30 second timeouts in games to 11. Timeouts may not be called by either side once the service motion has begun.

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