



Intramural Racquetball Rules

The Game

- **Objective** — 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 side makes an error, or is unable to return the ball before it touches the floor twice.
- **Points and Outs** — Points are scored only by the serving side, when it serves an ace or wins a rally. When the serving side loses a rally, it loses the serve. Losing the serve is called an out in singles.
- **Game** — a game is won by the side first scoring 15 points.
- **Match** — a match is won by the side first winning two games.

Play Regulations

Serve, Generally

- **Order** — The player or side winning the toss becomes the first server and starts the first game. The receiving player or side in the first game shall serve first in the second game. In a tie-breaker it shall be that player accumulating the greatest number of points in the first two games who shall serve first.
- **Place** — The server may serve from any place in the service zone. No part of either foot may extend beyond either line of the service zone. Stepping on the line (but not beyond it) is permitted. Server must remain in the service zone until the served ball passes the short line. Violations are called foot faults.
- **Manner** — A serve is commenced as the ball leaves the server's hand. The ball must bounce on the floor in their service zone and on the first bounce be struck by the server's racquet so that it hits the front wall and on the rebound hits the floor back of the short line, either with or without touching one of the side walls. A balk serve, or fake swing shall be deemed an infraction and be judged a handout.

Defective Serves

- **Dead Ball Serves** — A dead ball serve results in no penalty and the server is given another serve without canceling a prior illegal serve.
- **Fault Serves** — Two fault serves results in a handout.
- **Out Serves** — An out serve results in a handout.

Dead Ball Serves

- **Dead Ball Serves** — Dead ball serves do not cancel any previous illegal serve. They occur when an otherwise legal serve:
 - **Hits Partner** — Hits the server's partner on the fly on the rebound from the front wall while the server's partner is in the service box. Any serve that touches the floor before hitting the partner in the box is short.
 - **Screen Balls** — Passes too close to the server or the server's partner to obstruct the view of the returning side. Any serve passing behind the server's partner and the side wall is an automatic screen.

Note: Screen balls are a judgment call on the part of the referee. Any ball that passes within eighteen inches of the server's body on either side shall be deemed a screen ball. It shall not be ruled a screen if the receiving player is obviously overplaying his position in order to protect his offside.

- **Court Hinders** — Hits any part of the court that under local rules is a dead ball.

Fault Serves

- **Fault Serves** — The following serves are fault and any two in succession will result in a handout.
- **Foot Faults** — The foot fault results:
 1. when the server leaves the service zone before the served ball passes the short line.
 2. when the server's partner leaves the service box before the served ball passes the short line.
 3. when the server steps over the service or short line.
- **Short Serve** — A short serve is any served ball that first hits the front wall and on the rebound hits the floor in front of the short line either with or without touching one side wall.
- **Three-Wall Serve** — Any ball served that first hits the front wall and on the rebound hits two side walls on the fly.

- **Ceiling Serve** — Any served ball that touched the ceiling after hitting the front wall either with or without touching one side wall.
- **Long Serve** — A long serve is any served ball that first hits the front wall and rebounds to the back wall before touching the floor.

Out Serves

- **Out Serves** — Any one of the following serves results in a handout.
- **Failure of Server** — Failure of server to put the ball into play within ten seconds of the calling of the score.
- **Missed Ball** — Any attempt to strike the ball on the first bounce that results either in a total miss or in touching any part of the server's body other than his racquet.
- **Non-Front Serve** — Any served ball that strikes the server's partner, or the ceiling, floor or side wall, before striking the front wall.
- **Touched Serve** — Any served ball that on the rebound from the front wall touches the server, or touches the server's partner while any part of his body is out of the service box, or the server's partner intentionally catches the served ball on the fly.
- **Out-of-Order Serve** — In doubles, when either partner serves out-of-order. Any points which may have been scored during an out-of-order serve will automatically void with the score reverting to the score prior to the out-of-order serve.
- **Crotch Serve** — If the served ball hits the crotch in the front of the wall it is considered the same as hitting the floor and is an out. A crotch serve into the back wall is good and in play. A served ball hitting the side wall crotch beyond the short line is good and in play.
- **Fake or Balk Serve** — A balk serve is defined as a non-continuous movement of the racquet towards the ball as the server drops the ball for the purpose of serving.

Return of Serve

- **Receiving Position** — The receiver(s) must stand at least five (5) feet back of the short line, as indicated by the three (3) inch vertical line on each side wall, and cannot enter into this safety zone until the ball has been served and passes the short line but, if the ball bounces before crossing the five (5) foot short line, the receiver may cross the line and hit the ball after it has bounced. A violation of this line would result in a point for the server.
- **Defective Serve** — To eliminate any misunderstanding the receiving side should not catch or touch a defectively served ball until called or it has touched the floor for the second time.
- **Legal Return** — After the ball is legally served, one of the players on the receiving side must strike the ball with his racquet either on the fly or after the first bounce and before the ball

touches the floor the second time to 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 may not touch the floor before touching the front wall. It is legal to return the ball by striking the ball into the back wall first, then hitting the front wall on the fly or after hitting the side wall or ceiling.

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

Rallies

Each legal return after the serve is called a rally. Play during rallies shall be according to the following rules:

- **One or Both Hands** — Only the head of the racquet may be used at any time to return the ball. The ball must be hit with the racquet in one or both hands, switching hands to hit a ball is an out. The use of any portion of the body is an out.
- **One Touch** — In attempting returns, the ball may be touched or struck only once by one player on the returning side (a carried ball is a ball that rests on his racquet in such a way the effect is more of a sling or throw than a hit and shall be ruled a point or handout as is applicable). In doubles, both partners may swing at, but only one may hit the ball. A violation of this or the preceding rule results in a handout or point.
- **Return Attempts** —
 1. In singles, if a player swings at but misses the ball in play, the player may repeat his attempt to return the ball until it touches the floor for the second time.
 2. In doubles, if one player swings at but misses the ball, both he and his partner may make further attempts to return the ball until it touches the floor the second time. Both partners on the side are entitled to return the ball.
 3. In singles or doubles, if a player swings at but misses the ball in play and in his/hers, or his/hers partner's attempt again to play the ball there is an unintentional interference by an opponent it shall be a hinder.

Dead Ball Hinders

- **Dead Ball Hinders** — Hinders are two types - dead ball and avoidable, Dead Ball Hinders as described in this rule result in the point being replayed.
- **Situations** — When called the following are dead ball hinders:
 - A. Court Hinders. Hits any part of the court which under local rules is a dead ball.
 - B. Hitting Opponent. Any returned ball that touches an opponent on the fly before it returns to the front wall.

C. **Body Contact.** Any body contact with an opponent that interferes with seeing or returning the ball.

D. **Screen Ball.** Any ball rebounding from the front wall close to the body of a player on the side which just returned the ball, to interfere with or prevent the returning side from seeing the ball.

E. **Straddle Ball.** A ball passing between the legs of the player on the side which just returned the ball, if there is no fair chance to see or return the ball.

F. **Other Interference.** Any other unintentional interference which prevents an opponent from having a fair chance to see or return the ball.

- **Effect** — A call of a hinder stops the play and voids situation following, such as the ball hitting a player. The players themselves can call a hinder while holding up their swing, such a call should be made immediately.
- **Avoidance** — While making an attempt to return the ball, a player is entitled to have a direct path to the ball and an unobstructed view of the ball after it leaves the front wall. It is incumbent upon the players to give their opponents a free, uninhibited swing at the ball. This applies in doubles as well. It is not a hinder when one player interferes with their team-mate.

Avoidable Hinders

- **Avoidable Hinders** — An avoidable hinder results in an out or a point depending upon whether the offender was serving or receiving.
- **Failure to Move** — Does not move sufficiently to allow opponent his shot.
- **Blocking** — Moves into a position effecting a block, on the opponent about to return the ball, or, in doubles, one partner moves in front of an opponent as his partner is returning the ball.
- **Moving into the Ball** — Moves in the way and is struck by the ball just played by his opponent.
- **Pushing** — Deliberately pushes or shoves opponent during a rally.

Moves so as to restrict opponents swing so that player returning the ball does not have a free, unimpeded swing.