

CEDARVILLE UNIVERSITY

INTRAMURAL RACQUETBALL RULES

1. DEFINITIONS

A. 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 and a "handout" in doubles.

B. Game. A game is won by the side first scoring 15 points.

C. Match. A match is won by the first side winning two games. The third game, if necessary, of a match is played to eleven (11) points. **It is not necessary to win any game by two (2) points.**

D. Short Line. The short line is midway between and is parallel with the front and back walls dividing the court into equal front and back courts.

E. Service Line. The service line is parallel with and located 5 feet in front of the short line.

F. Service Zone. The service zone is the space between the outer edges of the short and service lines.

G. Service Boxes. A service box is located at each end of the service zone by lines 18 inches from and parallel with each side wall.

H. Receiving Lines. Five feet back of the short line, vertical lines shall be marked by a broken line.

2. PLAY REGULATIONS

A. Serve, In Singles

1. Order. The player or side winning the toss becomes the first server and starts the first game, and the third game, if any.

2. 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."

3. Manner. A serve begins as the ball leaves the server's hand. The ball must bounce to the floor in the service zone and on the first bounce be struck by the server's racquet so that it hits the front wall first and on the rebound hits the floor back of the short line, either with or without touching one of the side walls.

4. Readiness. Serves shall not be made until the receiver is ready.

B. Serve, In Doubles.

1. Server. At the beginning of each game in doubles, each side shall inform their opponents of the order of service, which shall be followed throughout the game. Only the first server serves the first time up and continues to serve first throughout the game. When the first server is out--the side is out. Thereafter both players on each side shall serve until a handout occurs. It is not necessary for the server to alternate serves to their opponents.

2. Partner's Positions. On each serve, the server's partner shall stand erect with his/her back to the side wall and with both feet on the floor within the service box until the served ball passes the short line. Violations are called "foot faults."

C. DEFECTIVE SERVES. Defective serves are of three types resulting in penalties as follows:

1. Dead Ball Serve. A dead ball serve results in no penalty and the server is given another serve without cancelling a prior illegal serve. Dead ball serves do not cancel any previous illegal serve. They occur when an otherwise legal serve:

A. 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 a short.

B. Screen Balls. Passes too close to the server or the server's partner and obstructs the view of the returning side. Any serve passing behind the server's partner and the side wall is an automatic screen.

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

2. Fault Serve. Two consecutive fault serves result in a sideout.

3. Out Serves. An out serve results in a sideout.

D. DEAD BALL SERVES.

5. FAULT SERVES. The following serves are faults and any two in succession result in a handout:

A. Foot Faults. A 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 zone before the served ball passes the short line.

B. Short Serve. A short serve is any served ball that first hits the front wall and on rebound hits the floor in front of the back edge of the short line either with or without touching one side wall.

C. Three-Wall Serve. A three-wall serve is any ball served that first hits the front wall and on the rebound hits two side walls on the fly.

D. Ceiling Serve. A ceiling serve is any served ball that touches the ceiling after hitting the front wall either with or without touching one side wall.

E. 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.

F. Out of Court Serve. Any ball going out of the court on the serve.

6. OUT SERVES. Any one of the following serves results in a handout:

A. Bounces. Bouncing the ball more than three times while in the service zone before striking the ball. One bounce is counted each time the ball hits the floor within the service zone. Once the server is within the service zone and the receiver is ready, the ball may not be bounced anywhere but on the floor within the service zone. Accidental dropping of the ball counts as one bounce.

B. 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.

C. Non-Front Service. Any served ball that strikes the server's partner, or the ceiling, floor or side wall, before striking the front wall.

D. Touched Serve. Any served ball that on the rebound from the front wall touches the server, or touches the server's box, or the server's partner intentionally catches the served ball on the fly.

E. 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 be automatically void with the score reverting to the score prior to the out-of-order serve.

F. Crotch Serve. If the served ball hits the crotch in the front 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.

7. RETURN OF SERVES

A. Receiving Position. The receiver (or receivers) must stand behind the receiving line which is indicated on the court with a broken line five feet in back of the short line. The receiver must allow the served ball to cross this line before striking it on the return. Any infraction results in a point for the server.

B. Defective Serve. To eliminate any misunderstanding the receiving side should not catch or touch a defectively served ball until it has touched the floor for the second time.

C. Fly Return. In making a fly return, no part of the receiver's body or racquet may enter into the service zone. A violation by a receiver results in a point for the server.

D. 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 wall, 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.

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

8. CHANGES OF SERVE.

A. Handout. A server is entitled to continue serving until:

(1) **Out serve.** He/she makes an out serve under **Rule 6** or;

(2) **Fault Serves.** He/she makes two fault serves in succession under **Rule 5** or;

(3) **Hits Partner.** He/she hit his/her partner with an attempted return before the ball touches the floor a second time.

(4) **Return Failure.** He/she or his/her partner fail to keep the ball in play by returning it as required by the rule dealing with the Legal Return in **7(d)**.

(5) **Avoidable Hinder.** He/she or his/her partner commits an avoidable hinder described below.

B. Side-out.

(1) **In Singles.** In singles, retiring the server retires the side.

(2) **In Doubles.** In doubles, the side is retired when both partners have been put out, except on the first serve as provided in rule **2B.1.** of these rules.

C. Effect. When the server or the side loses the serve, the server or serving side shall become the receiver; and the receiving side, the serve; and so alternately in all subsequent services of the game.

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

A. 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 out. The use of any portion of the body is an out.

B. One Touch. In attempting returns, the ball may be touched only once by one player on the returning side. In doubles, both partners may swing at, but only one may hit the ball. Each violation of (a) or (b) results in a handout or point.

C. Return Attempts.

(1) In Singles. In singles, if a player swings at but misses the ball in play, the player may repeat his/her attempts to return the ball until it touches the floor the second time.

(2) In Doubles. In doubles if one player swings at but misses the ball, both he/she and his/her partner may make further attempts to return the ball until it touches the floor the second time. Both partners on a side are entitled to an attempt to return the ball

(3) Hinders. In singles or doubles, if a player swings at but misses the ball in play, and in his/her partner's attempt again to play the ball there is an unintentional interference by an opponent it shall be a hinder.

D. Touching Ball. Except as provided in **Rule 10**, (a)(2), any touching of a ball before it touches the floor the second time by a player other than the one making a return is a point or out against the offending player.

E. Dry Ball. During the game and particularly on service every effort should be made to keep the ball dry. Deliberately wetting shall result in an out.

F. Broken Ball. If there is any suspicion that a ball has broken on the serve or during a rally, play shall continue until the end of the rally. The referee or any player may request the ball be examined. If the referee decides the ball is broken or otherwise defective, a new ball shall be put into play and the point replayed.

G. Play Stoppage.

(1) If a player loses a shoe or other equipment, or foreign objects enter the court, or any other outside interference occurs, the referee shall stop the play.

(2) If a player loses control of his/her racquet, time should be called after the point has been decided, providing the racquet does not strike an opponent or interfere with ensuing play.

10. **DEAD BALL HINDERS.** Hinders are of two types--"dead ball" and "avoidable" dead ball hinders as described in this rule result in the point being replayed. Avoidable hinders are described in **Rule 11**.

A. Situations. When called by the referee, the following are dead ball hinders:

(1) **Court Hinders.** Hits any part of the court which under local rules is a dead ball.

(2) **Hitting Opponent.** Any returned ball that touches an opponent on the fly before it returns to the front wall.

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

(4) **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. See **Rule 4 (b)**.

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

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

B. Effect. A call by the referee of a "hinder" stops the play and voids any situation following, such as the ball hitting a player. No player is authorized to call a hinder, except on the back swing and such a call must be made immediately. The decision of the referee will be final as to whether or not the violation impeded the ensuing rally.

C. Avoidance. While making an attempt to return the ball, a player is entitled to a fair chance to see and return the ball. It is the duty of the side that has just served or returned the ball to move so that the receiving side may go straight to the ball and not be required to go around an opponent. The referee should be liberal in calling hinders to discourage any practice of playing the ball where an adversary is disadvantaged. It is no excuse that the ball is "killed," unless in the opinion of the referee the ball could not be returned. Hinders should be called without a claim by a player, especially in close plays and on game points.

D. In Doubles. In doubles, both players on a side are entitled to a fair and unobstructed chance at the ball and either one is entitled to a hinder even though it naturally would be his/her partner's ball and even though his/her partner may have attempted to play the ball or that he/she may already have missed it. It is not a hinder when one player hinders his/her partner.

11. **Avoidable Hinders.** An avoidable hinder results in an "out" or a point depending upon whether the offender was serving or receiving.

(1) **Failure to Move.** Does not move sufficiently to allow opponent his/her shot.

(2) **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/her partner is returning the ball, or

(3) **Moving into Ball.** Moves in the way and is struck by the ball just played by his/her opponent.

(4) **Pushing.** Deliberately pushing or shoving an opponent during a rally.

12. REST PERIODS.

A. Delays. Deliberate delay exceeding ten seconds by server, or receiver shall result in an out or point against the offender.

B. Time Outs. During a game each player in singles, or each side in doubles, either while serving or receiving may request a "time out" for a towel, wiping glasses, change or adjustment. Each "time out" shall not exceed 30 seconds. No more than two "time outs" in a game shall be granted each singles player or each team in doubles. No player shall call a time out once the ball is in play.

C. Injury. No time out shall be charged to a player who is injured during play. An injured player shall not be allowed more than a total of fifteen minutes of rest. If the injured player is not able to resume play after 15 minutes, the match shall be awarded to the opponent or opponents.

For additional information or clarification, see the Official Rules of the United States Racquetball Association .