



RECREATIONAL SERVICES

Intramural Rulebook



4-Wall Racquetball

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Rule 1. The Game	2
Rule 2. Courts and Equipment	2
Rule 3. Play Regulations	3
Rule 4. One-Wall and Three -Wall Rules	9
Intramural Co-Rec Adaptations	10

RACQUETBALL RULES

Intramural Racquetball rules are adapted from the American Amateur Racquetball Association.

Rule 1. The Game

Section 1. Types of Games. Racquetball may be played by two or four players. When played by two it is called "singles" and when played by four is called "doubles".

Section 2. Description. Racquetball, as the name implies, is a competitive game in which a racquet is used to serve and return the ball.

Section 3. 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 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.

Section 4. Points and Outs. 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.

Section 5 - Game. A game is won by the first side scoring 15 points. In a 15-point game you need not win by two points.

Section 6. Match. A match is won by the side first winning two games. The third game, if necessary, will be played to 11 points.

Rule 2. Courts and Equipment

Section 1. Courts. The specifications for the standard four wall racquetball court are:

Article 1 - Dimensions. The court shall be 20 feet wide, 20 feet high, and 40 feet long with a back wall at least 12 feet high.

Article 2 - Lines and Zones. All racquetball courts shall be divided and marked on the floors with 1 ½ inch wide red or white lines as follows:

- a. Short Line - The back edge of the short line is midway between, and is parallel with, the front and back walls.
- b. 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.
- c. Service Zone - The service zone is the five-foot area between the outer edges of the short line and service line.
- d. Service Box - The service boxes are located at each end of the service zone and are designated by lines parallel with the side walls. The edge of the line nearest to the center of the court shall be 18 inches from the nearest side wall.
- e. Drive Serve Lines - The drive serve lines, which form the drive serve zone, are parallel with the side wall and are within the service zone. The edge of the line nearest to the center of the court shall be three feet from the nearest side wall.
- f. 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 two 21-inch lines.

- g. Safety Zone - The safety zone is the five-foot area bounded by the back edges of the short line and the receiving line. The zone is observed only during the serve.

Section 2. Ball Specifications

Article 1 - Official Ball. The ball shall be 2 1/4 inches in diameter; weigh approximately 1.4 ounces; have a hardness of 55-60 inches durometer; and bounce 68-72 inches from a 100-inch drop at a temperature of 70-74 degrees Fahrenheit.

Section 3. Ball Selection. A ball shall be selected by the players for use in each match in all tournaments. During a game the players may select another ball. Balls that are not round or which bounce erratically shall not be used.

Section 4. Racquet Specifications.

Article 1 - Dimensions. The racquet, including bumper guard and all solid parts of the handle, may not exceed 22 inches in length.

Article 2 - Frame. The racquet frame may be any material judged to be safe.

Article 3 - Thong. The racquet frame must include a thong that must be securely attached to the player's wrist.

Article 4 - Strings. The strings of the racquet should be gut, monofilament, nylon, graphite, plastic, metal, or a combination thereof, providing the strings do not mark or deface the ball.

Using an illegal racquet will result in forfeiture of the game in progress or, if discovered between games, forfeiture of the preceding game.

Rule 3. Play Regulations

Section 1. Serve (Singles or Doubles)

Article 1 - Order. The player or side winning the coin toss has the option to serve or receive for 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 for the start of the tie-breaker. In the event that both players or teams score an equal number of points in the first 2 games, another coin toss will take place and the winner of the toss will have the option to serve or receive.

Article 2 - Place. The serve is started from any place within the service zone. Certain drive serves are an exception. 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 over, the lines is permitted. When completing the service motion, the server may step over 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 over the short line until the ball passes the short line.

Article 3 - Manner. After taking a set position inside the service zone, a player may begin the service motion-any continuous movement which results in the ball being served. Once the service motion begins, the ball must be bounced on the floor in the zone and be struck by the racquet before it bounces a second time. After being struck, the ball must hit the front wall first and on the rebound hit the floor beyond the back edge of the short lines, either with or without touching one of the side walls.

Article 4 - Readiness. Serves shall not be made until the receiving side is ready.

Article 5 - Delays. Delays exceeding 10 seconds shall result in an out if the server is the offender or a point if the receiver is the offender.

- a. The 10 second rule is applicable to the server and receiver simultaneously. Collectively, they are allowed up to 10 seconds, after the score is called, to serve or be ready to receive. It is the server's responsibility to look and be certain the receiver is ready. If the receiver is not ready, he must signal so by raising his racquet above his head or

completely turning his back to the server. (These are the only two acceptable signals.)

b. Serving while the receiving player/team is signaling not ready is a fault serve.

Article 6 - Drive Service Zones. The drive serve lines will be three feet from each side wall in the service box, dividing the service area into two 17-foot service zones for drive serves only. The player may drive serve to the same side of the court on which he is standing, so long as the start and finish of the service motion takes place outside the drive serve zone.

Violations of this rule, either called or not called, may be appealed.

- a. The drive serve zones are not observed for crosscourt drive serves, the hard-Z, soft-Z, lob or half-lob serves.
- b. The racquet may not break the plane of the 17-foot zone while making contact with the ball.
- c. The drive serve line is not part of the 17-foot zone. Dropping the ball on the line or standing on the line while serving to the same side is an infraction.

Section 2. Serve (Doubles)

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

Article 2 - Partner's Position. On each serve, the server's partner shall stand erect with back to the side wall and with both feet on the floor within the service box from the moment the server begins the service motion until the served ball passes the short line. Violations are called foot faults. However, if the server's partner enters the safety zone before the ball passes the short line, the server loses service.

Section 3. Defective Serves. Defective serves are of three types, resulting in penalties as follows:

Article 1 - Dead Ball Serve. A dead ball serve results in no penalty and the server is given another serve without canceling prior illegal serve.

Article 2 - Fault Serve. Two fault serves result in an out (either side out or handout).

Article 3 - Out Serves. An out serve results in an out (either side out or handout).

Section 4. Dead Ball Serves. Dead ball serves do not cancel any previous illegal serve. They occur when an otherwise legal serve:

Article 1 - Hits Partner. Hits the server's partner on the fly on the rebound from the front wall while that partner is in the service box. Any serve that touches the floor before hitting the partner in the box is short.

Article 2 - Court Hinders. Hits any part of the court that under local rules is a dead ball.

Article 3 - Broken Ball. If the ball is determined to have broken on the serve, a new ball shall be substituted and the serve shall be replayed.

Section 5. Fault Serves. The following serves are faults, and any two in succession result in an out:

Article 1 - Foot Faults. A foot fault results when:

- a. The server does not begin the service motion with both feet in the service zone.
- b. The server steps completely over the service line (no part of the foot on or inside the service zone) before the served ball crosses the short line.
- c. In doubles, the server's partner is not in the service box with both feet on the floor and back to the wall from the time the server begins the service motion until the ball passes the short line.

Article 2 - 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.

Article 3 - 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.

Article 4 - 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.

Article 5 - 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.

Article 6 - Out of Court Serve. Any served ball that first hits the front wall then goes out of the court before striking the floor.

Article 7 - Bouncing Ball Outside Service Zone. Bouncing the ball outside the service zone as a part of the service motion is a fault serve.

Article 8 - Illegal Drive Serve. A drive serve in which the player fails to observe the 17-foot drive service zone.

Article 9 - Screen Serve. A served ball that first hits the front wall and on the rebound passes so closely to the server, or server's partner in doubles, that it prevents the receiver from having a clear view of the ball. (The receiver is obligated to place himself in good court position, near center court, to obtain that view.) The screen serve is the only fault serve which may not be appealed.

Article 10 - Serving Before the Receiver is Ready. A serve is made while the receiver is not ready.

Section 6. Out Serves. Any one of the following serves results in an out:

Article 1 - Fault Serves. Two consecutive fault serves.

Article 2 - Failure to Serve. Failure of server to put the ball into play.

Article 3 - 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. Also, allowing the ball to bounce more than once during the service motion.

Article 4 - Touched Serve. Any served ball that on the rebound from the front wall touches the server or server's racquet, or any ball intentionally stopped or caught by the server or server's partner.

Article 5 - Fake or Balk Serve. Any movement of the racquet toward the ball during the serve which is noncontinuous and done for the purpose of deceiving the receiver. If a balk serve occurs, but the referee believes that no deceit was involved, he has the option of declaring "no serve" and have the serve replayed without penalty.

Article 6 - 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.

Article 7 - Non-Front Wall Serve. Any served ball that does not strike the front wall first.

Article 8 - 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.

Article 9 - Out-of-Order Serve. In doubles, when either partner serves out of order, the points scored by that server will be subtracted and an out serve will be called: if the second server serves out of order, the out serve will be applied to the first server and the second server will resume serving. If the player designated as the first server serves out of order, a side out will be called. The referee should call no serve as soon as an out-of-order serve occurs. If no points are scored while the team is out of order, only the out penalty will have to be assessed. However, if points are scored before the out of order condition is noticed and the referee cannot recall the number, the referee may enlist the aid of the line judges (if they are being used) to recall the number of points to be deducted.

Article 10 - Ball Hits Partner. A served ball that hits the doubles partner while outside the doubles box results in loss of serve.

Article 11 - Safety Zone Violation. If the server, or doubles partner, enters into the safety zone before the served ball passes the short line, it shall result in the loss of serve.

Section 7. Return of Serve

Article 1 - Receiving Position

- a. The receiver may not enter the safety zone until the ball bounces or crosses the receiving line.
- b. The receiver may not strike the ball until the ball breaks the plane of the receiving line. The follow-through may carry the receiver or his racquet past the receiving line.
- c. Neither the receiver nor his racquet may break the plane of the short line during the service return, except if the ball is struck after rebounding off of the back wall.
- d. Any violation by the receiver results in a point for the server.

Article 2 - Defective Serve. The receiving side should not catch or touch a defectively served ball until called by the referee or it has touched the floor for the second time.

Article 3 - Legal Return. After a legal serve, a player on the receiving team 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.

Article 4 - Failure to Return. The failure to return a serve results in a point for the server.

Section 8. Changes of Serve

Article 1 - Outs. A server is entitled to continue serving until:

- a. Out Serve - The player commits an out serve.
- b. Fault Serves - The player commits two fault serves in succession.
- c. Hits Partner (Doubles) - The player hits his partner with an attempted return.
- d. Return Failure - A player or his partner fails to hit the ball prior to its second bounce or fails to return the ball to the front wall on a fly with or without hitting any combination of walls and ceiling.
- e. Avoidable Hinder - A player or his partner commits an avoidable hinder.
- f. Hits Self - A returned ball hits the player who just struck the ball or his partner before it touches the floor for the second time.

Article 2 - Side-Out. In singles, retiring the server is a side out. In doubles, the side is retired when both partners have lost service, except that the team which serves first at the beginning of each game loses the serve when the first server is retired.

Article 3 - Effect. When the server or the serving team received a side out; the server(s) become(s) the receiver(s) becomes(s) the server(s).

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

Article 1 - Legal Hits. Only the head of the racquet may be used at any time to return the ball. The racquet may be held in one or both hands. Switching hands to hit a ball, touching the ball with any part of the body or uniform, or removing the wrist thong, result in loss of the rally.

Article 2 - One Touch. In attempting returns, the ball may be touched only once by a player or team, or the result is a loss of rally. The ball may not be carried. A carried ball is one which rests on the racquet in such a way that the effect is more of a sling or throw than a hit.

Article 3 - Failure to Return. Any of the following constitutes a failure to make a legal return during a rally:

- a. The ball bounces on the floor more than once before being hit.
- b. The ball does not reach the front wall on the fly.
- c. The ball caroms off a player's racquet into a gallery or wall opening without first hitting the front wall.

- d. A ball which obviously did not have the velocity or direction to hit the front wall strikes another player on the court.
- e. A ball struck by one player on a team hits that player or that player's partner.
- f. Committing an avoidable hinder.
- g. Switching hands during a rally.
- h. Failure to use wrist thong on racquet.
- i. Touching the ball with the body or uniform.
- j. Carry or sling the ball with the racquet.

Effect - Violations of Section 9, Articles 1, 2, and 3 result in a loss of rally. If the serving player or team loses the rally, it is an out. If the receiver loses the rally, it results in a point for the server.

Article 4 - Return Attempts

- a. In singles, if a player swings at, but misses the ball, the player may continue to attempt to return the ball until it touches the floor for the second time.
- b. In doubles, if one player swings at, but misses the ball, both partners may make further attempts to return the ball until it touches the floor the second time. Both partners on a side are entitled to return the ball.

Article 5 - Out of Court Ball

- a. After Return - Any ball returned to the front wall, which on the rebound or the first bounce goes into the gallery or through any opening in a sidewall shall be declared dead and shall be an out or point against the player failing to make the return.
- b. No Return - Any ball not returned to the front wall, but which caroms off a player's racquet into the gallery or into any opening in a sidewall either with or without touching the ceiling, side, or back wall, shall be an out or point against the player(s) failing to make the return.

Article 6 - 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, the ball will be replaced and the rally replayed. The server will get two serves. The only proper way to check for a broken ball is to squeeze by hand. Checking the ball by striking it with a racquet will not be considered a valid check and shall work to the disadvantage of the player or team which struck the ball after the rally.

Article 7 - Play Stoppage

1. If a foreign object enters the court, or any other outside interference occurs, the referee shall stop the play immediately and declare a dead-ball hinder.
2. If a player loses any apparel, equipment, or other article, the referee shall stop play immediately and declare an avoidable hinder or dead-ball hinder as described in Article 8-Replays.

Article 8 - Replays. Whenever a rally is replayed for any reason, the server is awarded two serves. A previous fault serve is not considered.

Section 10 - Dead Ball Hinders. Dead ball hinders result in the rally being replayed without penalty and the server receiving two serves.

Article 1 - Situations

- a. Court Hinders - Stop play immediately whenever the ball hits any part of the court that was designated in advance as a court hinder (such as a door handle). The referee should also stop play when the ball takes an irregular bounce as a result of contacting a rough surface (such as court light or vent) or after striking a wet spot on the floor or wall and when, in the referee's opinion, the irregular bounce affected the rally. A court hinder is the only type of hinder that is appealable.
- b. Hitting Opponent - When an opponent is hit by a return shot in flight, it is a dead-ball hinder. If the opponent is struck by a ball which obviously did not have the velocity or direction to reach the front wall, it is not a hinder, and the player who hit the ball will

lose the rally. A player who has been hit by the ball can stop play and make the call though the call must be made immediately and acknowledged by the referee.

- c. **Body Contact** - If body contact occurs which the referee believes was sufficient to stop the rally, either for the purpose of preventing injury by further contact or because the contact prevented a player from being able to make a reasonable return, the referee shall call a hinder. Incidental body contact in which the offensive player clearly will have the advantage should not be called a hinder, unless the offensive player obviously stops play. Contact with the racquet on the follow-through normally is not considered a hinder.
- d. **Screen Ball** - Any ball rebounding from the front wall so close to the body of the defensive team that it interferes with, or prevents, the offensive player from having clear view of the ball. Be careful not to make the screen call so quickly that it takes away a good offensive opportunity. A ball that passes between the legs of the side that just returned the ball is not automatically a screen. It depends on the proximity of the players. Again, the call should work to the advantage of the offensive player.
- e. **Backswing Hinder** - Any body contact either on the backswing or en route to or just prior to returning the ball which impairs the hitter's ability to take a reasonable swing. This call may be made by the player attempting to return if it is made immediately.
Note: The interference may be construed as an avoidable hinder.
- f. **Safety Holdup** - Any player about to execute a return who believes he is likely to strike his opponent with the ball or racquet may immediately stop play and request a dead ball hinder. This call must be made immediately.
- g. **Other Interference** - Any other unintentional interference which prevents an opponent from having a fair chance to see or return the ball. *Example:* The ball obviously skids after striking a wet spot on the court floor or wall.

Article 2 - **Effect**. A call of a 'hinder' stops play and voids any situation following, such as the ball hitting a player. The effect of a dead ball hinder is that the player who served shall serve again, and shall be awarded two serves.

Article 3 - **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 that the receiving side may go straight to the ball and have an unobstructed view of the ball after it leaves the front wall. The receiver must make a reasonable effort to move towards the ball and have a reasonable chance to return the ball in order for a hinder to be called.

Section 11 - **Avoidable Hinders**. An avoidable hinder results in the loss of a rally. An avoidable hinder does not necessarily have to be an intentional act and is a result of any of the following.

Article 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. Also when a player move in such a direction that it prevents an opponent from taking either of these shots.

Article 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 the partner of the opponent is returning the ball.

Article 3 - **Moving Into the Ball**. Moves in the way and is struck by the ball just played by the opponent.

Article 4 - **Pushing**. Deliberately pushes or shoves an opponent during a rally.

Article 5 - **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 the wrong direction which prevents an opponent from making an open offensive shot.

Article 6 - **Intentional Distractions**. Deliberate shouting, stamping of feet, waiving of racquet, or any other manner of disrupting one's opponent.

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

Article 8 - **Wetting the Ball**. The players, particularly the server, should insure that the ball is dry prior to the serve. Any wet ball that is not corrected prior to the serve shall result in an avoidable hinder against the server.

Article 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 an avoidable 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 dead-ball hinder should be called. If the opponent's action is judged to have been avoidable, then the opponent should be called for an avoidable hinder.

Section 12 - Timeout

Article 1 - **Rest Periods**. Each player or team is entitled to three 30-second timeouts in games to 15 and two 30-second timeouts in games to 11. Timeout may not be called by either side after service motion has begun. Calling for a timeout when none remain or after service motion has begun, or taking more than 30 seconds in a timeout, will result in the assessment of a technical for delay of game.

Article 2 - **Injury**. If a player is injured during the course of a match as a result of contact with the ball, racquet, opponent, wall, or floor, he shall be granted an injury timeout. An injured player shall not be allowed more than a total of 15 minutes of rest during the match. If the injured player is not able to resume play after total rest of 15 minutes, the match shall be awarded to the opponent(s). Muscle cramps and pulls, fatigue, and other ailments that are not caused by direct contact on the court will not be considered an injury.

Article 3 - **Equipment Timeout**. Players are expected to keep all clothing and equipment in good, playable condition and are expected to use regular timeouts and time between games for adjustment and replacement of equipment. If a player or team is out of timeouts and the referee determines that an equipment change or adjustment is necessary for fair and safe continuation of the match, the referee may award an equipment timeout not to exceed two minutes.

Article 4 - **Between Games**. The rest period between the first two games of a match is two minutes. If a tiebreaker is necessary, the rest period between the second and third game is five minutes.

Rule 4. One-Wall and Three-Wall Rules

Section 1. **Exceptions to Rules**. Basically, racquetball rules for one-wall, three-wall, and four-wall games are the same, with the following exceptions:

Article 1 - **One-Wall: Court Size**. The wall shall be 20 feet in width and 16 feet high, floor shall be 20 feet in width and 34 feet from the wall to the back edge of the long line. There should be a minimum of three feet beyond the long line and six feet outside each side to permit movement area for the players.

Article 2 - **One-Wall: Short Line**. Back edge of short line is 16 feet from front wall. Service markers, lines at least 6 lines long parallel to the midway between the long and short line, extending in from the side lines. The imaginary extension and joining of these lines indicates the service line.

Service zone - floor area inside and including the short, side, and service lines.

Receiving zone - floor area in back of the short line bounded by and including long and side lines.

Article 3 - **Three-Wall: Serve**. A serve that goes beyond the side walls on the fly is a player or side out. A serve that goes beyond the long line on the fly but is within the side walls is the same as a "short".

Article 4 - Boundaries. Board at top of front wall is considered out of play.

Article 5 - Lines. Lines are "out".

INTRAMURAL CO-REC ADAPTATIONS

Rule 1. Alternation Service and Contact Rule

Section 1. Service

- a. Player of either sex may serve to player of either sex.
- b. Succeeding serves by that team during their side must alternate.
Example: Service #1 - Male A serves Male B.
Service #2 - Male A must serve Female B.
Service #3 - Male A must again serve Male B, etc.
- c. When Female A begins her turn at service, she need not continue the alternation pattern where her partner left off. In other words, each partner begins his or her own pattern by first serving to an opponent, but each succeeding serve must alternate during his or her turn at serve.

Section 2. Play

- a. Succeeding contacts by a team during a rally must be made by a player of the opposite sex.
- b. Example 1: Male A serves Male B
Male B shot to Female A
Female A shot to Female B
Female B shot to Male A
etc.
Example 2: Male A serves to Female B
Female B shot to Female A
Female A shot to Male B
Male B shot to Male A
etc.
Example 3: Female A serves Male B
Male B shot to Male A
Male A shot to Female B
Female B shot to Female A
etc.
Example 4: Female A serves Female B
Female B shot to Male A
Male A shot to Male B
Male B shot to Females A
etc.

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