

Racquetball Rules

Play Structure

- Preliminary Matches followed by Single Elimination Tournament
- Divisions- Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced
 - Women's Singles
 - Women's Doubles
 - Men's Singles
 - Men's Doubles
 - Coed Doubles
 - Faculty/Staff
- Location: All matches played at the Sarkeys Fitness Center.

Racquetball Information

- All participants must provide a valid OU ID (with picture) prior to each contest.
 - No OU ID = No Play
- Registration will be taken at imleagues.com

The Game

- 1) Points are scored only by the serving side, when it serves an irretrievable serve (an ace) or wins a rally.
- 2) 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.
- 3) The specifications for the standard four-wall racquetball court are:
 - a. 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 backwall), and designated court hinders.
 - b. Markings. Racquetball courts shall be marked with lines 1 1/2 inches wide as follows:
 - i. Short Line. The back edge of the short line is midway between, and is parallel with, the front and back walls.
 - ii. 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.
 - iii. Service Zone. The service zone is the 5' x 20' area bounded by the bottom edges of the sidewalls and by the outer edges of the short line and the service line.
 - iv. 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 sidewall.
 - v. Drive Serve Lines. The drive serve lines, which form the drive serve zones, are parallel with the sidewall 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 sidewall.
 - vi. 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 sidewall. 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.
 - vii. Safety Zone. The safety zone is the 5' x 20' area bounded by the bottom edges of the sidewalls and by the back edges of the short line and the receiving line. The zone is observed only during the serve.
- 4) All players must wear lensed eyewear that has been warranted by its manufacturer or distributor as (1) designed for use in racquetball and (2) meeting or exceeding the then current and full ASTM F803 standard. This rule applies to all persons, including those who wear corrective lenses. The eyewear must be unaltered and worn as designed at all times.
- 5) In Open Division competition, the server will have one opportunity to put the ball into play. In all other divisions, the server will have two opportunities to put the ball into play.
- 6) 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.
- 7) The server may not start the service motion until the referee has called the score or "second serve." 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. 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 lines 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.

- 8) After taking a set position inside the service zone, a player may begin the service motion any continuous movement that results in the ball being served. Once the service motion begins, when the ball leaves the hand, it must next bounce on the floor in the zone and then, without touching anything else, be struck by the racquet before it bounces on the floor 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 line, either with or without touching one of the sidewalls.
- 9) The service motion shall not begin until the referee has called the score or "second serve" and the server has visually checked the receiver's readiness.
- 10) The referee may call a technical foul for delays exceeding ten seconds.
- 11) The ten-second rule applies to the server and receiver simultaneously. Concurrently, they are allowed up to ten 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 a receiver is not ready, they must signal by raising the racquet above the head or completely turning the back to the server. (These are the only two acceptable signals.)
- 12) Serving while the receiving player/team is signaling "not ready" is a fault serve.
- 13) After the score is called, if the server looks at the receiver and the receiver is not signaling "not ready", the server may then serve. If the receiver attempts to signal "not ready" after that point, the signal shall not be acknowledged and the serve becomes legal.
- 14) There is a drive serve line three feet from each sidewall in the service zone. Viewed one at a time, each drive serve line divides the service zone into a three-foot and a seventeen-foot section. The player may drive serve between the body and the side wall nearest to where the service motion began only if the player, the racquet, and ball (until it is struck) starts and remains outside of that three-foot drive service zone until the served ball crosses the short line. A drive serve involving "any continuous movement" beginning in one 3-foot drive service zone and continuing into the opposite 3-foot drive service zone, is a fault serve.
 - a. The drive serve zones are not observed for cross-court drive serves, the hard-Z, soft-Z, lob or half-lob serves.
 - b. The 3-foot line is part of the 3-foot zone and defines a plane that, if broken, is an infraction.
- 15) Defective serves are of three types resulting in penalties as follows:
 - a. Dead-Ball Serve. A dead-ball serve results in no penalty and the server is given another serve (without canceling a prior fault serve).
 - b. Fault Serve. Two fault serves result in an out (either a sideout or a handout).
 - c. Out Serve. An out serve results in an out (either a sideout or a handout).
- 16) Dead-Ball Serves
 - a. Dead-ball serves do not cancel any previous fault serve. The following are dead-ball serves:
 - i. Court Hinders: A serve that takes an irregular bounce because it hit a wet spot or an irregular surface on the court is a dead-ball serve. In addition, any serve that hits any surface designated by local rules as an obstruction rather than being out-of-play.
 - ii. 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, not canceling any prior fault serve.
 - iii. Fault Serves
- 17) The following serves are faults and any two in succession result in an out:
 - a. Foot Faults: A foot fault results when:
 - i. At the start of or during the service motion, any part of the server (or doubles partner), including the racquet, touches the floor outside of the service zone.
 - ii. At the end of the serve, the server steps with either foot on the floor beyond the service line (with no part of the foot on the line or inside the service zone) before the served ball crosses the short line.
 - b. Short Service: A short serve is any served ball that first hits the front wall and, on the rebound, hits the floor on or in front of the short line either with or without touching a side wall.
 - c. Three-Wall Serve: A three-wall serve is any served ball that first hits the front wall and, on the rebound, strikes both sidewalls before touching the floor.
 - d. Ceiling Serve: A ceiling serve is any served ball that first hits the front wall and then touches the ceiling (with or without touching a side wall).
 - e. Long Serve: A long serve is a served ball that first hits the front wall and rebounds to the back wall before touching the floor (with or without touching a side wall).
 - f. Bouncing Ball Outside Service Zone: Bouncing the ball outside the service zone, including the ball touching a sidewall, as a part of the service motion is a fault serve.
 - g. Illegal Drive Serve: A drive serve in which the player fails to observe the 17-foot drive service zone.
 - h. 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 take up good court position, near center court, to obtain that view.)

3. The ball is hit such that it goes into the gallery or wall opening or else hits a surface above the normal playing area of the court that has been declared as out-of-play.
 4. A ball that obviously does not have the velocity or direction to hit the front wall strikes another player.
 5. A ball struck by a player hits that player or that player's partner.
 6. Committing a penalty hinder.
 7. Switching hands during a rally.
 8. Failure to use a racquet wrist safety cord.
 9. Touching the ball with the body or uniform.
 10. Carrying or slinging the ball with the racquet.
- d. Effect of Failure to Return: 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.
- i. Return Attempts: The ball remains in play until it touches the floor a second time regardless of how many walls it makes contact with including the front wall. If a player swings at the ball and misses it, the player may continue to attempt to return the ball until it touches the floor for the second time.
 - ii. Broken Ball: If there is any suspicion that a ball has broken 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 resumes play at first serve. The only proper way to check for a broken ball is to squeeze it 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 that struck the ball after the rally).
 - iii. 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 replay hinder.
 2. If a player loses any apparel, equipment, or other article, the referee shall stop play immediately and declare a penalty hinder or replay hinder.
 - iv. Replays: Whenever a rally is replayed for any reason, the server resumes play at first serve. A previous fault serve is not considered.
- 24) A rally is replayed without penalty and the server resumes play at first serve whenever a replay hinder occurs.
- a. Situations:
- i. Court Hinders: The referee should stop play immediately whenever the ball hits any part of the court that was designated prior to the match as a court hinder (such as a vent grate). The referee should also stop play when the ball takes an irregular bounce as a result of contacting an irregular surface (such as court light or vent), after striking a wet spot on the floor or wall, and when, in the referee's opinion, the irregular bounce affected the rally.
 - ii. Ball Hits Opponent: When an opponent is hit by a return shot in flight, it is a replay hinder. If the opponent is struck by a ball that 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. Note this interference may, under certain conditions, be declared a penalty hinder.
 - iii. 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 for either player.
 - iv. Screen Ball: Any ball rebounding from the front wall so close to the body of the defensive player that it prevents the offensive player from having a clear view of the ball. (The referee should 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 a player who has just returned the ball is not automatically a screen. It depends on whether the other player is impaired as a result. Generally, the call should work to the advantage of the offensive player.
 - v. Backswing Hinder: Any body or racquet contact, on the backswing or on the way to or just prior to returning the ball, which impairs the hitter's ability to take a reasonable swing. This call can be made by the player attempting the return, though the call must be made immediately and is subject to the referee's approval. Note the interference may be considered a penalty hinder.
 - vi. Safety Holdup: Any player about to execute a return, who believes that striking the opponent with the ball or racquet is likely, may immediately stop play and request a replay hinder. This call must be made immediately and is subject to acceptance and approval of the referee. (The referee will grant a replay hinder if it is believed the holdup was reasonable and the player would have been able to return the shot. The referee may also call a penalty hinder if warranted).

- vii. Other Interference: Any other unintentional interference that prevents an opponent from having a fair chance to see or return the ball. Example: When a ball from another court enters the court during a rally or when a referee's call on an adjacent court obviously distracts a player.
 - b. Effect of Hinders: The referee's call of hinder stops play and voids any situation that follows, such as the ball hitting the player. A replay hinder stops play and the rally is replayed. The server resumes play at first serve.
 - c. Responsibility: 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 responsibility of the side that has just hit the ball to move so the receiving side may go straight to the ball and have an unobstructed view of and swing at the ball. However, the receiver is responsible for making a reasonable effort to move towards the ball and must have a reasonable chance to return the ball for any type of hinder to be called.
- 25) A penalty hinder results in the loss of the rally. A penalty hinder does not necessarily have to be an intentional act. Any of the following results in a penalty hinder:
- a. 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.
 - b. 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.
 - c. 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 players' ability to move into a position to cover the pending shot that comes into play.
 - d. Moving into the Ball: Moves in the way and is struck by the ball just played by the opponent.
 - e. Pushing: Deliberately pushes or shoves opponent during a rally.
 - f. Intentional Distractions: Deliberate shouting, stamping of feet, waving of racquet, or any other manner of disrupting one's opponent.
 - g. View Obstruction: A player moves across an opponent's line of vision just before the opponent strikes the ball.
 - h. 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.
 - i. 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.

For rules not specifically mentioned above refer to International Racquetball Federation Official Rules.