

# Racquetball Rules

## Rule 1 – SERVE (Singles or Doubles)

1. Order – The player or side winning the coin toss becomes the first server of the match and starts the first and third game, if necessary.
2. Start – Games are started by the referee calling, “players ready?...Serve!”
3. Place – The server may serve from any place in the service zone. No part of either foot may extend beyond either line in the service zone. Stepping on the line (but not beyond) is permitted. The server must remain in the service zone until the served ball passes the short line. Violations are called “Foot Faults.”
4. Manner – A serve is commenced by bouncing the ball on the floor in the service zone, and on the first bounce the ball is struck by the server’s racket 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.
5. Readiness – Serves shall not be made until the receiving side is ready, or the referee has called “Player’s ready!”

## Rule 2 – SERVE (Doubles)

1. Serve – 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 on each side shall occur until a hand-out occurs. It is not necessary for the server to alternate serves to the opponents.
2. Partner’s Position – On each serve, the server’s partner shall stand erect, with his back to the side wall and both feet on the floor within the service box until the served ball passes back of the short line. Violations are called “foot faults.”

### Rule 3 – DEFECTIVE SERVES

1. Dead Ball Serve – A dead ball serve results in no penalty and the server is given another serve without canceling a prior illegal serve.
2. Fault Serve – Two faults serve result in a hand-out.
3. Out Serves – An out serve results in a hand-out.

Rule 4 – DEAD BALL SERVES Dead ball serves do not cancel any previous illegal serve

1. Hits Partner – Hits the server's partner on the fly on the rebound from the wall while the server's partner is in the service box. Any serve that touches the floor before hitting the partner is a short.
2. Screen Balls – Passes too close to the server or server's partner thus obstructing the view of the returning side. Any serve passing behinds the server's partner nod the side wall is an automatic screen.
3. Court Hinders – Hits any part of the court that under local rules is a dead ball.

Rule 5 – FAULT SERVES The following serves are faults, and any two in succession results in a hand-out.

a) Foot Faults – A foot faults 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 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 the 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 before touching the floor.

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.

#### Rule 6 – OUT SERVES The following serves result in a hand-out

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Nonfront service – Any served ball that strikes the server's partner, or the ceiling, floor, or side wall, before striking the front wall.
4. 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 the partner's body is outside of the service box, or if the server's partner intentionally catches the served ball on the fly.
5. Out of Order Serve – In doubles, when either partner serves out of order. Any points the score reverting to the score prior to the out of order serve.
6. Crotch Serve – If the served ball hits the crotch (joint of front wall and floor), 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.

#### Rule 6 – RETURN OF SERVE

1. Receiving position – The receiver or receivers must stand at least 5 feet back of the short line, until it passes the short line, until returning it. Any infraction results in a point for the server.
2. Defective Serve – To eliminate any misunderstanding 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.
3. Fly Return – In making a return on the fly (volley), 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.
4. Legal Return – After the ball has been 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 a second time to return the ball to the front wall either directly or after touching one or both side walls. The back wall, the ceiling, or any combination of those surfaces. A returned ball may not touch the floor before touching the front wall first, then hitting the front wall on the fly, or after hitting the side wall or ceiling.

### **Rule 8 – CHANGES OF SERVE**

Hand-Out – A server is entitled to continue serving until:

1. Out Serve – He makes an out serve as described under Rule 6.
2. Fault Serves – He makes two fault serves in succession as described under Rule 5.
3. Hits Partner (Doubles) – A returned ball hits a member of the same team which just struck the ball before the ball touches the floor the second time.
4. Return Failure – A player or his partner fails to keep the ball in play by returning the ball.
5. Avoidable Hinder – He or his partner commits an avoidable hinder under Rule 10.

6. Hits Self (Singles) - A returned ball hits the player who just struck the ball before the ball touches the floor the second time.

### 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.

Effect – When the server or the side loses the serve, the server or serving side shall become the receiver, and the receiving side shall become the server, and so this alternates for all subsequent service-outs of the game.

**Rule 9 – VOLLEYS** Each legal return after the serve is called a volley. Play during volleys shall be according to the following rules.

1. 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.
2. One Hit – 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 (1) or (2) results in a hand-out or point.
3. Return Attempts
  - a. In Singles – 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 a second time.
  - b. In Doubles – 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 a side are entitled, on any volley, to attempt to return the ball.

- c. Hinders – In singles or doubles, if a player swings at but misses the ball in play, and in his or his partner’s attempt to play the ball again there is an unintentional interference by an opponent it shall be called a hinder and the point shall be played over.
- 4. Touching Ball – Except as provided in Rule 10 covering Hinders, any touching of a ball before it touches the floor the second time by any player other than the one attempting to return the ball is a point or out against the offending player.
  - a. Ball Returning to Front Wall – A ball in play returning to the front wall and touching an opponent is played as a Hinder, however, if the ball touches the striker’s partner (in doubles) or the striker himself it is a point or out against the striker’s team.
  - b. Ball Returning from Front Wall – A ball returning from the front wall and touching any part of a player on the side just having returned the ball before it bounces twice, is a point or out against the offending side.
- 5. Out of Court Ball
  - a. After Return – Any ball returned to the front wall which on the rebound or on the first bounce goes into the gallery or through any opening in a side wall shall be declared dead and the serve replayed.
  - b. No Return – An ball not returned to the front wall, but which caroms off a player’s racquet into the gallery or into any opening in a side wall either with or without touching the ceiling, side or back wall shall be an out or point against the players failing to make the return.
- 6. Dry Ball – During the game and particularly on service, every effort should be made to keep the ball dry. Deliberate wetting of the ball shall result in an out. The ball may be inspected by the referee at any time during a game.
- 7. Broken Ball – If there is any suspicion that a ball has been broken on the serve or during a volley, play shall continue until the end of the volley.

If the referee decides the ball may be broken or otherwise defective, a new ball shall be put into play and the point replayed.

8. Play Stoppage

- If a player loses a shoe or other equipment, or foreign objects enter the court, or any outside interference occurs, the referee shall stop play.
- If a player loses control of his racquet, time should be called after the point has been decided, providing the racquet does not strike an opponent or interfere with play during the point. The condition causing the loss of racquet should then be corrected to prevent the loss on subsequent points.

Rule 10 – DEAD BALL HINDERS Hinders are of two types, “Dead Ball” and “Avoidable.” Dead ball hindes as described in this rule result in the point being replayed. Avoidable hindes result in a point or out.

1. Hinder Situation – When called by the referee, the following are dead ball hindes.

- Court Hindes – A court hinder is played if the ball hits any part of the court which under local rules is a dead ball.
- Hitting Opponent – Any returned ball that touches an opponent on the fly