

CENTER OF RECREATIONAL EXCELLENCE

RACQUETBALL RULES

Philosophy

The CORE Racquetball Program is intended to provide participants with an opportunity to play racquetball in an organized and recreational environment.

One of the goals of the program is to promote the ideals of sportsmanship and physical fitness to all participants, regardless of sex, race, creed or color. More important than any game are the participants and their needs. The Racquetball Program strives to bring area residents closer together through common interests in sportsmanship, cooperation and appreciation of the game.

Sportsmanship

A good portion of this manual is devoted to this topic, primarily out of necessity. The desire to win often produces a style of play contrary to the principles of sportsmanship and fair play. The CORE cannot and will not tolerate such a style that ignores good sportsmanship and clean play. The referee or the site supervisor can eject a player if they are abusive towards the site supervisor, officials, other players or spectators. If a player is ejected, then he/she will not be allowed to play in the next scheduled game.

Remember - It's only a game.

Players

Games can be played as singles (on versus one) or doubles (two versus two). For safety concerns, no more than 4 players in a court at a time.

Players Equipment

Racquets, balls, and eye guards are available for check-out at the Welcome Desk. It is recommended that all players wear eye guards and secure the racquet to their wrist using the strap on the end of the racquet. Closed-toed, non-marking athletic shoes must be worn at all times during play.

Duration of Game

Matches will follow a best of three games format. The team that wins two games will advance to the next round. If a team wins the first two games of a match, the third game will not be played. All games of each match will be played to 15 points, and the winner must win by two points. The game will be continued until one team wins by two points.

Tournament Play

All matches will be best 2 out of 3 games to 15. Tie breaker will be to 11 points. Must win by 2 points.

- For singles, tournament format will be round robin play. Final seeding will be based on overall win-loss record.
- For doubles, tournament format will be round robin + single elimination tournament.

Start of Play

The 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 team scoring the highest total of points in games one and two will have the option to serve or receive first at the start of the third game. In the event that both 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.

Service

- 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 line is permitted. However, when completing the service motion, the server may step beyond the front service line provided that some part of both feet remain on or inside the line until the served ball passes the short line.
- 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 line, either with or without touching one of the side walls.
- The following serves are faults and any two in succession result in an out:
 - **Foot Faults.** A foot fault results when:
 - The server does not begin the service motion with both feet in the service zone.

- 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.
 - **Short Serve.** 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.
 - **Three Wall Serve.** A three-wall serve is any served ball that first hits the front wall and, on the rebound, strikes both side walls before touching the floor.
 - **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).
 - **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).
 - **Bouncing Ball Outside Service Zone.** Bouncing the ball outside the service zone as a part of the service motion is a fault serve.
 - **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, 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.)
 - Serving before the Receiver is ready.
- Any of the following results in a side out:
 - **Two Consecutive Fault Serves.**
 - **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.
 - **Touched Serve.** Any served ball that, on the rebound from the front wall, touches the server or server's racquet before touching the floor, or any ball intentionally stopped or caught by the server or server's partner.
 - **Fake or Balk Serve.** Any movement of the racquet toward the ball during the serve which is non-continuous and is done for the purpose of deceiving the receiver. If a balk serve occurs, but no deceit was involved, the option of declaring "no serve" and having the serve replayed without penalty can be exercised.
 - **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.
 - **Non-Front Wall Serve.** Any served ball that does not strike the front wall first.
 - **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.
 - **Out-of-Court Serve.** An out-of-court serve is any served ball that first hits the front wall and, before striking the floor, either goes out of the court or hits a surface above the normal playing area of the court that has been declared as out-of-play for a valid reason (See Rule Four).

Dead Ball Hinders

A rally is replayed without penalty and the server resumes play at first serve whenever a dead-ball hinder occurs.

- Situations
 - **Court Hinders.** Play should stop immediately whenever the ball hits any part of the court that was designated in advance as a court hinder (such as a vent grate). Play should also stop:
 - 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 the irregular bounce affected the rally.
 - **Ball Hits 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. Note this interference may, under certain conditions, be declared an avoidable hinder.
 - **Body Contact.** If body contact sufficient to stop the rally occurs, 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, a hinder shall be called. 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.
 - **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. 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.

- **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. Note that the interference may be considered an avoidable hinder.
- **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 dead-ball hinder. This call must be made immediately.
- **Other Interference.** Any other unintentional interference which 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.
- **Effect of Hinders.** The call of hinder stops play and voids any situation which follows, such as the ball hitting the player. A dead-ball hinder stops play and the rally is replayed. The server resumes play at first serve.
- **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 has 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.

Avoidable Hinders

An avoidable hinder results in the loss of the rally. An avoidable hinder does not necessarily have to be an intentional act. Any of the following results in an avoidable hinder:

- **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. A cross-court shot 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 moves in such a direction that it prevents an opponent from taking either of these shots.
- **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 which prevents the opponent from making an open, offensive shot.
- **Blocking.** Moves into a position which blocks the opponent from getting to, or returning, the ball; or in doubles, a player moves in front of an opponent as the player's partner is returning the ball.
- **Moving into the Ball.** Moves in the way and is struck by the ball just played by the opponent.
- **Pushing.** Deliberately pushes or shoves opponent during a rally.
- **Intentional Distractions.** Deliberate shouting, stamping of feet, waving of racquet, or any other manner of disrupting one's opponent.
- **View Obstruction.** A player moves across an opponent's line of vision just before the opponent strikes the ball.
- **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.

Doubles Modifications

- The Serve
 - At the beginning of each game, when the first server of the first team to serve is out, the team is out. Thereafter, both players on each team shall serve until the team receives a handout and a side-out.
 - 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.
 - Changes of Serve. In doubles, the side is retired when both partners have lost service, except that the team that serves first at the beginning of each game loses the serve when the first server is retired.
- Fault Serve in Doubles (In addition to faults listed in Rule 6)

- The server's partner is not in the service box with both feet on the floor and back to (but not necessarily against) the side wall from the time the server begins the service motion until the ball passes the short line.
- A served ball that hits the doubles partner while in the doubles box results in a fault serve.
- A served ball that hits the doubles partner while outside the doubles box results in loss of serve.
- Return in Doubles
 - The rally is lost if one player hits that same player's partner with an attempted return.
 - If one player swings at the ball and misses it, 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.

Reporting Scores

- For league play only. Opponents must contact one another to schedule their game for the week. Players have between Sunday and Saturday to compete and report their scores, together, to the CORE staff at the Fitness Desk. Both players must initial the score for it to be valid.

Controversies

- The head official or site supervisor has the final say in all controversies or rule interpretations. Remember this is a recreational league based primarily on sportsmanship.

Referees have the right to interpret and use their judgement to the best of their abilities of enforcing the rules of the game properly. If a player, parent or coach shows unsportsmanlike behavior, they may be asked to leave the facility. They may be suspended for the remainder of that game or the remainder of the season. This will be up to the site supervisor, referee or program coordinator.