

-Texas A&M University-
Department of Recreational Sports
INTRAMURAL SPORTS
RACQUETBALL RULES

A. Participants

All participants must meet the eligibility standards as outlined in the RecSports Handbook.

B. Rules

Play is governed by AARA rules with Intramural exceptions. The tournament format will be determined based on number of participants. This decision will be made at the conclusion of registration.

C. Equipment

Participants must provide their own racquets. Rental racquets are available at the equipment desk. Balls must be provided by the participants and must be mutually agreed upon before the match.

D. The Game

A match is won by the first side to win two games. The first two games will be played to 15 points, and the deciding game to 11 points. Games may be won by one point. Report game results to the onsite Intramural Sports supervisor.

E. Service

1. A coin toss or other suitable means will determine first serve of the match. The individual who did not serve in the first game will serve in the second game. If a third game is necessary, **the individual/team that has scored the most combined points from the first two games shall serve first in the deciding game.** In the event that both player's/teams' scores are equal, the serve will be determined by another coin toss.
2. The service is started from any place within the service zone. No part of either foot may extend beyond either line of the service zone. An individual may step on but not over the line.
3. The server must remain in the service zone from the moment the service motion begins until the served ball passes the short line.
4. The server must call the score prior to beginning the motion for serve. Service shall not be made until the receiving team is ready.
5. The server must contact the ball on the first bounce. The served ball must hit the front wall first and on the rebound hit the floor behind the back edge of the short line, either with or without touching one of the side walls. A balk serve or fake swing at the ball shall be deemed an infraction and be judged an "out", "hand out" or "side out".
6. In doubles, when the first server is out the first time up, the side is out. Thereafter, both players on each side shall serve until each receives a hand out.
7. 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 his service motion until the served ball passes the short line.

F. Defective Serves

There are three types of defective serves:

Dead ball serve

Fault serve

Out serve

1. Dead Ball Serves

There is no penalty for a dead ball serve nor do dead ball serves cancel any previous illegal serve. The following are examples of dead ball serves:

- a. Hits partner: The ball 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 correctly positioned.
- b. Court hinders: The ball hits any part of the court that, under local rules, is a dead ball. For a court hinder to be called **there must be no attempt to return the ball**.
- c. Broken ball: If the ball breaks on the serve, a new ball shall be substituted and the serve shall be replayed, not canceling any prior fault serve.

2. Fault Serves

The following serves are faults and any two in succession result in a side-out (singles) or hand out (doubles):

- a. Foot faults
 - (1) The server does not begin the service motion with both feet in the service zone.
 - (2) The server leaves the service zone before the served ball passes the short line.
 - (3) 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.
- b. 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 (with or without touching a side wall.)
- c. Three wall serve: Any served ball that first hits the front wall and on the rebound hits the two side walls on the fly.
- d. Ceiling Serve: Any served ball that first hits the front wall and then touches the ceiling (with or without touching a side wall).
- e. Long Serve: Any 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).

3. Out Serves

- a. Missed ball: Any attempt to strike the ball that results in a total miss or in touching any part of the server's body other than the racquet.
- b. Non-front serve: Any served ball that does not strike the front wall first.

- c. Touched Serve: Any served ball on the rebound from the front wall that touches the server (or server's partner not properly positioned in the service box including the racquet) on a fly, or any ball intentionally stopped or caught by the server or server's partner.
- d. Crotch Serve: If the served ball hits the crotch of the front wall and floor, front wall and side wall, or front wall and ceiling; it is considered "no good" and is an out serve. A serve into the crotch of the back wall and the floor is good and in play. A served ball hitting the crotch of the sidewall and floor (as in a "Z" serve) beyond the short line is "good" and in play.
- e. Illegal hit: Any illegal hit (contacting the ball twice, carries or hitting the ball with the handle of the racquet or part of the body or uniform) results in an out serve.
- f. Fake or Balk Serve: Such a serve is defined as a non-continuous movement of the racquet towards the ball as the server drops the ball for the purpose of serving and results in an out serve.
- g. 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.
- h. Out of Court Serve: Any served ball that first hits the front wall and, before striking the floor, goes out of the court that has been declared out of play for a valid reason.
- i. 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.

G. Return of Serve

- 1. After the ball is legally served, one of the players on the receiving side must strike the ball with the racquet either on the fly or after the first bounce and before the ball touches the floor the second time. The ball must be returned 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.
- 2. A returned ball may not touch the floor before touching the front wall.
- 3. Failure to return a serve results in a point for the server.

H. A server is entitled to serve until:

- 1. The player commits an out serve.
- 2. The player commits two fault serves in succession.
- 3. The player hits his/her partner with an attempted return.
- 4. The player or partner fails to hit the ball on the fly or first bounce or fails to return the ball to the front wall on the fly (with or without hitting any combination of walls and ceiling).
- 5. The player or partner commits an avoidable hinder.

I. Rallies

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

- 1. 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 clothes, or removing the wrist thong result in loss of the rally.

2. In attempting returns, the ball may be touched or struck 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.)
3. Failure to make a legal return during a rally includes:
 - 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 exits the court via the open area of the back wall results in a point or side out.**
 - 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 returned ball that hits or touches the player's partner on the same play before the opposing team plays the ball.
 - f. The player or partner commits an avoidable hinder.
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 are entitled to return the ball.
5. If there is suspicion that a ball has broken on a rally, play shall continue until the end of the rally.
6. In singles a single hand out equals a side out and retires the server. In doubles a single hand out equals a side out on the first service of each game; thereafter, two handouts equal a side-out and thereby retires the serving team.

J. **Dead Ball Hinders**

Dead ball hinders result in the rally being replayed without penalty and the server receiving two serves. A dead ball hinder occurs when:

1. **Hitting an Opponent:** Any returned ball that touches an opponent on the fly before it returns to the front wall. The player that has been hit or nicked by the ball may make the call. It must be made immediately. Any ball, which hits an opponent, that obviously did not have the velocity or direction to reach the front wall shall not result in a hinder (and shall cause the player or team that hit the ball to lose the rally).
2. **Body Contact:** If body contact occurs which 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, it shall be declared a hinder. Body contact, particularly on the follow through is not necessarily a hinder. Either player involved in the contact shall make the call. This is an honor call and should not be abused or taken advantage of.
3. **Screen Ball:** Any ball rebounding from the front wall close to the body of a player on the side which just returned the ball which interferes with or prevents the returning player side from seeing the ball.
4. **Back Swing Hinder:** Any body contact either on the back swing or enroute to or just prior to returning the ball which impairs the hitter's ability to take a reasonable swing.
5. **Safety Holdup:** Any player about to execute a return who believes s/he is likely to strike his opponent with the ball or racquet may immediately stop play.
6. **Interference:** A player loses a shoe or other equipment or any other outside interference occurs.

K. **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 responsibility of the side that has just served or returned the ball to move so the receiving side may go straight to the ball and have an unobstructed view of the ball after it leaves the front wall. However, the receiver must make a reasonable effort to move toward the ball and have a reasonable chance to return it in order for a hinder to be called.

L. Avoidable Hinders

An avoidable hinder result 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:

1. The individual does not move sufficiently to allow an opponent an open shot.
2. The individual moves into position affecting 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 that opponent is returning the ball.
3. The individual intentionally moves in the way and is struck by the ball just played by the opponent.
4. The individual deliberately pushes or shoves the opponent during a rally.
5. The individual moves so as to restrict opponent's swing so that the player returning the ball does not have a free unimpeded swing.
6. Deliberate shouting, stamping of feet, waving of racquet or any manner of disrupting the player whom is hitting the ball.

M. Time Outs

1. During games to 15, each player or team is allowed two 30-second time-outs; one additional 30-second time-out in the tie breaker. A time out may not be called once the server begins the service motion.
2. In case of injury, (other than muscle cramps and pulls, fatigue and other ailments that are not caused by direct contact on the court) individuals will be awarded an injury time out. If the injured player is not able to resume play, the match will be declared a default.
3. In the case of equipment problems, individuals must use a time-out to change equipment. In unusual situations, players should consult the sport supervisor on duty.
4. Between games, a five-minute rest period will be allowed. If both parties are ready to play sooner than 5 minutes, they may start the next game.