

INTRO TO RACQUETBALL RULES & PLAY

(Audience: Friends/family watching others)

TYPES OF GAMES

Racquetball is played by two (*singles*) or four players (*doubles*). A variation of the game that is played by three players is called cut-throat. In cut-throat, one player serves and the other two players are his/her opponents. If the server wins the rally, they score a point. If they lose the rally, one of the other players becomes the server. The players take turns being the server as each player serving loses a rally.

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 hinder is called or when a player (or team in doubles): 1) is unable to hit the ball before it bounces twice, or 2) is unable to return the ball in such a way that it touches the front wall before it touches the floor.

POINTS AND OUTS

Points are scored only by the serving side when it serves an irretrievable server (an ace) or wins a rally. In doubles, when the first server loses the serve, the second server then serves. After the second server loses the serve, it is a side out.

MATCH, GAME, TIEBREAKER

A match is won by the first side winning two games. The first two games of a match are played to 15 points (win by one point). If each side wins one game, a tiebreaker game is played to 11 points (win by one point).

COURT SPECIFICATIONS

The specifications for the standard four-wall racquetball court are:

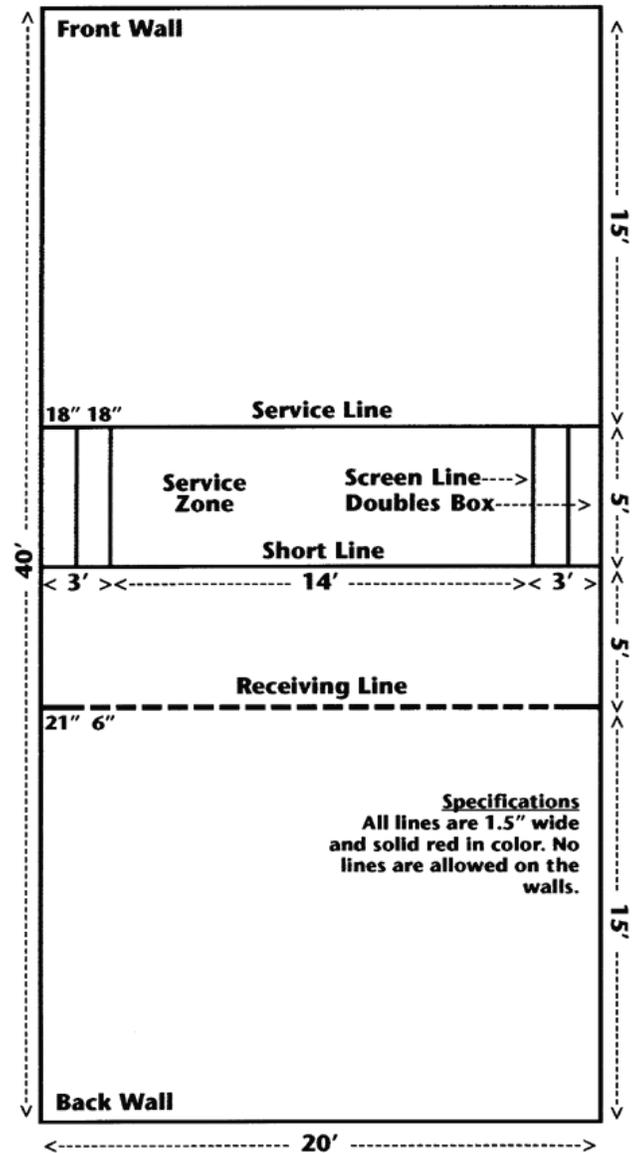
Dimensions. The dimensions of an indoor court are 20 feet wide, 40 feet long, and 20 feet high. Outdoor courts may be shorter and without back walls. All surfaces are in play, with the exception of any gallery opening, and surfaces designated as out-of-play for a valid reason (such as being of very different material or not in alignment with the back wall).

Court Markings and Uses.

Short Line. The short line is midway between the front and back walls. The serve must hit the front wall and then not bounce before crossing the short line in the air.

Service Line. The service line is five feet in front of the short line. It is the line closest to the front wall.

Service Area. The service zone is the 5' x 20' area bounded by the short line and a dashed line parallel to the short line (receiving line). The zone is observed only during the serve. Neither the server nor receiver may enter the zone until the ball has either hit the floor or crossed the line.



Graphic: © Copyright International Racquetball Federation

EYE GUARDS/WRIST TETHER

All players must wear lensed eyewear and keep their wrist tether on at all times for their safety and the safety of their opponent. No matter how careful you are, you never know when you may be hit by an errant shot. Wearing eye guards also allows you to watch the ball at all times, which will keep you from being hit by your opponent and will let you anticipate better where they are hitting the ball to. ALWAYS WEAR EYE GUARDS WHEN YOU PLAY AND USE THE WRIST TETHER ON YOUR RACQUET!

HOW TO BEGIN PLAYING

SERVING

To start playing, you have to decide who will serve first. You can do this by lagging, coin toss, or any other method you choose. To serve, the server must drop the ball in the service zone and hit it after it takes one bounce. The server gets two chances to put the ball into play. A good serve means that the ball hits the front wall first and did not hit more than one other wall before hitting the floor beyond the short line. Bad serves are called either fault serves or out serves. If a server commits two fault serves, they lose the serve, or if they commit one out serve, they lose the serve.

EXAMPLES OF FAULT SERVES

Short Service – the ball does not land over the short line.

3-Wall Serve – the ball hits more than two walls.

Ceiling Serve – the ball hits the ceiling after hitting the front wall.

Long Serve – the ball hits the back wall before hitting the floor.

Screen Serve – the ball passes so close to the server's body that the receiver cannot see it. The receiver must be in a good court position to make this call.

EXAMPLES OF OUT SERVES

Two Consecutive Fault Serves – serving two fault serves as described above.

Missed Serve Attempt – when the server drops the ball and swings at it, but completely misses it.

Non-Front Wall Serve – any ball that does not hit the front wall first.

Out of Court Server – if the ball goes out of the court before it hits the floor on the serve.

WHEN THERE IS A CHANGE OF SERVE

A server is entitled to continue serving until one of the following occurs:

They hit one *Out* serve.

They hit two *Fault* serves in a row.

They fail to keep the ball in play after their opponent's return of serve.

ABOUT THE RALLY

All of the lines on the court apply to serve and return of serve only and do not apply after a good serve has been returned and the rally has started.

During the rally, opponents take turns hitting the ball to the front wall. Players may hit the ball directly to the front wall, or use any combination of the side wall, back wall, or ceiling, as long as the ball hits the front wall before touching the floor.

The non-hitting team must yield the right of way to the hitter, including moving to worse court position if required.

The hitter should stop play whenever they believe they may injure another player with the ball, racquet or body. This is called a *Replay Hinder*, causing the last rally to be replayed. Penalty hinders are also called during tournament play. See the full rules for an explanation of that type of hinder.

WINNING A RALLY

A player wins the rally when their opponent does not make a good return by either:

- 1) *Two Bounce*. Opponent could not return the ball before the second bounce on the floor.
- 2) *Skip Ball*. Opponent's return hit the floor before touching the front wall.

MISC. HEALTH AND FITNESS BENEFITS

The average number of calories burned during racquetball play ranges from 640/hour to 822/hour.

Racquetball works nearly every muscle group, including sustained, repetitive use of large muscles that increase calorie burn and reduce fat percentage.

Racquetball players work at a constant rate of 75 to 85% of their maximum heart rate for the duration of a typical game.

An average game will take 20 minutes, during which a player will run a distance of approximately 3,650 feet – or over two miles in one hour.

Racquetball offers both aerobic and anaerobic benefits, with both sustained high-level heart rate activity and quick burst of energy required during play.

Except where noted, all text above is Copyright (c) 2008 North Carolina Racquetball Association and is directly from their poster. <http://ncracquetball.com/>

Above are general rules. Official rules found at: <http://www.usra.org/Rulebook.aspx>

**For positive or constructive feedback ...
Email: introtoracquetball@fauque.com**