

WSF RACKETBALL STANDARD RULES

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[Note: For ease of reading the male gender is used, but these references refer to both male and female players]

SECTION 1 - GENERAL RULES OF THE GAME - SINGLES

1. THE COURT

The game of Racketball is played between two players each using Racketball rackets and balls and in squash courts all of which meet WSF Specification. Racketball doubles may also be played on a wider squash court as desired.

2. THE GAME, HOW PLAYED

Racketball is played between two players each using a racket and a racketball ball both manufactured in accordance with WSF specifications (see Section 5), on squash courts compliant with WSF dimensions.

3. THE SCORE

A match consists of the best of five games. Each game uses point-a-rally scoring to 11 or 15 points*. When the score in a game is tied at 10-10 or 14 – 14 respectively, a player must win by two points. (See Section 3 for competition scoring options – e.g. best of three games).

*Note: recreational Racketball tends to be played to 15, while in competitions for better players games are usually played to 11 points.

4. POINTS, HOW SCORED

Points may be scored by either player, i.e. points are won whether the winner of the rally is serving or not. When a player fails to serve or to make a good return in accordance with the rules, the opponent wins the point. When the receiver wins a point, he becomes the server and adds one to his score.

5. THE SERVICE

- a. The right to serve is decided by the spin of a racket or coin. The server continues to serve until losing a point, after which the opponent becomes the server.
- b. At the beginning of each game, and after winning the serve, a player has the choice of serving from either service box and then alternates for as long as he scores points. However if the server serves a fault which is not taken, or a rally ends in a let, he serves again from the same box. If the server serves from the wrong box there is no penalty and the service counts as if served from the correct box, except that a receiver who does not attempt to take the service may request that it be served from the other box.
- c. The ball, before being struck, must be dropped or thrown on to the floor, without touching the wall; it must be served directly onto to the front wall between the tin and the out of court (top) line, so that on its return, unless volleyed, it falls to the floor within the back quarter of the court opposite to the server's box. Should a player, having dropped or thrown the ball on to the floor, make no attempt to strike it, it may be dropped or thrown again without penalty. A player with the use of only one arm/hand may use the racket to propel the ball onto the floor before striking it.
- d. A service is good when it is not a fault or does not result in the server serving his hand out in accordance with Rule 4(f). If the first service is a fault the server may serve a second time. The receiver may decide to play a fault on the first serve, and if he attempts to do so the service becomes good and the ball continues in play. (The receiver has not attempted to take a fault until he has clearly made an attempt to play the ball). A second service that is a fault may not be played by the receiver.
- e. A service is a fault:
 - (i) If at the time of striking the ball the server fails to have at least one foot in contact with the floor within the service box, and no part of that foot touching the line surrounding the service box.
 - (ii) If the ball is not bounced on the floor before serving. Any combination of faults during a serve counts as one fault.
 - (iii) If the ball, having been served, touches the back wall before touching the floor. It may touch the side wall before touching the floor. *A ball which strikes the back wall and floor simultaneously is a good service.*
 - (iv) If the ball, having been served, first touches the floor on or outside the short or half-court lines bordering the back quarter of the court required in Rule 4(c).
- f. A server serves his hand out and loses the service and the opponent scores a point:
 - (i) If two consecutive faults are served.
 - (ii) If the ball touches the walls before being hit by the server, or if the server fails to strike the ball after it has bounced or strikes it more than once.
 - (iii) If the ball is served onto or below the tin, or out, or against any part of the court before the front wall.
 - (iv) If the ball, before it has bounced twice on the floor or has been struck by the opponent, touches the server, his clothing or racket.

6. THE PLAY

After a good service has been delivered, the players return the ball alternately until one fails to make a good return, or the ball otherwise ceases to be in play, in accordance with the rules.

7. GOOD RETURN

A return is good if the ball, before it has bounced twice upon the floor, is returned by the striker onto the front wall above the tin, without touching the floor or any part of the striker's body or clothing, provided the ball is not hit twice or out.

8. LET

A Let is an undecided rally, and the service or rally where a Let is allowed does not count and the server serves again from the same box. A Let does not cancel a previous first fault which was not taken by the receiver.

9. RALLIES, HOW WON

A player wins a rally:

- a. Under Rule 4(f);
- b. If the opponent fails to make a good return of the ball;
- c. If the ball after being hit by the striker touches the opponent or anything carried or worn by the opponent, except as is otherwise provided by Rules 12 (a) (i):
- d. If a point is awarded by the Referee as provided for in the Rules.

10. HITTING OPPONENT WITH THE BALL

If an otherwise good return, before reaching the front wall, hits the opponent, or the opponent's racket, or anything the opponent wears or carries, then the ball ceases to be in play, and:

- a. If the player's ball would have struck the front wall without first touching any other wall, the striker wins the rally, except that if the striker had followed the ball round, and so turned, taking the ball on the forehand rather than the backhand or vice-versa, a Let is allowed.
This includes the case of a striker playing the ball behind his back or between his legs. If the striker, having turned elects not to continue the rally for fear of striking opponent with racket or ball and, in the opinion of the Referee, is able to make a good return, then a let is allowed.
- b. If the ball would have been good, a Let is allowed unless, in the Referee's opinion a winning stroke has been intercepted, in which case the striker wins the rally.
- c. If the return would not have been good, the striker loses the rally.

11. FURTHER ATTEMPTS TO HIT THE BALL

If the striker strikes at and misses the ball, further attempts may be made to return it. If after being missed, the ball touches the opponent, or opponent's racket or anything worn or carried, then:

- a. If the striker would otherwise have made a good return, a Let is allowed, or
- b. If the striker could not have made a good return, the striker loses the rally.

- c. If any such further attempt is successful, resulting in a good return being prevented from reaching the front wall by hitting the opponent, or anything worn or carried by the opponent, a Let is allowed in all circumstances.

12. FAIR VIEW, FREEDOM TO PLAY THE BALL & INTERFERENCE

- a. After playing a ball, a player must make every effort to get out of the opponent's way. That is:
 - (i) A player must make every effort to give the opponent a fair view of the ball, so that he may see it clearly enough to play it.
 - (ii) A player must make every effort not to interfere with, or crowd, the opponent in the latter's attempt to get to, or play, the ball.
 - (iii) A player must make every effort to allow the opponent, as far as the latter's position permits, freedom to play the ball directly to the front wall, or to either side wall to within one metre of the front wall.
- b. If any such form of interference has occurred, and, in the opinion of the Referee, the player has not made every effort to avoid causing it, the Referee shall on appeal, or stopping play without waiting for an appeal, award the rally to the opponent, provided the opponent was in a position to make a good return.
- c. However, if interference has occurred, but in the opinion of the Referee the player has made every effort to avoid causing it, the Referee shall on appeal, or stopping play without waiting for an appeal, award a Let, except that if the opponent is prevented from making a winning return by such interference or by distraction from the player, the Referee shall award the rally to the opponent.
- d. When, in the opinion of the Referee, a player refrains from playing the ball, which, if played would clearly have won the rally under the terms of Rule 9(a) or 9(b), he will be awarded the point.
- e. If either player makes unnecessary physical contact with his opponent, the Referee may stop play and award a point accordingly.

(The practice of impeding an opponent in the effort to play the ball by obscuring the view or crowding is highly detrimental to the game of Racketball. Unnecessary physical contact is also detrimental as well as being dangerous. Interfering with players must be interpreted to include the case of a player having to wait for an excessive swing of the opponent's racket).

13. LET, WHEN ALLOWED

Notwithstanding anything contained in these rules, and provided always that the striker could have made a good return:

- a. A Let may be allowed:
 - (i) If, owing to the position of the striker, the opponent is unable to avoid being touched by the ball before the return is made.

(This rule shall be construed to include the case of the striker, whose position in front of his opponent makes it impossible for the latter to see the ball, or who shapes as if to play the ball and has a change of mind at the last moment, preferring to take the ball off the

back wall, the ball in either case hitting the opponent, who is between the striker and the back wall. This is not, however, to be taken as conflicting in any way with the Referee's duties under rule 12).

- (ii) If the ball in play touches any article lying in the court.
 - (iii) If the striker refrains from hitting the ball owing to a reasonable fear of injuring his opponent.
 - (iv) If the striker, in the act of playing the ball, touches his opponent.
 - (v) If the Referee is asked to decide an appeal and is unable to do so.
 - (vi) If a player drops the racket, calls out or in any other way accidentally distracts the opponent, and the Referee considers that such occurrence has caused the opponent to lose the rally.
- b. A Let shall be allowed:
- (i) If the Receiver is not ready, and does not attempt to take the service.
 - (ii) If the ball breaks during play.
 - (iii) If an otherwise good return has been made, but the ball goes out of court on its first bounce. (A ball which strikes the top of the glass backed wall is deemed to be out, unless it rebounds normally into the court off the vertical panel).
 - (iv) As provided for in rules 9, 10, 11(b) (ii)
- c. A Let shall not be allowed when the player has made an attempt to play the ball, except as provided for under these rules.
- d. Unless an appeal is made by one of the players, a Let shall not be allowed except where these rules provide for a Let.

14. NEW BALL

- a. At any time, when the ball is not in play, a new ball may be substituted by mutual consent of the players, or on appeal by either player, at the discretion of the Referee. It is the responsibility of the player losing a rally or game, to check that the ball is not broken, when the rally/game ends. When the ball is found to be broken, the preceding rally must be replayed.
- b. In the event of a ball breaking, a new ball may be warmed, as provided for in rule 14.

15. WARM-UP

Immediately preceding the start of play, a period not exceeding five minutes shall be allowed, on court, for the purpose of warming-up. A further period shall be allowed to warm-up if the match is being resumed after a considerable delay or when the ball is replaced.

16. PLAY IN A MATCH TO BE CONTINUOUS

After the first service is delivered, play shall be continuous as far as is practical, provided that:

- a. At any time play may be suspended owing to bad light or other circumstances beyond the control of the players, for such period as the Referee shall decide. In the event of play

being suspended for the day, the match shall start afresh, unless both players agree to the contrary.

- b. The Referee shall award a game to the opponent of any player who persists, after due warning, in delaying the play.
- c. There is an interval of ninety seconds between each game in a match. A player may leave the court during such intervals, but must remain in earshot of the Referee and be ready to resume play at the end of the stated time. When 15 seconds of the interval permitted between games are left, the Referee shall call "fifteen seconds" to warn the players to be ready to resume play. Should either player fail to do so when required by the Referee, a game may be awarded to his opponent.
- d. In the event of an injury, the Referee may require a player to continue to play or concede the match, except where the injury is contributed to by his opponent, or where it was caused by dangerous play on the part of the opponent. In the former case, the Referee may allow time for the injured player to receive attention and recover, and in the latter, the injured player shall be awarded the match under rule 19(d)(ii). "Contributed to by the opponent" should not include the situation where the injury to the player results from that player occupying an unnecessarily close position to his opponent.
- e. If a player suffers a blood injury play must cease until the blood-flow has stopped and the injured area is securely covered. In the event of a natural nose bleed, the Referee may allow up to 3 minutes for the player to recover. At the end of that time the player may concede a maximum of one game to obtain a further ninety seconds and if unable to continue shall concede the match.
- f. In allowing for a player to receive attention and recover, the Referee should ensure that there is no conflict with the obligations of a player to comply with rule 15(b).

SECTION 2 – GENERAL RULES OF THE GAME - DOUBLES

The RULES of DOUBLES are the same as for the SINGLES game with the following alterations:

- a. SIDES:
Sides shall consist of two players each.
- b. WARM-UP:
The sides may warm up separately or together. Either side may request a separate warm-up that lasts three minutes, immediately prior to the start of the match. If the sides warm-up together it will last five minutes. The right to warm-up first when separate shall be decided by the spin of a racket or coin.
- c. SERVER:
Each side nominates its server for the first game. That player serves for the entirety of game one and game three in a five game match. The other player serves for game two and game four (if played). In the final game (3rd or 5th) when the first side's score reaches "five", the server changes for each team.
- d. RETURN OF SERVICE & SUBSEQUENT PLAY:
At the beginning of each game, each side shall designate one of its players to receive service in the right-hand service court and the other to receive service in the left-hand service court. Throughout the course of such game, the service must be received by the players so designated.

Only the Receiver may be positioned in the service court opposite the Server's service court.

Until the ball has been touched or has hit the floor twice, it may be struck at any number of times by either or both players on a side, in rotation.

(N.B. The order of striking shall be: The Server, the Receiver, the Server's partner, the Receiver's partner).

- e. LET:
If either player on the striking side is inadvertently hindered by either of his opponents from reaching or striking at the ball, a let shall be allowed.
Note to Referees: Under rule 11, where interference has occurred and the player has made every effort to avoid causing it, a let shall be allowed and the Referee shall not consider whether a winning stroke has been prevented. This shall not affect the Referee's duties in awarding strokes, as otherwise required in Rule 11 of the "Singles Game".

NOTES ON LETS & STROKES ---- DOUBLES:

If either player on the striking side is inadvertently hindered by either of their opponents from reaching or striking the ball, a Let shall be allowed.

If, in the opinion of the Referee, interference to the striker is unnecessary or created, the referee shall stop play and award a point to the hindered side.

Crowding shall also be penalised by the award of a point. If a service or return hits one of the striker's opponents before reaching the front wall,, it shall be a Let provided that the service or return would have been good. If the service or return would not have been good the striker's side shall lose the rally.

If a return hits the striker's partner, the other side wins the point.

SECTION 3 – COMPETITION RULES

THE SCORE

A match consists of the best of three or five games at the option of the organisers of the competition. Each game is normally point-a-rally scoring to 11 (PAR 11). When the score in a game is tied at 10-10, a player/side must win by 2 points.

SECTION 4 – MATCH MANAGEMENT (Match Refereeing)

1. CONTROL OF A MATCH

A match is normally controlled by a Referee, assisted by a Marker. One person may be appointed to carry out the functions of both Referee and Marker. The Referee announces all decisions to the players and the Marker repeats the decision and calls the score.

A minimum of half an hour before the commencement of a match, either player may request a Referee and/or a Marker other than the one (s) appointed, and this request may be considered by the Tournament Referee and a substitute appointed. Players are not permitted to request any such change after the commencement of a match, unless both agree to do so.

2. DUTIES OF THE MARKER

- a. The Marker calls the play and the score, with the Server's score first. The Marker shall call "fault", "footfault", "not up", "out" or "down", as appropriate.
- b. If in the course of play the Marker calls "not-up", "out", or "down" or in the case of a second service, "fault" or "foot-fault", then the rally shall cease.
- c. If the Marker's decision is reversed on appeal, a Let shall be allowed, except as provided for in the rules.
- d. Any service or return shall be considered good unless otherwise called.
- e. After the server has served a fault and the receiver has made no attempt to return the serve, the Marker shall repeat the score and add the words "one fault", before the Server serves again. This call shall be repeated should subsequent rallies end in a Let.
- f. If the Marker is unsighted or uncertain, the Referee shall make the relevant decision; if the referee is unsure a Let shall be allowed.

3. DUTIES OF THE REFEREE

- a. The Referee shall make decisions on the outcome of rallies where called for by the rules, and shall decide all appeals, including those against the Marker's calls. The decision of the Referee shall be final.
- b. The Marker's calls shall stand except:
 - (i) Upon appeal by one of the players.
 - (ii) As provided for in the rules.
 - (iii) When the Marker has called the score incorrectly.

- (iv) When the Marker has failed to call the ball "not up", "out" or "down" and, on appeal, the Referee rules that such was in fact the case, the rally should be awarded accordingly.
 - (v) When the Marker has called "not up", "out" or "down" and, on appeal, the Referee rules that this was not the case; a Let shall be allowed except that, if in the Referee's opinion, the Marker's call had interrupted an undoubted winning return, the Referee shall award the rally accordingly.
 - (vi) In exceptional circumstances when the Referee is absolutely convinced that the Marker has made an obvious error in stopping play or allowing play to continue, the Referee shall immediately rule accordingly.
- c. The Referee is responsible that all time periods laid down in the rules are strictly adhered to.
 - d. In specific cases, the Referee may order:
 - (i) A player, who has left the court, to play on.
 - (ii) A player to leave the court and to award the match to the opponent.
 - (iii) A match to be awarded to a player whose opponent fails to be present on court within ten minutes of the advertised time of play.
 - (iv) Play to be stopped in order to warn that the conduct of one or both of the players is an infringement of the rules. A Referee should avail himself of this rule as early as possible when either player is showing a tendency to break the provisions of rule 12.
 - e. If after warning, a player contravenes rule 15(c) again, the Referee shall award a game to the opponent.

4. APPEALS

- a. An appeal may be made against any decision of the Marker, except for a call of 'fault' or 'foot-fault' to the first service.
- b. If the Marker fails to call 'fault' or 'foot-fault' to the first service, the Receiver may appeal provided no attempt is made to return the ball. If the appeal is upheld the service shall be a fault.
- c. If the Marker calls 'fault' or 'foot-fault' to the second service, the Server may appeal. If the appeal is upheld, a "let" shall be allowed, with 'one fault' standing.
- d. If the Marker fails to call 'fault' or 'foot-fault' to the second service, the Receiver may appeal, either immediately or at the end of the rally if they have played the ball. If the appeal is upheld, the Receiver shall win the rally.
A player who wishes to request a Let must do so by saying "Let, please". Play shall cease until the Referee has announced a decision.

No appeal may be made after the delivery of a service for anything that occurred before that service.

SECTION 5 – RACKET & BALL SPECIFICATIONS

1. RACKETBALL RACKET SPECIFICATION

DIMENSIONS OF A RACKET

Maximum length - 558 mm.

Maximum width, measured at right angles to the shaft - 292 mm.

Maximum length of strings - 420 mm

Minimum width of any frame or any structural member (measured in plane of strings) - 7 mm.

Maximum depth of any frame or other structural member (measured at right angles to plane of strings) - 26 mm.

Minimum radius of outside curvature of frame at any point - 50 mm.

Minimum radius of curvature of any edge of frame or other structural member - 2 mm.

WEIGHT

Maximum weight - 280 gm.

CONSTRUCTION.

- a. The head of the racket is defined as that part of the racket containing or surrounding the strung area.
- b. Strings and string ends must be recessed within the racket head or, in cases where such recessing is impractical because of racket material, or design, must be protected by a securely attached bumper strip.
- c. The bumper strip must be made of a flexible material which cannot crease into sharp edges following abrasive contact with the floor or walls.
- d. The bumper strip shall be of a white, colourless or unpigmented material. Where for cosmetic reasons a manufacturer chooses to use a coloured bumper strip, then the manufacturer shall demonstrate to the satisfaction of the WSF that this does not leave a coloured deposit on the walls or floor of the court after contact.
- e. The frame of the racket shall be of a colour and/or material which will not mark the walls or floor following an impact in normal play.
- f. Strings shall be gut, nylon or a substitute material, provided metal is not used.
- g. Only two layers of strings shall be allowed and these shall be alternately interlaced or bonded where they cross, and the string pattern shall be generally uniform and form a single plane over the racket head.
- h. Any grommets, string spacers or other devices attached to any part of the racket shall be used solely to limit or prevent wear and tear or vibration, and be reasonable in size and placement for such purpose. They shall not be attached to any part of the strings within the hitting area (defined as the area formed by overlapping strings).
- i. There shall be no unstrung areas within the racket construction such that will allow the passage of a sphere greater than 50mm in diameter.
- j. The total racket construction including the head shall be symmetrical about the centre of the racket in a line drawn vertically through the head and shaft and when viewed face on.
- k. Provision of wrist straps for player use is optional, though encouraged.

- I. All changes to the racket specification will be subject to a notice period of two years before coming into force.

The World Squash Federation shall rule on the question of whether any racket or prototype complies with the above specifications, or is otherwise approved or not approved for play and will issue guidelines to assist in the interpretation of the above.

2. RACKETBALL BALL SPECIFICATION

GENERAL USE BALL (blue)

Weight: 39 – 41 gms

Diameter: 55 – 57mm

Rebound Resilience: Min 1120mm - Max 1150mm (from a height of 254cm/100 inches at a temp of 25 deg C)

COMPETITION BALL (black)

Weight: 38 – 40 gms

Diameter: 55 – 57mm

Rebound Resilience: Min 940mm - Max 970mm (from a height of 254cm/100 inches at a temp of 25 deg C)