



*INTERNATIONAL RACQUETBALL FEDERATION*

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**Rules - 2014-2016**

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# *INTERNATIONAL RACQUETBALL FEDERATION*

## **New Rules** **Effective September 1, 2014**

### **Rule 2.4 Racquet Specifications**

(a) The racquet, including bumper guard and all solid parts of the handle, may not exceed 22 inches in length. No additional tolerance.

### **2.5 Eyewear Specifications**

(b) Players must wear acceptable eyewear during play as well as during warm-up after being summoned to their court. The first offense is a referee technical. Thereafter, players are disqualified from the match.

# OFFICIAL INTERNATIONAL RACQUETBALL FEDERATION RULES

## 1 – THE GAME

- 1.1 Types of Games
- 1.2 Description
- 1.3 Objective
- 1.4 Points and Outs
- 1.5 Match, Game, Tiebreaker

## 2 – COURTS AND EQUIPMENT

- 2.1 Court Specifications
- 2.2 Ball Specifications
- 2.3 Ball Selection
- 2.4 Racquet Specifications
- 2.5 Eyeware Specifications

## 3 – PLAY REGULATIONS

- 3.1 Serve
- 3.2 Start
- 3.3 Manner
- 3.4 Readiness
- 3.5 Delays
- 3.6 Drive Service Zones
- 3.7 Defective Serves
- 3.8 Dead-Ball Serves
- 3.9 Fault Serves
- 3.10 Out Serves
- 3.11 Return of Serve
- 3.12 Changes of Serve
- 3.13 Rallies
- 3.14 Dead-Ball Hinders
- 3.15 Avoidable Hinders
- 3.16 Timeouts
- 3.17 Technical Fouls and Warnings

## RULE MODIFICATIONS

- 4.0 Doubles
- 5.0 One Serve Game
- 6.0 Multi-bounce
- 7.0 Wheelchair

## OFFICIATING

All Regulations such as: Uniform, Seeding, etc. are covered in the IRF Competition Format as a separate document.

## 1 – THE GAME

### Rule 1.1 Types Of Games

Racquetball is played by two or four players. When played by two, it is called singles and when played by four, doubles. A non-tournament variation of the game that is played by three players is called cutthroat.

### Rule 1.2 Description

Racquetball is a competitive game in which a strung racquet is used to serve and return the ball.

### Rule 1.3 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 player (or team in doubles) is unable to hit the ball before it touches the floor twice, is unable to return the ball in such a manner that it touches the front wall before it touches the floor, or when a hinder is called.

### Rule 1.4 Points And Outs

Points are scored only by the serving side when it either serves an irretrievable serve (an ace) or wins a rally. Losing the serve is called a sideout in singles. In doubles, when the first server loses the serve, it is called a handout, and when the second server loses the serve, it is a sideout.

### Rule 1.5 Match, Game, Tiebreaker

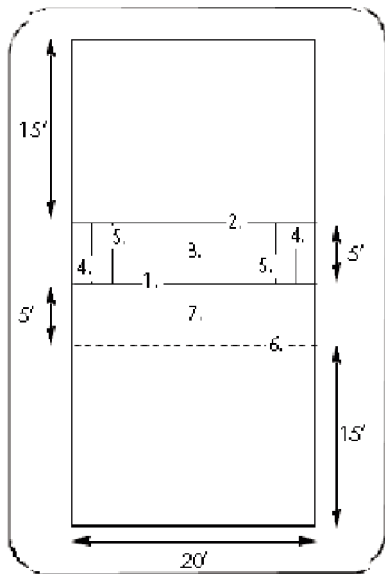
A match is won by the first side winning two games. The first two games of a match are played to 15 points. If each side wins one game, a tiebreaker game is played to 11 points.

## 2 – COURTS AND EQUIPMENT

### Rule 2.1 Court Specifications

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

(a) Dimensions. The dimensions shall be 20 feet wide, 40 feet long and 20 feet high, with a ceiling and with back wall at least 12 feet high. All surfaces shall be in play, with the exception of any gallery opening, any back wall surface above the 12-foot out-of-court line, surfaces designated as out-of-play for a valid reason (such as being of a very different material or not in alignment with the backwall), and designated court hindlers.



(b) Markings. Racquetball courts shall be marked with lines 1-1/2 inches wide as follows:

1. Short Line. The back edge of the short line is midway between, and is parallel with, the front and back walls.
2. Service Line. The front edge of the service line is parallel with, and five feet in front of, the back edge of the short line.
3. Service Zone. The service zone is the 5' x 20' area bounded by the bottom edges of the side walls and by

the outer edges of the short line and the service line.

4. Service Boxes. The service boxes are located at each end of the service zone and are designated by lines parallel with the side walls. The edge of the line nearest to the center of the court shall be 18 inches from the nearest side wall.

5. Drive Serve Lines. The drive serve lines, which form the drive serve zone, are parallel with the side wall and are within the service zone. The edge of the line nearest to the center of the court shall be three feet from the nearest side wall.

6. Receiving Line. The receiving line is a broken line parallel to the short line. The back edge of the receiving line is five feet from the back edge of the short line. The receiving line begins with a line 21 inches long that extends from each side wall. These lines are connected by an alternate series of six-inch spaces and six-inch lines. This will result in a line composed of 17 six-inch spaces, 16 six-inch lines, and two 21-inch lines.

7. Safety Zone. The safety zone is the 5' x 20' area bounded by the bottom edges of the side walls and by the back edges of the short line and the receiving line. The zone is observed only during the serve. See Rules 3.10(i) and 3.11(a).

8. Out-of-court line. The upper edge of the out-of-court line is on the

back wall parallel with and located 12 feet (3.65m) above the floor.

## **Rule 2.2 Ball Specifications**

(a) The standard racquetball shall be 2-1/4 inches in diameter; weigh approximately 1.4 ounces; have a hardness of 55-60 inches durometer; and bounce 68-72 inches from a 100-inch drop at a temperature of 70-74 degrees Fahrenheit.

(b) Official ball. Any ball which carries the endorsement stamp of approval from the IRF is an official ball.

## **Rule 2.3 Ball Selection**

(a) The ball shall be selected by agreement between the players and at least two acceptable balls should be agreed upon before the match commences. If the players cannot agree, the referee shall make the selection and this decision shall be binding on the participants.

(b) During the course of a match the referee may, at his/her discretion or at the request of both players/teams, replace the ball. Only an IRF approved ball shall be used in all sanctioned tournaments.

## **Rule 2.4 Racquet Specifications**

(a) The racquet, including bumper guard and all solid parts of the handle, may not exceed 22 inches in length. No

additional tolerance.

(b) The racquet frame may be any material judged to be safe.

(c) The racquet frame must include a cord that must be securely attached to the player's wrist. The cord must be secured around the wrist at all times during play as well as during warm-up periods. The first offense is a referee technical. Thereafter players are disqualified from the match.

(d) The string of the racquet must be gut, monofilament, nylon, graphite, plastic, metal, or a combination thereof, and must not mark or deface the ball.

(e) The penalty for using an illegal racquet is a technical. The penalty for requesting that an opponent's racquet be measured resulting in the racquet being declared legal will be a technical on the requesting team/player for delay of game.

### **Rule 2.5 Eyewear Specifications**

(a) All players competing in an IRF sanctioned event will be required to wear lensed protective eyewear manufactured for racquet sports, with the exception of prescribed non-breakable protective lenses. The eyewear must be worn properly and not altered in any way. Note: National

Federations are empowered to apply and enforce the published national safety standards of their country in the matter of protective eyewear for their athlete.

(b) Players must wear acceptable eyewear during play as well as during warm up after being summoned to their court. The first offense is a referee technical. Thereafter, players are disqualified from the match.

## **3 – PLAY REGULATIONS**

### **Rule 3.1 Serve**

The server has two opportunities to put the ball into play in all divisions other than the Open division, where only one serve is allowed. The player or 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 player or team scoring the highest total of points in games 1 and 2 will have the option to serve or receive first at the start of the tiebreaker. In the event that both players or 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.

### **Rule 3.2 Start**

Games are started with the referee calling the score (“Zero serves zero.”). The server may not initiate the pre-

service motion from outside of the service zone. Stepping on the short line (back), but not over, is permitted. After starting the service motion, the server may step over the service (front) line provided that some part of both feet remains on or inside the line until the served ball passes the short line. See Rule 3.9(a) and 3.10(i) for violations.

### **Rule 3.3 Manner**

A serve is commenced as the ball leaves the server's hand. The ball must bounce on the floor in the service zone and on the first bounce be struck by the server's racquet in an obvious attempt to serve the ball. The ball must strike the front wall first and on the rebound hit the floor back of the short line, either with or without touching one of the side walls.

### **Rule 3.4 Readiness**

Once a rally has ended, the players are given a reasonable amount of time (according to the judgment of the referee) to return to their respective positions, and then the score is called.

### **Rule 3.5 Delays**

Officials are instructed to call the score after a few seconds have elapsed in order to eliminate undue delays.

(a) The ten-second rule applies to the server and receiver simultaneously. Collectively, they are allowed up to ten seconds after the score is called to

server be ready to receive. It is the server's responsibility to look and be certain the receiver is ready. If a receiver is not ready, he/she must signal by raising the racquet above the head or completely turning the back to the server. These are the only two acceptable signals. The receiver cannot cause the server to violate the ten-second rule. [See Rule 5.3 for warnings].

(b) Serving while the receiving player/team is signaling "not ready" is a fault serve. A warning will be issued with each first-serve infraction.

(c) After the score is called, if the server looks at the receiver and the receiver is not signaling not ready, the server may then serve. If the receiver attempts to signal "not ready" after that point, the signal shall not be acknowledged and the serve becomes legal.

### **Rule 3.6 Drive Service Zones**

The drive serve lines will be 3 feet from each side wall in the service zone. Viewed one at a time, the drive serve line divides the service area into a 3-foot and a 17-foot section that apply only to drive serves. The player may drive serve between the body and the side wall nearest to where the service motion began only if the player starts and remains outside of the 3-foot drive service zone. In the event that the

service motion begins in one 3-foot drive service zone and continues into the other 3-foot drive serve zone, the player may not hit a drive serve at all.

(a) The drive serve zones are not observed for cross-court drive serves, the hard-Z, soft-Z, lob or half-lob serves.

(b) The drive serve line is not part of the 17-foot zone. Dropping the ball on the line or standing on the line while serving to the same side is an infraction.

### Rule 3.7 Defective Serves

Defective serves are of three types resulting in penalties, as follows:

(a) Dead-Ball Serve. A dead-ball serve results in no penalty and the server is given another serve (without canceling a prior fault serve).

(b) Fault Serve. In the Open division, players will be permitted only one serve. In the Open division, a fault serve is a handout, out, or sideout. In age and other skill divisions, players are permitted two serves. Two (2) fault serves result in a handout, out, or sideout.

(c) Out Serve. An out serve results in an out (either a sideout or a handout).

### Rule 3.8 Dead-Ball Serves

Dead-ball serves do not cancel any

previous fault serve. The following are dead-ball serves:

(a) Court Hinders. A serve that takes an irregular bounce because it hit a wet spot or an irregular surface on the court is a dead-ball serve. Also, any serve that hits any surface designated by local rules as an obstruction rather than being out of play.

(b) Broken Ball. If the ball is determined to have broken on the serve, a new ball shall be substituted and the serve shall be replayed (without canceling any prior fault serve).

(c) Screen serve. In the Open division only (using one-serve modifications), a screen ball serve is replayed.

### Rule 3.9 Fault Serves

The following serves are faults. In one-serve play, infractions result in an out [see exceptions in Rule 5.3]. In other divisions, any two in succession result in an out:

(a) Foot Faults. A foot fault results when:

1. The server does not begin the service motion with both feet in the service zone.
2. 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.

(b) Short Service. 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.

(c) **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.

(d) **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).

(e) **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).

(f) **Bouncing Ball Outside Service Zone.** Bouncing the ball outside the service zone as a part of the service motion is a fault serve.

(g) **Illegal Drive Serve.** A drive serve in which the player fails to observe the 17-foot drive service zone outlined in Rule 3.6.

(h) **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 in doubles, 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.) [See Rule 5.3 for one serve variation]

(i) **Serving Before the Receiver is Ready.** A serve is made while the receiver is not ready as described in Rule 3.5(b). [See Rule 5.3 for one-serve variation.]

### **Rule 3.10 Out Serves**

Any of the following results in an out:

(a) **Failure to Serve.** Failure of server to put the ball into play, according to 3.5.

(b) **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.

(c) **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.

(d) **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 deceiving the receiver(s).

(e) **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.

(f) Non-Front Wall Serve. Any served ball that does not strike the front wall first.

(g) 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.

(h) 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, hits the back wall above the out-of-court line, 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 2.1(a)].

(i) Safety Zone Violation. The server's or server doubles partner may enter the safety zone at any time after serving (striking) the ball.

### **Rule 3.11 Return Of Serve**

#### **(a) Receiving Position**

1. The receiver may not enter the safety zone until the ball bounces or crosses the receiving line.

2. On-the-fly return attempt: The receiver may not strike the ball until the ball breaks the plane of the receiving line. However, the receiver's follow-through may carry the receiver or the racquet past the receiving line.

3. Neither the receiver nor the racquet may break the plane of the short line, except if the ball is struck after rebounding off the back wall.

4. Any violation by the receiver results in a point for the server.

(b) Legal Return. After a legal serve, a player receiving the serve must strike the ball on the fly or after the first bounce and before the ball touches the floor the second time; and return the ball to the front wall, either directly or after touching one or both side walls, the back wall below the out of-court line, the ceiling, or any combination of those surfaces. A returned ball must touch the front wall before touching the floor.

(c) Failure to Return. Failure to return a serve results in a point for the server.

(d) Other Provisions. Except as noted in this rule (3.11), the return of serve is subject to all provisions of Rules 3.13 through 3.15.

### **Rule 3.12 Changes Of Serve**

(a) Outs. A server is entitled to

continue serving until one of the following occurs:

1. Out Serve. See Rule 3.10.
2. Two Consecutive Fault Serves. See Rule 3.9. [See Rule 5.3 for one-serve variation]
3. Failure to Return Ball. Player or team fails to keep the ball in play as required by Rule 3.11(b).
4. Avoidable Hinder. Player or team commits an avoidable hinder which results in an out. See Rule 3.15.

(b) Sideout. Retiring the server in singles is called a sideout.

(c) Effect of Sideout. When the server (or serving team) receives a sideout, the server becomes the receiver and the receiver becomes the server.

### Rule 3.13 Rallies

All of the play that occurs after the successful return of serve is called the rally. Play shall be conducted according to the following rules:

(a) Legal Hits. 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 uniform, or removing the wrist safety cord during a rally results in loss of the rally.

(b) One Touch. The player or team attempting to return the ball may touch

or strike the ball only once or else the rally is lost. The ball may not be carried. (A carried ball is one that rests on the racquet long enough that the effect is more of a sling or a throw than a hit.)

(c) Failure to Return. Any of the following constitutes a failure to make a legal return during a rally:

1. The ball bounces on the floor more than once before being hit.
2. The ball does not reach the front wall on the fly.
3. The ball is hit such that it goes into the gallery or wall opening or else hits a surface above the normal playing area of the court that has been declared as out-of-play [See Rule 2.1(b)8].
4. A ball that obviously does not have the velocity or direction to hit the front wall strikes another player.
5. A ball struck by one player on a team hits that player or that player's partner.
6. Committing an avoidable hinder [See Rule 3.15].
7. Switching hands during a rally.
8. Failure to use a racquet wrist safety cord.
9. Touching the ball with the body or uniform.
10. Carrying or slinging the ball with the racquet.

(d) Effect of Failure to Return. Violations of Rules 3.13

(a) through (c) result in a loss of rally. If the serving player or team loses the rally, it is an out. If the receiver loses the rally, it results in a point for the server.

(e) Return Attempts. The ball remains in play until it touches the floor a second time, regardless of how many walls it makes contact with, including the front wall. If a player swings at the ball and misses it, the player may continue to attempt to return the ball until it touches the floor for the second time.

(f) Broken Ball. If there is any suspicion that a ball has broken during a rally, play shall continue until the end of the rally. The referee or any player may request the ball be examined. If the referee decides the ball is broken, the ball will be replaced and the rally replayed. The server resumes play at first serve. The only proper way to check for a broken ball is to squeeze it by hand.

(Checking the ball by striking it with a racquet will not be considered a valid check and shall work to the disadvantage of the player or team that struck the ball after the rally.)

(g) Play Stoppage. If foreign objects enter the court, or any outside interference occurs, the referee shall stop play if such occurrences interfere

with ensuing play or players' safety [See Rule 3.14(a)7].

(h) Replays. Whenever a rally is replayed for any reason, the server resumes play at first serve. A previous fault serve is not considered.

(i) Out of Court Ball

1. After return (with a bounce). Any ball returned to the front wall which, after its first bounce on the floor, goes above the out-of-court line or through any opening in a side wall shall be declared dead and the rally replayed.

2. After return (without a bounce). Any ball which, on the rebound, does not bounce on the floor and goes above the out-of-court line shall be an out or point against the offending player. If the ball goes through any opening in a side wall, it shall be declared dead and the rally replayed.

3. No return. Any ball not returned to the front wall, but which caroms off a player's racquet above the out-of-court line or into any opening in a side wall, either with or without touching the ceiling, side or back wall shall result in loss of the rally by the offending player.

### **Rule 3.14 Dead-Ball Hinders**

A rally is replayed without penalty and the server resumes play at first serve

whenever a dead-ball hinder occurs. Also, see Rule 3.15 which describes conditions under which a hinder might be declared avoidable and result in loss of the rally.

(a) Situations

1. Court Hinders. The referee should stop play immediately whenever the ball hits any part of the court that was designated in advance as a court hinder (such as a vent grate). The referee should also stop play (i) 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 (ii) when, in the referee's opinion, the irregular bounce affected the rally.

2. 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 that 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 and acknowledged by the referee. Note this interference may, under certain conditions, be declared an avoidable hinder. See Rule 3.15.

3. Body Contact. If body contact occurs that the referee believes 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, the referee shall call a hinder. 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.

4. 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. (The referee should be careful not to make the screen call so quickly that it takes away a good offensive opportunity.) [Does not apply for the serve. See Rule 4.3(c)]. 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. Generally, the call should work to the advantage of the offensive player.

5. 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 and is subject to the referee's approval. Note the interference may be considered an avoidable hinder. See Rule 3.15(b).

6. 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 and is subject to acceptance and approval of the referee. (The referee will grant a dead-ball hinder if it is believed the holdup was reasonable and the player would have been able to return the shot. The referee may also call an avoidable hinder if warranted.)

7. Other Interference. Any other unintentional interference which prevents an opponent from having a fair chance to see or return the ball. Examples: When a ball from another court enters the court during a rally, or when a referee's call on an adjacent court obviously distracts a player.

(b) Effect of Hinders. The referee's call of hinder stops play and voids any situation that follows, such as the ball hitting the player. The only hinders that may be called by a player are described in rules (2), (5), and (6) above, and all of these are subject to the approval of the referee. A dead-ball hinder stops play and the rally is replayed. The server

resumes play at first serve.

(c) 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 have an unobstructed view of and swing at the ball. However, the receiver is responsible for making a reasonable effort to move toward the ball and must have a reasonable chance to return the ball for any type of hinder to be called.

### **Rule 3.15 Avoidable Hinders**

An avoidable hinder results in loss of the rally. An avoidable hinder does not necessarily have to be an intentional act. Dead-ball hinders are described in Rule 3.14. Any of the following results in an avoidable hinder:

(a) 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 which 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.

(b) 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 that prevents the opponent from making an open, offensive shot.

(c) **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.

(d) **Moving into the Ball.** Moves in the way and is struck by the ball just played by the opponent.

(e) **Pushing.** Deliberately pushes or shoves opponent during a rally.

(f) **Intentional Distractions.** Deliberate shouting, stamping of feet, waving of racquet, or any other manner of disrupting one's opponent.

(g) **View Obstruction.** A player moves across an opponent's line of vision just before the opponent strikes the ball.

(h) **Wetting the Ball.** The players, particularly the server, should ensure that the ball is dry prior to the serve. Any wet ball that is not corrected prior to the serve shall result in an avoidable hinder against the server.

(i) **Equipment Interference.** If a player loses any part of his/her equipment that interferes with play. The loss of eye protection is an automatic avoidable hinder.

### **Rule 3.16 Timeouts**

(a) **Rest Periods.** During a game, each player in singles or each side in doubles, either while serving or receiving, may request a "time out." Each "time out" shall not exceed one minute (60 seconds). No more than three "time outs" in a game shall be granted each singles player or each team in doubles. Two time outs are allowed in the tiebreaker.

(b) **Injury.** No time out shall be charged to a player who is injured during play. An injured player shall not be allowed more than a cumulative total of fifteen (15) minutes of rest. If the injured player is not able to resume play after a cumulative rest of fifteen (15) minutes, the match shall be awarded to the opponent(s). On any additional injury to the same player, the tournament director or referee, after considering any available medical opinion, shall determine whether the injured player will be allowed to continue.

1. Should any external bleeding occur, the referee must halt play as soon as the rally is over, charge an injury timeout to the person who is bleeding, and not allow the match to

continue until the bleeding has stopped.

2. Muscle cramps and pulls, fatigue, and other ailments that are not caused by direct contact (such as with the ball, racquet, wall, or floor) will not be considered an injury.

(c) **Equipment Timeouts.** A time out may be called by the referee at the request of a player and after substantiation by the referee, because of faulty equipment or uniform. Two (2) minutes are to be allowed for any uniform adjustment needed and thirty (30) seconds for any equipment adjustment.

(d) **Between Games.** A two (2) minute rest period is allowed between the first and second game and a five (5) minute rest period between the second and third game.

(e) **Postponed Games.** Any games postponed by the referee shall be resumed with the same score as when postponed.

### **Rule 3.17 Technical Fouls And Warnings**

(a) The referee is empowered to deduct one point from a player's or team's score when, in the referee's sole judgment, the player is being overly and deliberately abusive. The actual invoking of this penalty is called a "referee's technical." If the player or

team against whom the technical was assessed does not resume play immediately, the referee is empowered to forfeit the match in favor of the opponent. Some examples of actions that may result in technicals are:

1. Profanity.
2. Excessive arguing.
3. Threat of any nature to opponent or referee.
4. Excessive or hard striking of the ball between rallies.
5. Slamming of the racquet against walls or floor, slamming the door, or any action which might result in damage to the court and/or injury to other players.
6. Delay of game. Examples include (i) taking too much time to dry the court, (ii) excessive questioning of the referee about the rules, (iii) exceeding the time allotted for timeouts or between games, (iv) calling a timeout after the service motion begins, (v) calling a timeout or asking for an appeal when none are remaining will result in a technical warning. If this occurs again in the same game it will result in a technical foul. If there is a delay no warning shall be given. (vi) A technical foul will be assessed if the warm-up period is violated. The allowed warm-up time in singles is 5 minutes maximum for both players at the same time. In doubles each team will be allowed 4 minutes



- maximum for the warm-up.
7. Intentional front line foot faults to negate a bad lob serve.
  8. Anything considered unsportsmanlike behavior.
  9. Failure to wear proper eyewear, as specified in Rule 2.5 (b).
  10. Using an illegal racquet as specified in Rule 2.4(e).

(b) **Coaching.** Where coaches are involved, coaches or team representatives are bound by the same rules as far as technicals are concerned and any infractions are charged against the player. No coaches or representatives are allowed onto the courts at any time during a match unless granted permission by the referee. Failure to observe this rule is a technical and will be charged against the player.

Any coach or player conducting themselves in a negative manner towards the referee or linesperson of a match shall receive the following penalties:

First Offense: technical warning (minimum)

Subsequent Offenses: technical on the coach/person's player or team.

(c) **Technical Warning.** If a player's behavior is not so severe as to warrant a referee's technical, a technical warning may be issued without the deduction of a point.

(d) **Effect of Technical or Warning.** If a referee issues a technical foul, one point shall be removed from the offender's score. No point will be deducted if a referee issues a technical warning. In either case, a technical foul or warning should be accompanied by a brief explanation. Issuing a technical foul or warning has no effect on who will be serving when play resumes. If a technical foul occurs when the offender has no points or between games, the result will be that the offender's score becomes minus one (-1).

## **RULE MODIFICATIONS**

The following sections (4.0 through 11.0) detail additional or modified rules that apply to variations of the singles game described in Sections 1 through 3.

### **4.0 – DOUBLES**

The IRF's rules for singles also apply in doubles with the following additions and modifications:

#### **Rule 4.1 Doubles Team**

(a) A doubles team shall consist of two players who meet either the age requirements or player classification requirements to participate in a particular division of play. A team with different skill levels must play in the division of the player with the higher level of ability.

When playing in an adult age division,

the team must play in the division of the younger player. When playing in a junior age division, the team must play in the division of the older player.

(b) A change in playing partners may be made so long as the first match of the posted team has not begun.

For this purpose only, the match will be considered started once the teams have been called to the court.

The team must notify the tournament director of the change prior to the beginning of the match.

#### **Rule 4.2 Serve In Doubles**

(a) Order of Serve. Each team shall inform the referee of the order of service which shall be followed throughout that game. The order of serve may be changed between games, once the referee has been notified. 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 sideout.

(b) 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 server strikes the ball. Violations are called foot faults. However, if the server's

partner enters the safety zone before the ball passes the short line, the server loses service.

(c) 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.

#### **Rule 4.3 Fault Serve In Doubles**

(a) The server's partner is not in the service box with both feet on the floor and back to the side wall from the time the server begins the service motion until the ball passes the short line.

(b) A served ball that hits the doubles partner while in the doubles box results in a fault serve. In Open play (one serve), this fault may be replayed one time only, per service. The second instance, on the same serve, will result in a handout or a sideout.

(c) There will be an automatic screen serve in doubles matches when the ball goes behind the body of the server's partner.

#### **Rule 4.4 Out Serve In Doubles**

(a) Out-of-Order Serve. In doubles, when either partner serves out of order, the points scored by that server will be subtracted and an out serve will be called; if the second server serves out of

order, the out serve will be applied to the first server and the second server will resume serving. If the player designated as the first server serves out of order, a sideout will be called. The referee should call “no serve” as soon as an out-of-order serve occurs. If no points are scored while the team is out of order, only the out penalty will have to be assessed. However, if points are scored before the out of order condition is noticed and the referee cannot recall the number, the referee may enlist the aid of the line judges (but not the crowd) to recall the number of points to be deducted.

(b) **Ball Hits Partner.** A served ball that hits the doubles partner while outside the doubles box results in a loss of serve.

#### **Rule 4.5 Return In Doubles**

(a) The rally is lost if one player hits that same player’s partner with an attempted return.

(b) 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.

(c) Both players on a side are entitled to a fair and unobstructed chance at the ball and either one is entitled to a

hinder even though it naturally would be the partner’s ball and even though the partner may have attempted to play the ball or may have already missed it. It is not a hinder when players hinder their own partner.

## **5.0 – ONE SERVE**

The IRF’s standard rules governing racquetball play will be followed except for the following:

### **Rule 5.1 One Serve**

Only one serve is allowed. Therefore, any fault serve is an out serve, with a few exceptions.

### **Rule 5.2 Screen Serve**

If a serve is called a screen, the server will be allowed one more opportunity to hit a legal serve. Two consecutive screen serves result in an out.

### **Rule 5.3 Warnings**

Warnings shall be issued for the infractions shown below. Subsequent infractions will result in a sideout or loss of rally (point to the server). For infraction of Rule 3.5(a) – Delay of Game ... taking more than 10 seconds to serve or be ready to receive serve ... one warning issued per match. For infraction of Rule 3.5(b) – Serving when the receiver is signaling “not ready” ... one warning will be issued per each first service.

#### **Rule 5.4 Consecutive Faults**

In doubles, a screen serve followed by hitting the non-serving partner results in an out.

## **6.0 – MULTI-BOUNCE**

In general, the IRF's standard rules governing racquetball play will be followed except for the modifications that follow.

#### **Rule 6.1 Basic Return Rule**

In general, the ball remains in play as long as it is bouncing. However, the player may swing only once at the ball and the ball is considered dead at the point it stops bouncing and begins to roll. Also, anytime the ball rebounds off the back wall, it must be struck before it crosses the short line on the way to the front wall, except as explained in Rule 6.2.

#### **Rule 6.2 Blast Rule**

If the ball caroms from the front wall to the back wall on the fly, the player may hit the ball from any place on the court—including past the short line—so long as the ball is still bouncing.

#### **Rule 6.3 Front Wall Lines**

Two parallel lines (tape may be used) should be placed across the front wall such that the bottom edge of one line is 3 feet above the floor and the bottom edge of the other line is 1 foot above the floor. At all times, any ball that hits

the front wall (i) below the 3-foot line and (ii) either on or above the 1-foot line must be returned before it bounces a third time. However, if the ball hits below the 1-foot line, it must be returned before it bounces twice. If the ball hits on or above the 3-foot line, the ball must be returned as described in the basic return rule.

#### **Rule 6.4 Games And Matches**

All games are played to 11 points and the first side to win two games wins the match.

## **7.0 – WHEELCHAIR**

#### **Rule 7.1 Adjustments**

The participant may wear an appliance that is medically prescribed, providing it does not jeopardize the safety of others and the player does not use it to any unfair advantage. The participant may secure any portion of his/her body to the wheelchair.

#### **Rule 7.2 Equipment**

In order to protect playing surfaces, the wheelchair must be equipped with a functional roller bar or similar protection under the foot platform. There should be no sharp edges anywhere on the outside parts of the chair that could cause injury or damage to the court and the chair must be equipped with non-marking tires. The racquet, including bumper guard and all solid parts of the handle, may not

exceed 22 inches in length.

### **Rule 7.3 Two-Bounce Rule**

Two bounces of the ball on the floor are permitted but not mandatory during all rallies and serves.

### **Rule 7.4 Wheel Faults**

All four wheels of the wheelchair are considered equal to both feet of the able-bodied player and subsequent calls are made accordingly. The proper call is “Wheel Fault.”

### **Rule 7.5 Avoidable Hinder/Chair Control**

Any player who intentionally alters the direction or speed of the wheelchair with their lower extremities will be assessed an avoidable hinder.

### **Rule 7.6 Diving**

Players may “dive” from their wheelchair to make a shot: however, every separate attempt at a shot must be initiated from an upright sitting position in the wheelchair. The players buttock must be in contact with the chair when the ball is hit. After the ball has been hit, the player may then come clear from the chair. Any infraction of the above will result in the loss of the rally.

Players diving from their wheelchairs, where either they or their wheelchair impede their opponent’s shot or movement to a ball which is deemed

returnable by the referee, will result in an avoidable hinder.

### **Rule 7.7 Maintenance Delay**

Each player will be allowed up to two (2) five-minute maintenance delays per match for any malfunction and repair of a wheelchair, prosthesis, or assistance device. These delays are irrespective of other game timeouts or injury timeouts.

### **Rule 7.8 Coaching**

Only one coach per player may enter the court during a timeout to “upright” their player after a rally or between games and only then with the permission of the referee. Failure to abide by this rule will result in a technical foul assessed against the player of the offending coach.

## **A – OFFICIATING**

### **A.1 Tournament Management**

All recognized IRF tournaments shall be managed by a tournament director, who shall designate the officials.

### **A.2 Officials**

The official shall be a referee designated by the tournament director or the floor manager or one agreed to by both participants (teams in doubles). Officials may also include, at the discretion of the tournament director, a scorekeeper and two linespeople.

### A.3 Referee Removal

A referee may be removed upon the agreement of both participants (teams in doubles) or at the discretion of the tournament director. In the event that the referee's removal is requested by one player (team) and not agreed to by the other, the tournament director or that director's designated assistant(s) may accept or reject the request.

### A.4 Rules Briefing

Before all tournaments, all officials and players shall be briefed on rules as well as local court hindlers, regulations, and modifications the tournament director wishes to impose. The briefing should be reduced to writing. The current IRF rules will apply and be made available. Any modifications the tournament director wishes to impose must be stated on the entry form and be available to all players at registration.

### A.5 Referees

(a) Pre-Match Duties. Before each match begins, it shall be the duty of the referee to:

1. Check on adequacy of preparation of court with respect to cleanliness, lighting, and temperature.
2. Check on availability and suitability of materials to include balls, towels, scorecards, pencils, and timepiece necessary for the match.
3. Check the readiness and qualifications of the line judges and

scorekeeper. Review appeal procedures and instruct them of their duties, rules and local regulations.

4. Go onto the court to make introductions; brief the players on court hindlers (both designated and undesignated); identify any out-of-play areas [See Rule 2.1]; discuss local regulations and rule modifications for this tournament; and explain often misinterpreted rules.

5. Inspect players' equipment; identify the line judges; verify selection of a primary and alternate ball.

6. Toss coin and offer the winner the choice of serving or receiving.

(b) Referee's decisions. During the match, the referee shall make all decisions with regard to the rules. Where line judges are used, the referee shall announce all final judgments. If both players in singles and three out of four in a doubles match disagree with a call made by the referee, the referee is overruled, with the exception of technical fouls and forfeitures.

(c) Protests. Any decision of the referee will, on protest, be accorded due process as set forth in the constitution of the IRF. For the purposes of rendering a prompt decision regarding protests filed during the course of an ongoing tournament, the stages of due

process will be: first to the tournament desk, then to the tournament director, and finally to the tournament rules committee. In those instances when time permits, the protest may be elevated to a higher level as called for in the IRF Constitution.

### **A.6 Line Judges**

In any IRF sanctioned tournament, linespeople may be designated in order to decide appealed rulings. Two linespeople will be designated by the tournament director and shall, at the referee's signal, either agree or disagree with the referee ruling. The signal to show agreement with the referee's call is "thumbs up." The signal to show disagreement is "thumbs down." The signal for no opinion is an "open palm down." Both linespeople must disagree with the referee in order to reverse the ruling. If both linespeople disagree with the referee's call, it shall be overruled, and the call reversed. If either linesperson agrees with the referee, the call shall stand. In the event that one linesperson disagrees, and the other signals that they did not see the call in question, the rally shall be replayed. If both linespeople indicate they did not see the appealed call in question, the referee's call will stand.

### **A.7 Appeals**

In any match using line judges, all calls are appealable with the exception of technicals and game/match forfeitures

. (a) Limit on Appeals. Each player will

be allowed to make a maximum of five "not accepted" appeals per 15-point game, and three "not accepted" appeals in the 11-point tiebreaker. If one linesperson has no opinion and the other disagrees with the referee's call, the appeal will not count against the five-appeal limit. If the referee's call stands, one appeal is charged.

(b) Loss of Appeal. The referee shall recognize an appeal only if it is made before the appealing player leaves the court, or if the players do not leave the court, only before the next serve begins. A player or team will forfeit the right of appeal if such appeal is made directly to the line judges or follows an excessive demonstration or complaint. Obstructed View. If the referee's view is obstructed, he/she can issue a "no-call" on the play. If one line judge is also unable to make a call (agreeing with the referee's "no call"), the final decision may be determined by the call of the remaining line judge.

### **A.8 Outcome of Appeals**

Everything except technical fouls and forfeitures can be appealed. The following outcomes cover several of the most common types of appeal, but not all possible appeals can be addressed. Therefore, the referee's discretion and common sense should govern the outcomes of those appeals that are not covered herein:

(a) Skip Ball. If the referee makes a call of “skip ball” and the call is reversed, the referee then must decide if the shot in question could have been returned had play continued. If, in the opinion of the referee, the shot could have been returned, the rally shall be replayed. However, if the shot was not retrievable, the side that hit the shot in question is declared the winner of the rally. If the referee makes no call on a shot (thereby indicating that the shot did not skip), an appeal may be made that the shot skipped. If the “no call” is reversed, the side that hit the shot in question loses the rally.

(b) Fault Serve. If the referee makes a call of fault serve and the call is reversed, the serve is replayed, unless if the referee considered the serve to be not retrievable, in which case a point is awarded to the server. If an appeal is made because the referee makes no call on a serve—thereby indicating that the serve was good—and the “no call” is reversed, it will result in second serve if the infraction occurred on the first serve or loss of serve if the infraction occurred on the second serve, or utilizing one-serve rules.

(c) Out Serve. If the referee calls an “out serve” and the call is reversed, the serve will be replayed, unless the serve was obviously a fault also, in which case the call becomes fault serve. However, if the call is reversed and the serve was

considered an ace, a point will be awarded. Also, if the referee makes no call on a serve—thereby indicating that the serve was good—but the “no call” is reversed, it results in an immediate loss of serve.

(d) Double Bounce Pickup. If the referee makes a call of two bounces, and the call is reversed, the rally is replayed, except if the player against whom the call was made hit a shot that could not have been retrieved, then that player wins the rally. (Before awarding a rally in this situation, the referee must be certain that the shot would not have been retrieved even if play had not been halted.) If an appeal is made because the referee makes no call, thereby indicating that the get was not two bounces, and the “no call” is reversed, the player who made the two-bounce pickup is declared the loser of the rally.

(e) Receiving Line Violation/Encroachment. If the referee makes a call of encroachment, but the call is overturned, the serve shall be replayed unless the return was deemed irretrievable in which case a sideout (or possibly a handout in doubles) should be called. When an appeal is made because the referee made no call, and the appeal is successful, the server is awarded a point.

(f) Court Hinder. If the referee makes a call of court hinder during a rally or



return of serve, the rally is replayed. If the referee makes no call and a player feels that a court hinder occurred, that player may appeal. If the appeal is successful, the rally will be replayed. A court hinder on a second serve results in only that serve being replayed.

(g) Other Rulings. The referee may rule on all matters not covered in the IRF Official Rules. However, the referee's ruling is subject to protest as described in A.5(c).

### **A.9 Rule Interpretations**

If a player feels the referee has interpreted the rules incorrectly, the player may require the referee or tournament director to cite the applicable rule in the rulebook. Having discovered a misapplication or misinterpretation, the official must correct the error by replaying the rally, awarding the point, calling sideout, or taking other corrective measures.

## **B – PROCEDURES**

### **B.1 Rule Change Procedures**

(a) Any participating country may propose a rule change to the International Racquetball Federation Rules Committee. The rule changes must be submitted in writing to the IRF Office, Colorado Springs, Colorado, before January 15th of the year in which the World Championships are held.

(b) The proposed rule changes will be submitted to the IRF Rules Committee for review and evaluation. The committee will then submit its recommendation to the IRF Executive Board by June 1st of the year in which the World Championships are held.

(c) The Executive Board will present its recommendation and the recommendations of the Rules Committee to the participating countries during the World Congress meeting at the World Championships.

(d) The participating countries at the World Congress will then vote on the proposed rule changes.

(e) Rule changes which receive the majority of yes votes will go into effect on September 1st of the year in which they are passed.

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