



20 January 2022

Dear International Racquetball Family,

As many of you have probably already heard, we at the IRF have approved some significant changes to Racquetball competition on the international level. We would like to take this opportunity to describe these changes and the rationale behind them. Keep in mind that these changes will become effective 1 February 2022.

1. The first is the scoring system, often referred to as “rally scoring.” With rally scoring, a point is earned at the end of each rally, by the winner of the rally, regardless of whether the winner of the rally is the server or the receiver.

- The best of five (5) games will be played.
- The first four (4) games will be played to 15 points, win by one (1) point.
- If a fifth (tiebreaker) game is necessary, it will be played to 11 points, win by two (2) points.
- There will be one (1) timeout per game.
- There will be a limit of two (2) appeals per game.
- The time between games will be two (2) minutes.

The main reason for this move to rally scoring is that many times our matches are too long in duration. That negatively affects the feasibility of televising, in addition to negatively affecting Racquetball in Olympic Chain tournaments with the extensive number of days that are required to complete all of the matches. Additionally, we know the general public often does not understand Racquetball and becomes lost and confused trying to follow our scoring format as it has existed in the past.

In short, we want to make Racquetball a game that everyone, players and spectators alike, can enjoy equally, whether or not they know it and understand it well.

We understand that change sometimes brings uneasiness and requires short-term adjustments, but we have learned from the experience of other sports that made the same scoring changes years ago (as with Volleyball, Badminton, and Squash). They feel it was very positive for them.

Another benefit of rally scoring is that we can also provide the return of the team competition to our tournaments. This is something that we have been wanting to do for a while, but it was just not possible due to match length. Instead, with the new rally scoring system, creating games of shorter duration gives us the time to again offer the team competition.

Rally scoring will take effect beginning 1 February 2022 at each IRF, PARC and ARF tournament going forward including the IRF World Junior Championships later in 2022.

Two additional changes we consider very positive for inclusiveness and heightened opportunities in international competition are:

2. Adding a Mixed Doubles division to each tournament, something that has already been done successfully in several tournaments. Mixed Doubles is steadily gaining in popularity, and lead organizations across the globe are actively looking for ways to make sports even more inclusive and interesting for women to play.

3. Adding a Junior 21 & Under division to the IRF World Junior Championships. We believe this move is very important since it covers an age range between 18 and 21 years old when many players who do not yet have the experience and expertise to qualify for the adult teams. Those players have been known to leave Racquetball for other sports. Now, they will have the possibility to continue their international competitive development playing the sport of Racquetball.

World Cup age ranges will consist of 21 & Under; 18 & Under; and 16 & Under. Esprit Cup ranges will now be 14 & Under; 12 & Under; and 10 & Under. Bringing 14 & Under into the Esprit Cup category will give non-point-earning experience to additional players who did not qualify for their country's national teams but are seriously preparing for future success in the older World Cup divisions.

IRF Rule Change

At the World Congress at the IRF World Championships in Guatemala City, Guatemala, on 28 November 2021, a rule change* was approved concerning appeals, effective 1 January 2022: *The player must stop in the moment of a perceived wrong call and make an appeal immediately concerning the last play between the players.* *This rule change will be reflected in the updated 2022-2024 IRF Rulebook to be released soon.

Conclusion

Please be assured that these important changes underwent a long process of research and analysis involving many people and organizations who walked the path with us. Our gratitude goes to everyone for their invaluable collaboration.

We are confident that these decisions will benefit Racquetball and create further strength and momentum for success on the World stage and in the Olympic Chain of Events.

We wish everyone a smooth transition to these announced international competition changes, and we hope that the pandemic will allow us all to return to full normal activity as soon as possible!

Sincerely,

The IRF Board of Directors

Oswaldo Maggi (President/Argentina), Marcelo Gómez Pacheco (Vice President/Costa Rica), Luke St. Onge (General Secretary/USA), Cheryl Kirk (Secretary/USA), Carlos Ruiz (Treasurer/Venezuela), María Renée Rodríguez (Athlete Representative /Guatemala), Dr. Estuardo Wer (Guatemala), Miguel Perea (Mexico), Dr. Cho Wangki (Korea), Yunhui Cobb (USA), Aisling Hickey (Ireland).