

# **USA Racquetball**

## **Official Rules of Racquetball**



**Last Updated September 30, 2015**

Hello Players,

This is the latest version of the USA Racquetball's Official Rulebook that went into effect on September 1, 2013 and covers all USAR sanctioned and non-sanctioned play in the USA. Also included are rule modifications for the IRT, LPRT, WOR, CPRT, NMRA, as well as for Wheelchair, Deaf, and Vision-impaired racquetball play.

This current version contains no significant rule changes since those made to the last version which was dated October, 2014. You may notice a few wording changes made only to clarify the existing rule. No basic concepts were changed. Also, it is now dated with a "Last Updated Date" which appears on the cover and as part of the page number on each numbered page.

The procedures for proposing future changes to the USAR rules are described near the end of the Rulebook. See Policy and Procedure "E".

Please continue enjoying this fun, fast, and furious sport, but always "Play by the Rules",

*Otto E. Dietrich*

OTTO E. DIETRICH  
National Rules Commissioner  
USA Racquetball

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# USAR Official Rules of Racquetball



## USAR Official Rules & Regulations

### 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. Cut-throat is the name generally applied to several non-tournament variations of the standard game when played by three players.

#### Rule 1.2 Description

Racquetball is a competitive game in which each player uses a strung racquet 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 serves an irretrievable serve (an ace) or wins a rally. Losing the serve is called a side out 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 side out.

#### 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. Unless a rule exception exists, the first side reaching the requisite score is the winner.



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## 2 – Courts and Equipment

### Rule 2.1 Court Specifications

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

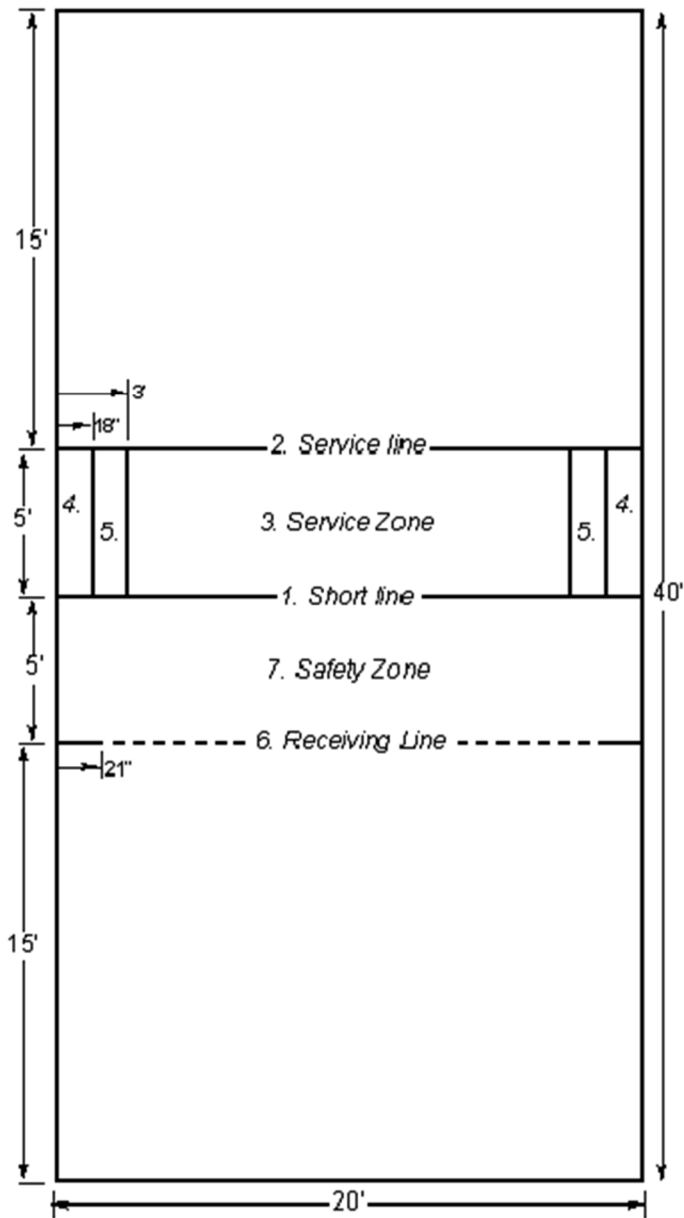
**(a) Dimensions.** The dimensions shall be 20 feet wide, 40 feet long and 20 feet high, with a back wall at least 12 feet high. All surfaces shall be in play, with the exception of any gallery opening, surfaces designated as out-of-play for a valid reason (such as being of a very different material or not in alignment with the back wall), 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 5 feet in front of, the back edge of the short line.
3. **Service Zone.** The service zone is the 5-foot x 20-foot 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, used in doubles play, are located at each end of the service zone and are designated by lines parallel with the side walls [see 4.2(b)]. 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 zones, are parallel with the side wall and are within the service zone. For each line, the edge of the line nearest to the center of the court shall be 3 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 2 twenty-one-inch lines.
7. **Safety Zone.** The safety zone is the 5-foot x 20-foot 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).



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## 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) Only a ball approved by the USAR may be used in a USAR sanctioned tournament.





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## Rule 2.3 Ball Selection

- (a) A ball shall be selected by the referee for use in each match. During the match, the referee may replace the ball at his own discretion or at the request of a player or team. Balls that are not round or which bounce erratically shall not be used.
- (b) If possible, the referee and players should also agree to an alternate ball, so that in the event of breakage, the second ball can be put into play immediately.

## Rule 2.4 Racquet Specifications

- (a) The racquet frame, including bumper guard and all solid parts of the handle, may not exceed 22 inches in length. The racquet frame may be any material judged safe.
- (b) Using a racquet frame that exceeds 22 inches will result in forfeiture of the game in progress or, if discovered between games, forfeiture of the preceding game.
- (c) The penalty for playing with a racquet frame that does not exceed 22 inches, but has a grip extending beyond the 22-inch limit, if noted during the course of a game, shall be a technical foul and a timeout to correct the problem. Subsequent violation will result in the loss of the game in progress. If a player challenges a racquet during a game that is found to be within the 22-inch limit, then a timeout is charged to the player who made the challenge. There is no penalty if the grip issue is noted and corrected between games.
- (d) The racquet frame must include a cord securely attached to the player's wrist. The wrist cord can be no longer than 18 inches as measured from one end of the cord to the other. When stretched to its maximum, the cord cannot be longer than 24 inches. Players using non-complying cords will be charged with a time-out to make the change and, if none remain, a technical foul will be assessed to make the change.
- (e) 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.

## Rule 2.5 Apparel

- (a) All players must wear lensed eyewear that has been warranted by its manufacturer or distributor as having:
- (1) Been designed for use in racquetball and
  - (2) Met or exceeded the then current and full ASTM F803 standard.

This rule applies to all persons, including those who wear corrective lenses. The eyewear must be unaltered and worn as designed at all times. A player who fails to wear proper eyewear will be assessed a technical foul and a timeout to obtain proper eyewear (see Rule 3.17(a)9). A second infraction in the same match will result in immediate forfeiture of the match.

**Certifications & Compliance.** The USAR maintains a reference list of eyewear so warranted by their manufacturers, and provides that list to each sanctioned event (an eyewear list dated more than 90 days prior to the first day of the tournament will be deemed invalid for the purpose of determining compliance with this eyewear rule). In addition, the list is available online at the USRA.org website (indexed under "eyewear"), and individual copies may be requested by calling the USAR National Office at (719) 635-5396.

To be used in sanctioned competition, protective eyewear must:

- bear a permanent, physical stamp of the appropriate "ASTM-F803" citation on the frame itself, or
- appear on the ASTM reference listing, or
- bear the "Protective Eyewear Certification Council" [PECC] seal of approval for the ASTM standard, or



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- be certified in writing by the maker that it complies with the required ASTM standard (in such instance, the player must be able to provide written, adequate proof - on demand - at any sanctioned event, before such eyewear may be used).

**(b) Clothing and Shoes.** The clothing may be of any color; however, a player may be required to change wet, extremely loose fitting, or otherwise distracting garments. Insignias and writing on the clothing must be considered to be in good taste by the Tournament Director. Shoes must be worn as designed and have soles, which do not mark or damage the floor. Players may not play in socks only or in bare feet.

**(c) Audio Devices.** Players may not wear audio devices during play unless they are needed to amplify one's hearing.

**(d) Equipment Requirements During Warm-up.** Proper eyewear [see 2.5(a)] must be worn and wrist cords must be used during any on-court warm-up period. The referee should give a technical warning to any person who fails to comply and assess a technical foul if that player continues to not comply after receiving such a warning.



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## 3 – Play Regulations

### Rule 3.1 Serve

In all USAR sanctioned competition (except as noted in Rule 5), the server will have two opportunities to put the ball into play.

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. If 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

The server may not start the service motion until the referee has called the score or "second serve." The referee shall call the score as both server and receiver prepare to return to their respective positions, shortly after the previous rally has ended--even if the players are not ready. The serve is started from any place within the service zone. Certain drive serves are an exception. See Rule 3.6. Neither the ball nor any part of either foot may extend beyond either line of the service zone when initiating the service motion. Stepping on, but not beyond, the line is permitted. However, when completing the service motion, the server may step beyond the service (front) line provided that some part of both feet remain on or inside the line until the served ball passes the short line. The server may not step beyond the short line until the ball passes the short line. See Rule 3.9(a) and 3.10(i) for penalties for violations.

### Rule 3.3 Manner

After taking a set position inside the service zone, a player may begin the service motion. The service motion is any continuous movement that results in the ball being served. Once the service motion begins, after the ball leaves the hand, it must next bounce on the floor in the service zone and then, without touching anything else, be struck by the racquet before the ball bounces on the floor a second time. After being struck, the ball must hit the front wall first and on the rebound hit the floor beyond the back edge of the short line, either with or without touching one of the side walls. However, the receiver may return the ball "on the fly" before those things happen as long as Rule 3.11 is followed.

### Rule 3.4 Readiness

The service motion shall not begin until the referee has called the score or "second serve" and the server has visually checked the receiver's readiness.

### Rule 3.5 Delays

Except as noted in Rule 3.5(b), the referee may call a technical foul (or warning) for delays exceeding 10 seconds.

(a) The 10-second rule applies to the server and receiver simultaneously. Concurrently, they are allowed up to 10 seconds after the score is called to serve or 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, they must signal by raising the racquet above the head or completely turning the back to the server. (These are the only two acceptable signals.)

(b) Serving while the receiving player/team is signaling "not ready" is a fault serve.

(c) After the score or "second serve" 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.



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## Rule 3.6 Drive Service Zones

There is a drive serve line 3 feet from each side wall in the service zone. Viewed one at a time, each drive serve line divides the service zone into a 3-foot and a 17-foot section. The player may drive serve between the body and the side wall nearest to where the service motion began only if the player, the racquet, and the ball (only until it is struck by the server) starts and remains outside of that 3-foot drive service zone until the served ball crosses the short line. A drive serve involving "any continuous movement" (see Rule 3.3 Manner), beginning in one 3-foot drive service zone and continuing into the opposite 3-foot drive service zone, is a fault serve. See Rule 3.9(h) Illegal Drive Serve.

- (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 3-foot line is part of the 3-foot zone and defines a plane that, if broken, is an infraction. (See Rule 3.9h)

## 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.** Two consecutive fault serves result in an out (either a side out or a handout).
- (c) **Out Serve.** An out serve results in an immediate out (either a side out 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. In addition, 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, not canceling any prior fault serve.
- (c) **Out-of-Court Serve.** A served ball that first hits the front wall and, after striking the floor, either goes out of the court 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)].



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## Rule 3.9 Fault Serves

The following serves are faults and any two in succession result in an out:

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

1. At the start of or during the service motion, any part of the server (or doubles partner), including the racquet, touches the floor outside of the service zone.
2. At the end of the service motion, the server steps with either foot on the floor beyond the service line (with no part of the foot on the line or inside the service zone) before the served ball crosses 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 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, including the ball touching a side wall, as a part of the service motion is a fault serve.

**(g) Serving the Ball Without a Bounce.** Tossing the ball into the air and serving it without a bounce is a fault serve.

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

**(i) 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.) *In one serve play*, if a serve is called a screen, the server will be allowed one more opportunity to hit a legal serve. Two consecutive screen serves results in an out.

**(j) Serving before the Receiver is Ready.** A serve is made while the receiver is not ready as described in Rule 3.5(b). *In one serve play*, if a serve is made while the receiver is not ready as described in Rule 3.5(b), the server will be allowed one more opportunity to hit a legal serve.



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## Rule 3.10 Out Serves

Any of the following results in an out:

- (a) Two Consecutive Fault Serves** [see Rule 3.9], or a single fault serve in one serve play [see exceptions: 5.0].
- (b) Missed Serve Attempt.** Any attempt to serve/strike the ball that results in a total miss or in the ball touching any part of the server's body, including the foot. Also, allowing the ball to bounce more than once during the service motion.
- (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.** Any movement of the racquet toward the ball during the serve that is non-continuous and done for the purpose of deceiving the receiver. If a balk serve occurs, but the referee believes that no deceit was involved, the option of declaring "no serve" and having the serve replayed without penalty can be exercised.
- (e) Illegal Hit.** An illegal hit includes contacting the ball twice, intentionally 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 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.** An immediate loss of serve shall result if, after the serve has been struck, the server or doubles partner step into the safety zone before the served ball passes the short line.



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## Rule 3.11 Return of Serve

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

1. The receiver may not break the plane of the receiving line with the racquet or body until the ball either bounces in the safety zone or else crosses the receiving line. For example, if the receiver steps on the dashed receiving line with either foot (with any part of the foot contacting the line) before either of the two preceding things happen, a point shall be called for the server.
2. The follow through may carry the receiver or the racquet past the receiving line, but neither may break the plane of the short line unless the ball is struck after rebounding off the back wall.
3. Any violation by the receiver results in a point for the server.

**(b) Touched Serve.** During the return of serve, a player on the receiving side may not intentionally catch or touch a served ball (such as an apparently long or short serve) until the referee has made a call or the ball has touched the floor for a second time. Violation results in loss of the rally, i.e. a point.

**(c) 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 or the ceiling, or any combination of those surfaces. A returned ball must touch the front wall before touching the floor.

**(d) Failure to Return.** The failure to return a serve results in a point for the server.

**(e) Other Provisions.** Except as noted in this rule (3.11), the return of serve is subject to all provisions of Rules 3.13 through Rule 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], or a single fault serve in one serve play [see exceptions: 5.0].
3. Failure to Return Ball. Player or team fails to keep the ball in play as required by Rule 3.11 (c).
4. Penalty Hinder. Player or team commits a penalty hinder which results in an out. See Rule 3.15.

**(b) Side out.** Retiring the server in singles is called a side out.

**(c) Effect of Side out.** When the server (or serving team) receives a side out, the server becomes the receiver and the receiver becomes the server.



# USAR Official Rules of Racquetball



## 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 (not the handle or the hand) 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 a loss of the rally.

**(b) One Touch.** The player or team trying to return the ball may touch or strike the ball only once or else the rally is lost. The ball may not be intentionally carried. (A carried ball -- one that rests on the racquet slightly longer than a true "hit" -- is allowed if not done intentionally.)

**(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 or else "rolls" before being hit.
2. The ball does not reach the front wall on the fly after being struck, e.g. like being stuck in the racquet strings.
3. The ball is hit such that it goes, without first touching the floor, 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(a)].
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 a player hits that player or that player's partner.
6. Committing a penalty hinder. See Rule 3.15.
7. Switching hands during a rally.
8. Failure to use a racquet wrist safety cord as intended.
9. Touching the ball with the body or uniform.
10. Intentionally carrying or slinging the ball with the racquet. Also, the ball becoming lodged in one's strings or clothing.

**(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 proper way to check for a broken ball is to squeeze it by hand. However, if the referee can be certain that the ball was broken during, and not after, the previous rally, then he can call for that rally to be replayed. Checking the ball by any hard striking of 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.





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## **(g) Play Stoppage**

1. If a foreign object enters the court, or any other outside interference occurs, the referee shall stop the play immediately and declare a replay hinder.
2. If a player loses any apparel, equipment, or other article, the referee shall stop play immediately and declare a penalty hinder or replay hinder as described in Rule 3.15 (i).

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



# USAR Official Rules of Racquetball



## Rule 3.14 Replay Hinder

A rally is replayed without penalty and the server resumes play at first serve whenever a replay hinder occurs. Depending on the circumstances, several of the replay hinder described below could more properly be called penalty hinders. The differences might be small and also involve referee judgment. So, as suggested below, also see Rule 3.15, which describes certain conditions under which a penalty hinders, might be called instead and result in loss of the rally.

### (a) Situations

- 1. Court Hinder.** The referee should stop play immediately whenever the ball hits any part of the court that was designated prior to the match 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 an irregular 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. This also includes any ball that leaves the court after legally touching the front wall and then bouncing on the floor.
- 2. Ball Hits Opponent.** When an opponent is hit by a return shot in flight, it is a replay 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 a penalty hinder. Also see Rule 3.15.
- 3. Body Contact.** If body contact occurs which 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 for either player. Also see Rule 3.15.
- 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.) 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. Also see Rule 3.15
- 5. Backswing Hinder.** Any racquet or body 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 a penalty hinder. Also see Rule 3.15.
- 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 replay hinder. This call must be made immediately and is subject to acceptance and approval of the referee. The referee will grant a replay 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 a penalty hinder if warranted. Also, see Rule 3.15.
- 7. Other Interference.** Any other unintentional interference that prevents an opponent from having a fair chance to see or return the ball. Example: 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. Also see Rule 3.15.

**(b) Effect of Hinder.** 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 them are subject to the approval of the referee. A replay hinder stops play and the rally is replayed. The server resumes play at first serve.



# USAR Official Rules of Racquetball



**(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 towards the ball and must have a reasonable chance to return the ball for any type of hinder to be called.

## Rule 3.15 Penalty Hinder

A penalty hinder results in the loss of the rally. A penalty hinder does not have to be an intentional act, but an intentional hinder would be a penalty hinder. Replay hinders are described in Rule 3.14. The following actions or failure to act result in a penalty 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. In addition, 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 a shot.

**(c) Blocking.** Moves into a position which blocks the opponent from getting to, or returning, the ball; or in doubles, the offensive player who is not returning the ball hinders or impedes either defensive player's ability to move into a position to cover the pending shot that comes into play.

**(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 a penalty hinder against the server.

**(i) Apparel or Equipment Loss.** If a player loses any apparel, equipment, or other article, play shall be immediately stopped and that player shall be called for a penalty hinder, unless the player has just hit a shot that could not be retrieved. If the loss of equipment is caused by a player's opponent, then a replay hinder should be called. If the opponent's action is judged to have been avoidable, then the opponent should be called for a penalty hinder.



# USAR Official Rules of Racquetball



## Rule 3.16 Timeouts

**(a) Rest Periods.** Each player or team is entitled to three 30-second timeouts in games to 15 and two 30-second timeouts in games to 11. Timeouts may not be called by either side once the service motion has begun. Calling for a timeout when none remain or after the service motion has begun will result in the assessment of a technical foul for delay of game. If a player takes more than 30 seconds for a single timeout, the referee may automatically charge any remaining timeouts, as needed, for any extra time taken. Once all time allowed has expired, a delay of game technical foul can be assessed. A player who leaves the court should call a timeout or else advise the referee of the reason for leaving the court. If a player leaves the court without advising the referee, a timeout may be charged to that player. If none remain, the referee may assess a technical foul for delay of game; however, the referee may excuse a delay if the player's reason for leaving was to correct a problem affecting the playability of the court, such as obtaining a towel to dry the court or disposing of some foreign material from the court.

**(b) Injury.** If a player is injured during the course of a match because of contact, such as with the ball, racquet, wall, floor, or another player, an injury timeout will be awarded without regard to the player's use of regular timeouts. While a player may call more than one timeout for the same injury or for additional injuries that occur during the match, a player is not allowed more than a total of 15 minutes of rest for injury during the entire match. If the injured player is not able to resume play after total rest of 15 minutes, the match shall be awarded to the opponent.

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 on the court will not be considered an injury. Injury time is also not allowed for pre-existing conditions.

**(c) Equipment Timeouts.** Players are expected to keep all clothing and equipment in good, playable condition and must use regular timeouts for adjustment and replacement of equipment (such as broken strings or racquet) during play. If a player or team has no regular timeouts left and the referee determines that an equipment change or adjustment is necessary for fair and safe continuation of the match, the referee may grant an equipment timeout not to exceed 2 minutes. The referee may allow additional time under extenuating circumstances.

**(d) Between Games.** The rest period between the first two games of a match is 2 minutes. If a tiebreaker is necessary, the rest period between the second and third game is 5 minutes.

**(e) Postponements.** Any game/match postponed by a referee or the Tournament Director shall be resumed with the same scores as when postponed.



# USAR Official Rules of Racquetball



## Rule 3.17 Technical Fouls and Warnings

**(a) Technical Fouls.** 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 overtly and deliberately abusive. A prior warning is not required, but often may be enough to correct the behavior (see Rule 3.17(b)). If the player or team against whom the technical foul 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 can result in technical fouls 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 that might result in damage to the court 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 warm-up (see Policy A.8), timeouts, or between games,
  - (iv) Calling a timeout when none remain, or after the service motion begins, or
  - (v) Taking more than ten seconds to serve or be ready to receive serve.
  - (vi) Repeatedly serving before the score or "second serve" is called.
7. Intentional front line foot fault to negate a bad lob serve.
8. Anything the referee considers unsportsmanlike behavior.
9. Failure to wear lensed eyewear designed for racquet sports [See Rule 2.5(a)] is an automatic technical foul on the first infraction, plus a mandatory timeout (to acquire the proper eyewear) will be charged against the offending player. A second infraction by that player during the match will result in automatic forfeiture of the match.

**(b) Technical Warnings.** There are varying degrees of unsportsmanlike behavior, so if a player's behavior is not as severe as to warrant a technical foul and deduction of a point, the referee may, at his discretion, issue a technical warning instead -- without the deduction of a point.

**(c) Effect of Technical Foul 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 of the behavior. Issuing a technical foul or warning has no effect on who will serve 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).



# USAR Official Rules of Racquetball



## VARIOUS RULE MODIFICATIONS

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

### 4 – Doubles

The USAR'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. At the beginning of each game, when the first server of the first team to serve is out, the team is out. After that, either partner can serve first each time the team steps in to serve. Both players on each team shall serve until there is a handout and a side out -- i.e. both players are out. The referee must make sure that neither partner serves again after that partner had previously lost a rally while serving.

(b) Partner's Position. On each serve, the server's partner shall stand erect with back facing 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 served ball passes the short line. Any violation is called a foot fault unless the server's partner enters the safety zone before the ball passes the short line in which case 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 (but not necessarily against) 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 service box results in a fault serve.

(c) *In one serve play only*, if a serve hits the non-serving partner while standing in the box, the server will be allowed one more opportunity to hit a legal serve. Hitting the non-serving partner twice results in an out. Also consecutive faults – such as (i) a screen serve followed by hitting the non-serving partner or (ii) hitting the non-serving partner followed by serving while the receiver is not ready -- results in an out.

#### Rule 4.4 Out Serve in Doubles

(a) Out-of-Order Serve. If either partner serves again after that partner had previously lost a rally while serving, the penalty is an immediate out for that team.

(b) Ball Hits Partner. A served ball that hits the doubles partner, while outside the service box, results in 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.



# USAR Official Rules of Racquetball



(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.

## 5 – One Serve (U.S. Team Divisions at National Singles and Doubles Only)

The USAR's standard rules will be followed for all play except for the U.S. National Team Qualifying divisions played at U.S. National Singles and Doubles where only one serve is allowed. Therefore, any fault serve is an out serve, with a few exceptions [noted separately below, and within the text rules cited].

See [Rule 3.9 Fault Serves](#)

[Screens]

(i) . . . *In one serve play*, if a serve is called a screen, the server will be allowed one more opportunity to hit a legal serve, except if the serve is also defective for some other reason, such as being long or short. Two consecutive screen serves results in an out.

[Serving before the Receiver is Ready]

(j) . . . *In one serve play*, if a serve is made while the receiver is not ready as described in Rule 3.5(b), the server will be allowed one more opportunity to hit a legal serve.

See [Rule 4.3 Fault Serves in Doubles](#)

[Serve hits partner / Consecutive faults]

(c) . . . *In one serve play only*, if a serve hits the non-serving partner while standing in the box, the server will be allowed one more opportunity to hit a legal serve. Hitting the non-serving partner twice results in an out. Also consecutive faults – such as (i) a screen serve followed by hitting the non-serving partner or (ii) hitting the non-serving partner followed by serving while the receiver is not ready -- results in an out.

## 6 – Multi-Bounce

In general, the USAR'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. During the rally, 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.



# USAR Official Rules of Racquetball



## [Rule 6.4 Games and Matches](#)

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





# WOR Rule Modifications



## 7 – Outdoor Racquetball, World Outdoor Racquetball (WOR)

World Outdoor Racquetball Association (WOR)

There are many rule variations in the outdoor game. Generally, the standard USAR rules also apply outdoors. Variations acknowledged by WOR are described below, but there may be local rule exceptions that supersede them. Tournament Directors are advised to put any local rule exceptions in writing and all participants are advised to ask about them prior to playing.

### Rule 7.1 Court Specifications

Outdoor courts vary in size and there is no “official court size.” Generally, outdoor courts either have no or a very limited ceiling. They usually have no back walls; however, some courts may have a non-connected back wall surface considered part of the playing area. Outdoor courts can be classified as one of two general types.

- (a) One-Wall. A one-wall court has no side walls that do not extend more than a few feet.
- (b) Three-Wall. The front wall is usually at least 20 feet wide and at least 20 feet high. The side walls generally are at least 20 feet long and 20 feet high where they meet the front wall and are often tapered as they come toward the back court.

### Rule 7.2 Court Markings

Generally, the markings are the same as the USAR’s standard rules, except that on an outdoor court, there is no receiving (5-foot) line. Since the size of outdoor courts may vary, the exact placement of other lines may also vary. Some outdoor courts may also have singles service lines to reduce the server’s advantage. These lines are usually placed 18 inches inside each side line and run from the short line to the back line. These lines are only in force during the serve and are not used for doubles play.

### Rule 7.3 Apparel

Shirts are not required in the outdoor game.

### Rule 7.4 Play Regulations

- (a) All divisions for the WOR are one serve only. Generally, a rally must be played for the receiver(s) to take possession of the serve.
- (b) In doubles, the non-serving partner may take a position in the normal service box or outside the court beyond the back line or side line. If the non-serving partner hinders the receiving team on the return of serve, the referee may call a penalty hinder. In one wall, the non-serving partner may not step onto the playing zone of the court until serve has passed the short line.
- (c) On the return of serve, the receiver(s) may not break the plane of the short line and doing so results in a point for the server.
- (d) If the ball bounces on a side line or the back line on its first bounce, the ball is considered “in”. When the singles service line is used, a served ball that bounces on it is “in”. If the ball hits the beveled end of a side wall or the beveled top of the front wall or a side wall and remains in play, the shot is good. A ball that bounces over a side wall is legal; however, local rules may declare that such a shot is out when long-wall courts are used.
- (e) Generally, there are no court hinders. Local rules, however, may designate a particular feature of the court as a court hinder. The elements of nature, such as sun, wind, rain, etc., may not serve as the basis for a hinder. A ball that strikes a light pole that is inside the playing area, but outside the “in” zone, without bouncing is considered out. However, if the ball first bounces “in”, and then hits such a light pole, it is a court hinder as soon as the ball touches the pole. A court hinder may also be called when a returned ball hits a light attached to the end of a side wall if the ball would have otherwise reached the front wall.



## WOR Rule Modifications



(f) A safety holdup (replay hinder) also includes consideration given to players on an adjacent court or any spectators who are not part of the stationary crowd. The player must be able to hit the ball prior to it reaching the stationary crowd. Any vehicle that enters the playing area can be grounds for a safety holdup. Parked vehicles are classified as part of the stationary crowd.

(g) Intentionally launching a ball following a rally is a technical foul for delay of game against the player who sent the ball sailing. This includes launching a ball prior to the referee or opponent confirming that it is broken.

(h) When line judges are in place, they will be used exactly like indoors with the exception of calling side lines. The line judge will have the first call on sidelines, not the referee. If a ball is out, the line judge should say "OUT" and stop play. If there is an appeal on the line judge's call on a side line, the appeal will only go to the referee. If the referee disagrees with the line judge's call, then the rally will be replayed. If the referee agrees or has no opinion, the call stands. The opposite side line judge does not render an opinion.



# USAR Official Rules of Racquetball



## 8 - Wheelchair Racquetball

### Rule 8.1 Changes to Standard Rules

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

- (a) Where USAR rules refer to server, person, body, or other similar variations, for wheelchair play such reference shall include all parts of the wheelchair in addition to the person sitting on it.
- (b) Where the rules refer to feet, standing or other similar descriptions, for wheelchair play it means only where the rear wheels actually touch the floor.
- (c) Where the rules mention body contact, for wheelchair play it shall mean any part of the wheelchair in addition to the player.
- (d) Where the rules refer to double bounce or after the first bounce, it shall mean three bounces. All variations of the same phrases shall be revised accordingly.

### Rule 8.2 Divisions

- (a) Novice Division. The Novice Division is for the beginning player who is just learning to play.
- (b) Intermediate Division. The Intermediate Division is for the player who has played tournaments before and has a skill level to be competitive in the division.
- (c) Open Division. The Open Division is the highest level of play and is for the advanced player.
- (d) Multi-Bounce Division. The Multi-Bounce Division is for the individuals (men or women) whose mobility is such that wheelchair racquetball would be impossible if not for the Multi-Bounce Division.
- (e) Junior Division. The junior divisions are for players who are under the age of 19. The Tournament Director will determine if the divisions will be played as two bounce or multi-bounce. Age divisions are: 8-11, 12-15, and 16-18.

### Rule 8.3 Rules

- (a) Two Bounce Rule. Two bounces are used in wheelchair racquetball in all divisions except the Multi-Bounce Division. The ball may hit the floor twice before being returned.
- (b) Out-of-Chair Rule. The player can neither intentionally jump out of the chair to hit a ball nor stand up in the chair to serve the ball. If the referee determines that the chair was left intentionally, it will result in loss of the rally for the offender. If a player unintentionally leaves the chair, no penalty will be assessed. The referee will warn repeat offenders.
- (c) Equipment Standards. To protect playing surfaces, the tournament officials will not allow a person to participate with black tires or anything that will mark or damage the court.
- (d) Start. The serve may be started from any place within the service zone. Although the front casters may extend beyond the lines of the service zone, at no time shall the rear wheels cross either the service or short line before the served ball crosses the short line. Penalties for violation are the same as those for the standard game.
- (e) Maintenance Delay. A maintenance delay is a delay in the progress of a match due to a malfunction of a wheelchair, prosthesis, or assistive device. Such delay must be requested by the player, granted by the referee during the match, and shall not exceed 5 minutes. Only two such delays may be granted for each player for each match. After using both maintenance delays, the player has the following options:



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- (i) continue play with the defective equipment,
- (ii) immediately substitute replacement equipment, or (iii) postpone the game, with the approval of the referee and opponent.

## Rule 8.4 Multi-Bounce Rules

- (a) The ball may bounce as many times as the receiver wants though the player may swing only once to return the ball to the front wall.
- (b) The ball must be hit before it crosses the short line on its way back to the front wall.
- (c) The receiver cannot cross the short line after the ball contacts the back wall.

## 9 - Visually Impaired Racquetball

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

### Rule 9.1 Eligibility

A player's visual acuity must not be better than 20/200 with the best practical eye correction or else the player's field of vision must not be better than 20 degrees. The three classifications of blindness are B1 (totally blind to light perception), B2 (able to see hand movement up to 20/600 corrected), and B3 (from 20/600 to 20/200 corrected).

### Rule 9.2 Return of Serve and Rallies

On the return of serve and on every return thereafter, the player may make multiple attempts to strike the ball until

- (i) the ball has been touched,
- (ii) the ball has stopped bouncing, or
- (iii) the ball has passed the short line after touching the back wall.

The only exception is described in Rule 9.3.

### Rule 9.3 Blast Rule

If the ball (other than on the serve) caroms from the front wall to the back wall on the fly, the player may retrieve the ball from any place on the court--including in front of the short line -- so long as the ball has not been touched and is still bouncing.

### Rule 9.4 Hinders

A replay hinder will result in the rally being replayed without penalty unless the hinder was intentional. If a hinder is clearly intentional, a penalty hinder should be called and the rally awarded to the non-offending player or team.

## 10 - Deaf Racquetball

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

### Rule 10.1 Eligibility

An athlete shall have a hearing loss of 55 dB or more in the better ear to be eligible for any tournament for deaf athletes.



# IRT Rule Modifications

## 11 – Men’s Professional, International Racquetball Tour (IRT)

In general, competition on the International Racquetball Tour (IRT) will follow the standard rules governing racquetball established by the USAR, except for the modifications that follow. Consult the IRT President regarding any changes after this publication. The IRT President will resolve all IRT rules questions.

### Rule 11.1 Game, Match

Every game is won by the first player who scores 11 points with at least a 2 point lead. If necessary, the game will continue beyond 11 points, until one player does have a 2 point lead. Matches are played the best three out of five possible games. Losing a point due to a technical foul CAN create the 2 point lead needed to win a game.

### Rule 11.2 Appeals

The referee's call is final. Players may not question calls that involve skips, double bounces, or fault serves, including screen serves. The first incidence of such questioning is a technical warning and the second is a technical foul (loss of one point). Discussions or rule clarifications are only allowed for hinder calls.

### Rule 11.3 Line Judges

Used only at selected events to make certain specific calls during ongoing play. The IRT President will determine whether to use line judges, their positioning around the court, the format for appeals, and the line judges' specific authority.

### Rule 11.4 Serves

Players are allowed two serves to put the ball into play. The server (or partner in doubles) may leave the service zone as soon as the ball is struck on the serve.

### Rule 11.5 Resuming Play

Shortly after the end of each rally, the referee should call the score or “second serve”. Once he does, the players are allowed 10 seconds to initiate the serve

### Rule 11.6 Readiness Rule

Any serve made before 5 seconds expires will be replayed if the receiver was not ready. However, within the 5 seconds after either the score or “second serve” is called, the server must serve the ball -- even if the receiver is not ready. Should 10 seconds expire without the serve being made, then a timeout is charged to the server. If the player does not have a timeout, then that player loses the serve.

### Rule 11.7 Court Hinders

No court hindes are allowed or called, except on the serve and even then only for a wet ball on the first surface the ball touches, either the floor or side wall, after it leaves the front wall.

### Rule 11.8 Out-of-Court Ball

Any ball leaving the court results in a loss of rally.

### Rule 11.9 Carrying the Ball

There is no “carry rule” in IRT play unless the “carry” is intentional.



# IRT Rule Modifications



## Rule 11.10 Ball

All matches must be played with the IRT's Official Ball. The first, third, and fifth (if necessary) games of the match are started with a new ball.

## Rule 11.11 After the Rally

In general, players are not to strike the ball after the rally. The referee may issue a technical warning for the first offense and a technical foul (loss of one point) for each further offense.

## Rule 11.12 Timeouts

(a) Per Game. Each player is entitled to one 1-minute timeout per game.

(b) Between Points. The players have 10 seconds to put the ball in play once the referee calls the score or "second serve". See Rules 11.5 and 11.6 for details.

(c) Between Games. The rest period between all games is 2 minutes, including between games 4 and 5.

(d) Equipment Timeouts. A player does not have to use the regular timeout to correct or adjust equipment, provided that the need for the change or adjustment is acknowledged by the referee as being necessary for fair and safe continuation of the match.

(e) Injury Timeout. Each player may take two injury timeouts per match. Each timeout may be as long as seven and one-half (7-1/2) minutes. Any portion of the seven and one-half minutes that is not used is forfeited.

## Rule 11.13 Forfeit Time

A match can be forfeited when a player or team fails to report to play within 15 minutes after the scheduled time of the match.

## Rule 11.14 Apparel

Players must wear collared shirts that are clean and in good repair. T-shirts made of some type of performance fabric (such as Cool Max and Dri-Fit) are acceptable substitutes. All shirts must present a professional appearance and are subject to approval/rejection by the IRT President. Players are not required to use a wrist cord or protective eyewear during warmup.



# LPRT Rule Modifications



## 12 – Ladies Professional Racquetball Tour (LPRT)

In general, competition in the Ladies Professional Racquetball Tour (LPRT) will follow the standard rules governing racquetball established by the USAR, except for the modifications that follow. Consult the tour commissioner regarding any changes after this publication. The LPRT commissioner or, if that person is on-court, the Tournament Director or other designated person, will resolve all LPRT rules questions or disputes and has the final say.

### Rule 12.1 Game, Match

Matches are best 3 out of 5 games to 11 points. The first player to score 11 points with at least a 2-point lead wins the game.

### Rule 12.2 New Ball

A new ball will be used in the first, and, if necessary, fifth game.

### Rule 12.3 Line Judges, Appeals

Line judges are required for semifinal and final matches. Players may use three appeals in each game, plus a game-ending rally may be appealed even if all three appeals have been used.

### Rule 12.4 Serve

Players are allowed two serves to put the ball into play.

### Rule 12.5 Timeouts

(a) Per Game. Each player is entitled to two 45-second timeouts per game. Calling a timeout, when none remain, will result in a technical foul and deduction of one point from the violator's score.

(b) Between Games. The rest period between all games is 1½ minutes, except between games 4 and 5 when 2½ minutes are allowed.

(c) Wet Court. Player may leave the court to obtain a towel to dry the court, but neither player may leave the court while it is being dried unless she officially calls a timeout.

(d) Equipment Timeouts. Players may only call an equipment timeout if both of her regular timeouts have been exhausted. Equipment must be deemed unsafe to use for an equipment timeout to be called. It cannot be used to change a wet glove. The maximum time allowed for an equipment timeout is 20 seconds.

(e) Injury Timeouts. A total of 15 minutes is allowed for an injury timeout in a match. An injury must not be pre-existing to the current match. Aggravating a previous injury does not qualify for an injury timeout. The referee must stop play for any external bleeding so that the player may receive treatment or apply a bandage.

### Rule 12.6 Hinders

(a) Court Hinders. There are NO court hinders except when the ball strikes a foreign object, including, but not limited to, microphones, speakers, etc. used for production.

(b) Audible Distractions. Audible distractions are NOT a hinder (justification for play stoppage) unless made by the referee during a rally.



# LPRT Rule Modifications



## [Rule 12.7 Warm-ups](#)

Players are not required to use a wrist cord or protective eyewear during warmup





# CPRT Rule Modifications

## 13 – Classic Professional Racquetball Tour (CPRT)

In general, competition will follow the standard rules governing racquetball established by the USAR, except for the modifications that follow. Consult the tour commissioner regarding any changes after this publication. The CPRT tour commissioner or other designated person will resolve all CPRT rules questions or disputes.

### Rule 13.1 Eligibility

Players trying to qualify for the CPRT Professional Division must be at least 40 years old as of the first day of the event and also ranked outside of the top 8 of the IRT rankings as of September 1 of the current season. Participants in CPRT events must comply with all the requirements of USA Racquetball.

### Rule 13.2 Game, Match

Matches are played best 3 out of 5 games to 9 points. Game 5, if necessary, must be won by at least 2 points and thus may continue beyond 9 points.

### Rule 13.3 Bonus Serve

Players are allowed only one serve, except that once in every game, a player (or doubles team) may take a second serve if he advises the referee of his intent immediately following the defective serve.

### Rule 13.4 Time

Players are allowed one 1-minute timeout in each game and there is a 2-minute break between all games. If game 5 goes beyond 9 points, then each player is allowed one more 1-minute timeout in that game.

### Rule 13.5 Appeals

The referee's call is final. There are no line judges, and no appeals may be made.

### Rule 13.6 Court Hinders

No court hinders are allowed or called.



# NMRA Rule Modifications

## 14 – National Masters Racquetball Association (NMRA)

In general, competition will follow the standard rules governing racquetball established by the USAR, except for the modifications that follow. Consult the NMRA President regarding any changes after this publication. The NMRA President or other designated person will resolve all NMRA rules questions or disputes.

### Rule 14.1 Eligibility

Players at least 45 years of age are eligible to compete in an NMRA event. Competition is offered at 5-year age increments. Players must play in their proper age group as determined by their age on the first day of the tournament. You must be a current member of the USAR as of the first and last day of the tournament to compete.

### Rule 14.2 Draws

All NMRA events are played as round robins. If there are more than 12 players/teams in an age bracket, then it will be split into pools. The top finisher from each pool will play a single elimination playoff to determine the champion. When there are only two flights, the top three players/teams are selected for the playoff. Playoff matches are two games to 15 points with a tiebreaker game to 11 (if necessary).

### Rule 14.3 Game, Match

The number of entrants and available court time dictate the choice of score to win a game, which is usually the first player/team to score either 11 or 15 points. A match consists of two games.

### Rule 14.4 Match Score

Each player/team receives credit for every point scored during the match. They earn two more points for each game they win, plus an additional 4 points if they win the match by scoring more overall points than their opponent. However, if each player/team wins a game and the scores are the same, then there is no match winner and the match is recorded as a "tie". A "tie" matches result in each player/team earning 2 points for the game they won, plus 2 more points, i.e. one-half of the 4 additional points usually earned by the winner of the match.

### Rule 14.5 Order of Finish

The finishing positions of the players/teams are determined based on who scored the highest average number of points (total overall points earned divided by the total games played).

### Rule 14.6 Forfeits

If a team/player forfeits a match, they receive zero points for that match and their opponents receive the maximum total points for the match. If a team/player drops out of the tournament, they cannot receive an award. Moreover, the points earned based on the matches they did play are not affected and the players/teams they did NOT play will have their averages based on the fewer number games they will have played.



# Official Rules of Racquetball

## Competition Policies and Procedures

Sections A through D that follow contain policies and procedures concerning competition, rather than "rules of play" which are subject to the formal rule change procedures. However, some of the topics that follow are still subject to the formal rule change procedures.

### A - Tournaments

#### A.1 Draws

(a) If possible, all draws shall be finalized at least two (2) days before the tournament commences. The seeding method of drawing shall be approved by the USAR. Use of USAR National Rankings is the preferred method. R2Sports can do this automatically.

(b) At USAR National events, the draw and seeding committee shall be chaired by the USAR's Executive Director, National Tournament Director, and the host Tournament Director. No other persons shall participate in the draw or seeding unless at the invitation of the draw and seeding committee.

(c) In local and regional tournaments, the draw shall be the responsibility of the Tournament Director.

#### A.2 Consolation Matches

(a) Each entrant shall be entitled to participate in a minimum of two matches. Therefore, losers of their first match shall have the opportunity to compete in a consolation bracket of their own division. In draws of less than seven players, a round robin may be offered. See A.6 about how to determine the winner of a round robin event.

(b) Consolation matches may be waived at the discretion of the Tournament Director, but this waiver must be in writing on the tournament application.

(c) Preliminary consolation matches will be two of three games to 11 points. Semifinal and final matches will follow the regular scoring format.

#### A.3 Scheduling

**(a) Preliminary Matches.** If contestants are entered in more than one division, it is likely that they will be required to play several times on the same day with little rest between matches. This is a risk assumed on entering multiple categories of play. If possible, schedules should provide at least one (1) hour of rest between matches.

**(b) Final Matches.** Where the possibility exists of one or more players reaching the finals in multiple divisions, it is recommended that these matches be scheduled several hours apart to assure more rest between the final matches. If this is not possible, it is recommended that a singles final be scheduled before any doubles final, and that at least one (1) hour of rest be allowed between matches.

**(c) Conflicts.** If a player reaches the finals of two divisions that are scheduled within the same hour, that player should be given the option of choosing which final is to be played first.

#### A.4 Notice of Matches

After the first round of matches, it is the responsibility of each player to check the posted schedules to determine the time and place of each subsequent match. If any change is made in the schedule after posting, it shall be the duty of the Tournament Director to notify the players of the change.



# Official Rules of Racquetball

## A.5 Finishes

Finalists must play off for first and second place, or determine a winner by some mutually acceptable method. Semi-finalists are not required to play off for third place. However, if one semifinalist wishes to play off and the other does not, the one willing to play shall be awarded third place.

## A.6 Round Robin Scoring

The final places of players or teams in round robin competition are determined in the following sequence:

- (a) The winner of the most matches wins the top place;
- (b) If two are tied for any particular place having won the same number of matches, then the winner of their head-to-head match is awarded the place that they are tied for in all cases;
- (c) If three or more are tied in the number of matches won, the place is determined as follows:
  1. Determine the net difference between the number of games that each tied player won and lost when they played each other. Games played against persons NOT involved in the tie are NOT considered. The player with the largest positive difference in games differential (i.e. games won minus games lost) is awarded the highest place for which there exists a tie.
  2. If a multiple tie of more than two still remains after tallying the games differentials (Step 1), determine the net difference between the points that each tied player won and lost when they played each other. Again, points won or lost involving persons NOT involved in the tie are NOT considered. The player with the largest positive difference in points differential (i.e. points won minus points lost) is awarded the highest place for which there exists a tie.
  3. If a multiple tie (more than two) still remains after applying steps 1 and 2 above, then the player who scored the highest average points per match is awarded the highest place in question. As always, points scored against persons NOT involved in the tie are NOT counted.

Once any one or more of the three steps described in paragraph c. above have been applied to reduce the number tied for a particular place to two players, then the winner of the remaining two players' head-to-head match is awarded the higher place for which there exists a tie. For the purposes of determining place, a forfeited match should be treated as a match won in two games by a score of (0,0).

## A.7 Court Assignments

In all USAR sanctioned tournaments, the Tournament Director and/or USAR official in attendance may decide on a change of court after the completion of any tournament game, if such a change will accommodate better spectator conditions.

## A.8 Warm-Up Times

Once all players in a match have been informed what court they will be playing on, singles players are allowed up to 5 minutes of on-court warm-up time and these warm-up times run concurrently. For doubles, each team is allowed up to 5 minutes for on-court warm-up and while these times do not run concurrently, both teams' warm-ups must be completed generally within a 10-minute period that starts when the first team begins its warm-up.

## A.9 Tournament Conduct

In all USAR sanctioned tournaments, the referee is empowered to forfeit a match, if the conduct of a player or team is considered detrimental to the tournament and the game. See B.5 (d) and (e).

## A.10 Spectator Conduct



# Official Rules of Racquetball

In the event of disruptive or threatening behavior on the part of any spectator, relative, parent, guardian, or coach at any USAR sanctioned event, the referee is empowered to address a first offense by applying sanction (a) described below. For additional infractions, the Tournament Director or USAR official in attendance, either of their own accord or at the request of the referee, is empowered to apply either sanctions (b) or (c) as warranted.

(a) For the first offense, the violator may observe, but not speak (as determined by whether the referee hears the person), while the athlete's match is being played.

(b) For the second offense, the violator may not watch that match, but may remain within the building.

(c) For the third offense, violator will be removed from the club for the duration of the tournament, and appropriate authorities advised of the restriction. If a given situation so warrants, the Tournament Director or USAR official may invoke the (c) sanction immediately and without previous offenses - in the interest of general safety.

## B - Officiating

### B.1 Tournament Management

A designated Tournament Director shall identify the various officials and manage every USAR sanctioned tournament.

### B.2 Tournament Rules Committee

The Tournament Director should appoint a Tournament Rules Committee to resolve any disputes that the referee, tournament desk, or Tournament Director cannot resolve. The committee, composed of an odd number of persons, may include state or national officials, or other qualified individuals in attendance that are prepared to meet on short notice. The Tournament Director should not be a member of this committee.

### B.3 Referee Appointment and Removal

The principal official for every match shall be the referee who has been designated by the Tournament Director, or a designated representative, and who has been agreed upon by all participants in the match. The referee's authority regarding a match begins once the players are called to the court. The referee may be removed from a match upon the agreement of all participants (teams in doubles) or at the discretion of the Tournament Director or the designated representative. In the event that a referee's removal is requested by one player or team and not agreed to by the other, the Tournament Director or the designated representative may accept or reject the request. It is suggested that the match be observed before determining what, if any, action is to be taken. In addition, two line judges and a scorekeeper may also be designated to assist the referee with officiating the match.

### B.4 Rules Briefing

Before all tournaments, all officials and players shall be briefed on rules as well as local court hinders, regulations, and modifications the Tournament Director wishes to impose. The briefing should be reduced to writing. The current USAR 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.

### B.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.



# Official Rules of Racquetball

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(a)]; 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) 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 not involving the judgment of the referee will, on protest, be accorded due process as set forth in the constitution of the USAR. 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:

1. first to the tournament desk,
2. then to the Tournament Director,
3. and finally, to the tournament rules committee.

In those instances when time permits, the protest may be elevated to the state association or, when appropriate, to the National level as called for in the USAR constitution.

**(d) Forfeitures.** A match may be forfeited by the referee when:

1. Any player refuses to abide by the referee's decision or engages in unsportsmanlike conduct.
2. Any player or team who fails to report to play 10 minutes after the match has been scheduled to play. (The Tournament Director may permit a longer delay if circumstances warrant such a decision.)
3. A game will be forfeited by the referee for using an illegal racquet as specified in Rule 2.4.

**(e) Defaults.** A player or team may be forfeited by the Tournament Director or official for failure to comply with the tournament or host facility's rules while on the premises between matches, or for abuse of hospitality, locker room, or other rules and procedures.

**(f) Spectators.** The referee shall have jurisdiction over the spectators, as well as the players, while the match is in progress.

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

## **B.6 Line Judges**

**(a) When Utilized.** Two line judges should be used for semifinal and final matches, when requested by a player or team, or when the referee or Tournament Director so desires. However, the use of line judges is subject to availability and the discretion of the Tournament Director.

**(b) Replacing Line Judges.** If any player objects to a person serving as a line judge, before the match begins, all reasonable effort shall be made to find a replacement acceptable to the officials and players. If a player objects after the match begins, any replacement shall be at the discretion of the referee and/or Tournament Director.

**(c) Position of Line Judges.** The players and referee shall designate the court location of the line judges. The Tournament Director shall settle any dispute.





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**(d) Duties and Responsibilities.** Line judges are designated to help decide appeals. In the event of an appeal, and after a very brief explanation of the appeal by the referee, the line judges must indicate their opinion of the referee's call.

**(e) Signals.** Line judges should extend their arm and signal as follows:

- (i) thumb up to show agreement with the referee's call,
- (ii) thumb down to show disagreement, and
- (iii) hand open with palm facing down to indicate "no opinion" or that the play in question wasn't seen.

**(f) Manner of Response.** Line judges should be careful not to signal until the referee announces the appeal and asks for a ruling. In responding to the referee's request, line judges should not look at each other, but indicate their opinions simultaneously in clear view of the players and referee. If at any time a line judge is unsure of which call is being appealed or what the referee's call was, the line judge should ask the referee to repeat the call and the appeal.

**(g) Result of Response.** The referee's call stands if at least one line judge agrees with the referee or if neither line judge has an opinion. If both line judges disagree with the referee, the referee must reverse the call. If one line judge disagrees with the referee and the other signals no opinion, the rally is replayed. Any replays, with the exception of appeals on the second serve itself, will result in resumption of play at first serve.

## B.7 Appeals

**(a) Appealable Calls and Non-Calls.** In any match using line judges, a player may appeal any call or non-call by the referee, except for a technical foul or forfeiture.

**(b) How to Appeal.** A verbal appeal by a player must be made directly to the referee immediately after the rally has ended. A player, who believes there is an infraction to appeal, should bring it to the attention of the referee and line judges by raising the non-racquet hand at the time the perceived infraction occurs. The player is obligated to continue to play until the rally has ended or the referee stops play. The referee will recognize a player's appeal only if it is made before that player leaves the court for any reason including timeouts and game-ending rallies or, if that player doesn't leave the court, before the next serve begins.

**(c) Loss of Appeal.** A player or team forfeits its right of appeal for that rally if the appeal is made directly to the line judges or, if the appeal is made after an excessive demonstration or complaint.

**(d) Limit on Appeals.** A player or team can make three appeals per game. However, if either line judge disagrees (thumb down) with the referee's call, that appeal will not count against the three-appeal limit. In addition, a potential game-ending rally may be appealed without charge against the limit--even if the three-appeal limit has been reached.

## B.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 could be addressed. Therefore, 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 the referee considered the serve to have been irretrievable, 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, the result will be a fault serve.



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**(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 too, 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 side out (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. If a court hinder occurs on a second serve, play resumes at second serve.

## B.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 "Side out", or taking other corrective measures.

## C – Eligibility & National Events

### C.1 Eligibility

To be eligible to compete in any USAR sanctioned event, a player must be a current registered member of USA Racquetball.

### C.2 Waiver & Release

Athletic Waiver and Release of Liability: In consideration of being allowed to participate in any USA Racquetball athletics/sports programs, and related events and activities, all member signatories:

- (a) Agree that prior to participating, they will inspect the facilities and equipment to be used, and if they believe anything is unsafe, they will immediately advise their coach, supervisor, or USAR personnel of such condition(s) and refuse to participate.
- (b) Acknowledge and fully understand that each participant will be engaging in activities that involve risk of serious injury, including permanent disability and death, and severe social and economic losses which might result not only from their own actions, inaction, or negligence but the actions, inaction, or negligence of others, the rules of play, or the condition of the premises or of any equipment used. Further, that there may be other risks not known to us or not reasonably foreseeable at this time.
- (c) Assume all the foregoing risks and accept personal responsibility for the damages following such injury, permanent disability, or death.





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- (d) Release, waive, discharge and covenant not to sue the USA Racquetball, its affiliated clubs, regional sports organizations, their respective administrators, directors, agents, coaches, and other employees of the organization, other participants, sponsoring agencies, sponsors, advertisers, and, if applicable, owners and lessees of premises used to conduct the event, all of which are hereinafter referred to as “releases” from any and all liability to the signatory on the opposite side of this form, his or her heirs and next of kin for any and all claims, demands, losses or damages on account of injury including death or damage to property, caused or alleged to be caused in whole or in part by the negligence of the release of otherwise.

## C.3 Recognized Divisions

Title opportunities at national championships will be selected from the division lists that follow. Combined Age + Skill divisions may also be offered to provide additional competitive opportunities for non-open entrants. For ranking consistency, state organizations are encouraged to select from these recognized divisions when establishing competition in all sanctioned events.

(a) Open Division. Any eligible player, as defined in C.1.

(b) Adult Age Divisions. Eligibility is determined by the player’s age on the first day of the tournament that anyone begins playing in that division. The divisions are:

- 24 & under - Varsity
- 25+ - Junior Veterans
- 30+ - Veterans
- 35+ - Seniors
- 40+ - Veteran Seniors
- 45+ - Masters
- 50+ - Veteran Masters
- 55+ - Golden Masters
- 60+ - Veteran Golden Masters
- 65+ - Senior Golden Masters
- 70+ - Advanced Golden Masters
- 75+ - Super Golden Masters
- 80+ - Grand Masters
- 85+ - Super Grand Masters

(c) Junior Age Divisions. Player eligibility is determined by the player’s age on January 1st of the current calendar year. The divisions are:

- 18 & Under
- 16 & Under
- 14 & Under
- 12 & Under
- 10 & Under
- 8 & Under (regular rules)
- 8 & Under (multi-bounce rules)
- 6 & Under (multi-bounce rules)

(d) Skill Divisions. Player eligibility is determined by USAR skill level certification or verification by a state association official, at the entered level. The divisions are:

- Elite [Open level drop-down]
- A
- B
- C



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D

Novice

(e) Age + Skill Divisions. Player eligibility is determined by the player's age on the first day of the tournament, plus USAR skill level certification, or verification by a state association official, at the entered level. Such combinations may be offered as additional competition to players who do not fall into the "open" or designated skill levels of play. For example: 24- A/B; 30+ B; 35+ C/D; 40+ A; 65 + A/B, etc.

## C.4 Division Competition by Gender

Men and women may compete only in events and divisions for their respective gender during regional and national tournaments. If there is not a sufficient number of players to warrant play in a specific division, the Tournament Director may place the entrants in a comparably competitive division. Note: For the purpose of encouraging the development of women's racquetball, the governing bodies of numerous states permit women to play in men's divisions when a comparable skill level is not available in the women's divisions.



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## D – Self-Officiating – “How to Ref ‘Without’ a Ref”!

### ***Safety Is The Responsibility Of Every Player Who Enters The Court!***

At no time should the physical safety of the participants be compromised. Players are entitled, and expected, to hold up their swing, without penalty, any time they believe there might be a risk of physical contact. Any time a player claims to have held up to avoid contact, even if being over-cautious, they are entitled to at least a replay hinder and, perhaps a penalty hinder depending on the circumstances.

### D.1 Score

Since there is no referee, it is important for the server to announce and for both players/teams to agree on both the server's and receiver's score BEFORE each first serve. The server should do this before serving.

### D.2 During Rallies

During rallies, it is the hitter's responsibility to make the call. If there is a possibility that a skip ball, double-bounce, or illegal hit occurred, play should continue unless the hitter makes the call against himself. If the hitter does not make the call and goes on to win the rally, and the opponent thought that one of the hitter's shots was not good, they may appeal to the hitter by pointing out which shot was thought to be bad and request that the hitter reconsider. If the hitter is sure of the non-call, and the opponent is still sure the hitter is wrong, the rally should be replayed. As a matter of etiquette, players are expected to make calls against themselves any time they are not sure. Unless the hitter is certain the shot was good, it should be replayed.

### D.3 Serve

**Fault Serves.** The receiver has the primary responsibility to make this call, though either player may make it. The receiver must make the call immediately, and not wait until the ball has been hit to gain the benefit of first seeing how good the return was that they have made. It is not an option play. Also, the receiver does not have the right to play a serve they know was short.

**Screen Serves.** The screen serve call is the sole responsibility of the receiver. If the receiver has taken the proper court position, near center court, and the ball passes so close to the server that the closeness causes the receiver to not have clear view of the ball, a screen serve should be called immediately. The receiver may not call a screen after attempting to hit the ball or after taking himself out of proper court position by starting the wrong way. The server may not call a screen under any circumstance and thus, must always expect to play the rally unless the receiver calls “screen serve”.

**Other Situations.** Foot faults, 10-second violations, receiving zone violations, and other calls generally require a referee. However, if either player believes an opponent is abusing any of these rules, be sure there is clear agreement on what the rule exactly says, and reach a mutual understanding that the rules should be followed.

### D.4 Replay Hinders

Generally, hinder calls should work like the screen serve does -- as sort of an option play for the hindered party. Only the person going for the shot can stop play by calling a hinder, and must do so immediately and not wait to see how good the resulting shot was. If the hindered party believes they can make an effective return in spite of some physical contact or impairment that has occurred, they may continue to play, but should not claim a hinder thereafter.

### D.5 Penalty Hinders

Penalty hinders are usually unintentional, so they can occur even in the friendliest matches. A player who realizes that they have caused such a hinder should simply declare their opponent to be the winner of the rally. If a player feels that his opponent caused such a hinder, but the opponent does not make the call himself, after the rally, the offended player should point out that a penalty hinder may have occurred. However, unless the opponent agrees that a penalty hinder



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occurred, it should not be called, but simply replayed. Often just pointing out what appears to have been a penalty hinder will prevent the opponent from such actions on future rallies.

## D.6 Disputes

Should either player, for any reason, desire to have a referee, then a referee should be sought, although there could be some delay in the match while the person is sought.

## E - Procedures

### E.1 Rule Change Procedures

To ensure the orderly growth of racquetball, the USAR has established specific procedures that are followed before a major change is made to the rules of the game.

**NOTE:** Changes to rules and regulations in Sections 1 through 10 must adhere to published rule change procedures. Remaining sections may be altered by vote of the USAR Board of Directors\*.

- (a) Rule change proposals must be submitted in writing to the USAR National Office by June 1st.
- (b) The USAR Board of Directors will review all proposals at its Fall board meeting and determine which will be considered.
- (c) Selected proposals will appear in RACQUETBALL Magazine -- the official USAR publication -- as soon as possible after the Fall board meeting for comment by the general membership.
- (d) After reviewing membership input and the recommendations of the National Rules Committee and National Rules Commissioner, the proposals are discussed and voted upon at the annual Board of Directors meeting in May.
- (e) Changes approved in May become effective on September 1st. Exception: changes in racquet specifications become effective 2 years later on September 1st.
- (f) Proposed rules that are considered for adoption in one year, but are not approved by the Board of Directors in May of that year, will not be considered for adoption the following year. However, a proposed rule that is tabled at the May Board Meeting for additional discussion or review, must be adjudicated by the Board of Directors by July 1 of the same year.

\* The following policies & procedures segments are subject to stated rule change procedures outlined in E.1:

- A.6 Round Robin Scoring
- A.8 Tournament Conduct
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- B.7 Appeals
- B.8 Outcome of Appeals

### E.2 National Rules Commissioner

Otto Dietrich, National Rules Commissioner  
35805 North 34th Lane  
Phoenix, AZ 85086  
678-575-8975 (Cell phone)  
Email: [ODietrich@USRA.org](mailto:ODietrich@USRA.org)



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# Official Rules of Racquetball

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