

# 1997-1998 OFFICIAL RULES OF RACQUETBALL



## OFFICIAL RULES & REGULATIONS

<b>1 — THE GAME</b>	
1.1 Types of Games	26
1.2 Description	26
1.3 Objective	26
1.4 Points and Outs	26
1.5 Match, Game, Tiebreaker	26

<b>2 — COURTS AND EQUIPMENT</b>	
2.1 Court Specifications	26
2.2 Ball Specifications	27
2.3 Ball Selection	27
2.4 Racquet Specifications	27
2.5 Apparel	27

<b>3 — PLAY REGULATIONS</b>	
3.1 Serve	27
3.2 Start	27
3.3 Manner	27
3.4 Readiness	27
3.5 Delays	27
3.6 Drive Service Zones	27
3.7 Defective Serves	28
3.8 Dead-Ball Serves	28
3.9 Fault Serves	28
3.10 Out Serves	28
3.11 Return of Serve	28
3.12 Changes of Serve	28
3.13 Rallies	29
3.14 Dead-Ball Hinders	29
3.15 Avoidable Hinders	30
3.16 Timeouts	30
3.17 Technical Fouls and Warnings	30

<b>RULE MODIFICATIONS</b>	
4.0 Doubles	31
5.0 One Serve Game	31
6.0 Multi-bounce	31
7.0 One-wall and Three-wall play	34
8.0 Wheelchair	34
9.0 Visually Impaired	34
10.0 Deaf	35
11.0 Professional	35

### ALSO

FYI: Rule Changes in '97	26
USRA National Office Information	40
USRA National Staff Directory	40
Rulebook Index	40

## COMPETITION POLICIES & PROCEDURES

### A — TOURNAMENTS

A.1 Draws	35
A.2 Consolation Matches	35
A.3 Scheduling	35
A.4 Notice of Matches	36
A.5 Third Place	36
A.6 Round Robin Scoring	36
A.7 Court Assignments	36
A.8 Tournament Conduct	36

### B — OFFICIATING

B.1 Tournament Management	36
B.2 Tournament Rules Committee	36
B.3 Referee Appointment and Removal	36
B.4 Rules Briefing	36
B.5 Referees	36
B.6 Line Judges	37
B.7 Appeals	37
B.8 Outcome of Appeals	37
B.9 Rule Interpretations	38

### C — ELIGIBILITY & NATIONAL EVENTS

C.1 Professional	38
C.2 Return to Amateur Status	38
C.3 USRA Eligibility	38
C.4 Divisions	38
C.5 Division Competition by Gender	38
C.6 USRA Regional Championships	38
C.7 National Singles & Doubles	39
C.8 National Junior Olympics	39
C.9 National High Schools	39
C.10 National Intercollegiate	39
C.11 U.S. Open	39

### D — PROCEDURES

D.1 Rule Change Procedures	39
D.2 USRA National Rules Committee	39

*NOTE: Changes to rules and regulations in Sections 1, 2, and 3 must adhere to published rule change procedures. Remaining sections may be altered by vote of the USRA Board of Directors.*

## FYI RULE CHANGES:

Effective September 1, 1997

The racquet's maximum length has been increased to 22 inches. [See Rule 2.4(a) – on page 27]

If you hit the ball out-of-court (or just out-of-play), you lose the rally. This also includes hitting the serve out-of-court. [See Rule 3.13 (c) 3 – on page 29]

In officiated tournament play [with line judges] ... Players may now appeal every call or "non-call" by the referee (except for technical fouls and forfeitures) whenever line judges are used. [See "Officiating" section B.7 Appeals, citation (a) – on page 37]

The referee can declare a "sideout" when their call of encroachment is overturned, AND the return of serve was considered irretrievable. For example ... You short-hop a return and roll it out. The ref says you were over the safety line and you appeal. You win your appeal and, instead of a replay, you get to keep your rollout. Side out. You serve. [See "Officiating" section B.8 Outcome of Appeals, citation (e) – on page 37]

# 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. A non-tournament variation of the game that is played by three players is called cutthroat.

### Rule 1.2 DESCRIPTION

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

### Rule 1.3 OBJECTIVE

The objective is to win each rally by serving or returning the ball so the opponent is unable to keep the ball in play. A rally is over when a player (or team in doubles) is unable to hit the ball before it touches the floor twice, is unable to return the ball in such a manner that it touches the front wall before it touches the floor, or when a hinder is called.

### Rule 1.4 POINTS AND OUTS

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

### Rule 1.5 MATCH, GAME, TIEBREAKER

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

## 2 — COURTS AND EQUIPMENT

### Rule 2.1 COURT SPECIFICATIONS

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

(a) Dimensions. The dimensions shall be 20 feet wide, 40 feet long and 20 feet high, with a 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 backwall), and designated court hinders.

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

1. Short Line. The back edge of the

short line is midway between, and is parallel with, the front and back walls.

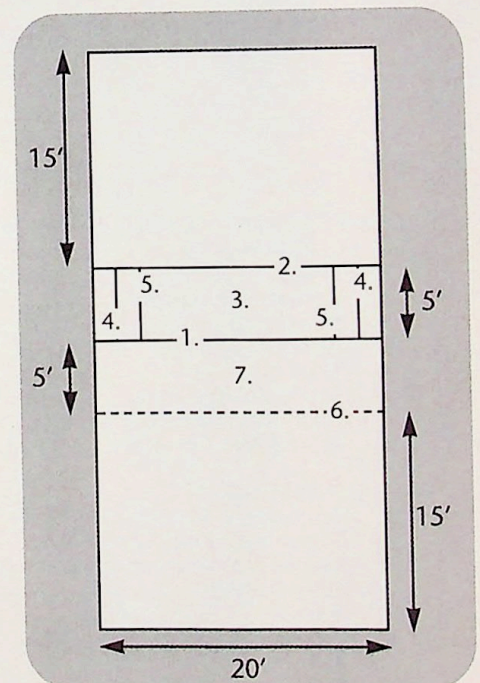
2. Service Line. The front edge of the service line is parallel with, and five feet in front of, the back edge of the short line.

3. Service Zone. The service zone is the five-foot area between the outer edges of the short line and service line.

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

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

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



Cover: Javier Moreno at the Tournament of the Americas. Photo: Alex Aguirre Terrazas.

posed of 17 six-inch spaces, 16 six-inch lines, and two 21-inch lines.

7. Safety Zone. The safety zone is the five-foot area bounded 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).

### **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 having the endorsement or approval of the USRA may be used in a USRA sanctioned tournament.

### **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, based on personal discretion or at the request of a player or team, replace the ball. Balls that are not round or which bounce erratically shall not be used.

(b) If possible, the referee and players should 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, including bumper guard and all solid parts of the handle, may not exceed 22 inches in length.

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

(c) The racquet frame must include a cord that must be securely attached to the player's wrist.

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

(e) Using an illegal racquet will result in forfeiture of the game in progress or, if discovered between games, forfeiture of the preceding game.

### **Rule 2.5 APPAREL**

(a) Lensed eyewear designed for racquetball, and which meets or exceeds ASTM F803 or Canadian (CSA) impact standards, is required apparel. This rule applies to all persons, including those who must wear corrective lenses. The eyewear must be worn as designed and at all times. A player who fails to wear proper eyewear will be assessed a technical foul and a timeout to obtain proper eyewear. A second infraction in the same match will result in

immediate forfeiture of the match. [See Rule 3.17(a)9]. The current USRA Approved Eyewear list is published periodically in *RACQUETBALL Magazine*, can be found on the Internet at <http://www.rac-qmag.com/PUB&REF/eyeguard.html>, and is available upon request from the USRA's national office.

(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 have soles which do not mark or damage the floor.

(c) Equipment Requirements During Warm-up. Approved eyeguards 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.

## **3 — PLAY REGULATIONS**

### **Rule 3.1 SERVE**

The player or team winning the coin toss has the option to either serve or receive at the start of the first game. The second game will begin in reverse order of the first game. The player or team scoring the highest total of points in games 1 and 2 will have the option to serve or receive first at the start of the tiebreaker. In the event that both players or teams score an equal number of points in the first two games, another coin toss will take place and the winner of the toss will have the option to serve or receive.

### **Rule 3.2 START**

The server may not start the service motion until the referee has called the score or "second serve." 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 lines 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—any continuous movement which results in the ball being served. Once the

service motion begins, the ball must be bounced on the floor in the zone and be struck by the racquet before it bounces 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.

### **Rule 3.4 READINESS**

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

### **Rule 3.5 DELAYS**

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

(a) The 10 second rule applies to the server and receiver simultaneously. Collectively, 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 signalling "not ready" is a fault serve.

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

### **Rule 3.6 DRIVE SERVICE ZONES**

The drive serve lines will be 3 feet from each side wall in the service zone, dividing the service area into two 17-foot service zones for drive serves only. The player may drive serve between the body and the side wall nearest to where the service motion began only if the player starts and remains outside of the 3-foot drive service zone. In the event that the service motion begins in one drive service zone and continues into the other drive serve zone, the player may not hit a drive serve at all.

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

(b) The racquet may not break the plane of the 17-foot zone while making contact with the ball.

(c) The drive serve line is not part of the 17-foot zone. Dropping the ball on the

line or standing on the line while serving to the same side is an infraction.

### **Rule 3.7 DEFECTIVE SERVES**

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

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

(b) Fault Serve. Two fault serves result in an out (either a sideout or a handout).

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

### **Rule 3.8 DEAD-BALL SERVES**

Dead-ball serves do not cancel any previous fault serve. The following are dead-ball serves:

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

(b) Broken Ball. If the ball is determined to have broken on the serve, a new ball shall be substituted and the serve shall be replayed, not cancelling any prior fault serve.

### **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. The server does not begin the service motion with both feet in the service zone.

2. The server steps completely over the service line (no part of the foot on or inside the service zone) before the served ball crosses the short line.

(b) Short Service. A short serve is any served ball that first hits the front wall and, on the rebound, hits the floor on or in front of the short line either with or without touching a side wall.

(c) Three Wall Serve. A three-wall serve is any served ball that first hits the front wall and, on the rebound, strikes both side walls before touching the floor.

(d) Ceiling Serve. A ceiling serve is any served ball that first hits the front wall and then touches the ceiling (with or without touching a side wall).

(e) Long Serve. A long serve is a served ball that first hits the front wall and rebounds to the back wall before touching the floor (with or without touching a side wall).

(f) Bouncing Ball Outside Service Zone. Bouncing the ball outside the service zone

as a part of the service motion is a fault serve.

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

(h) Screen Serve. A served ball that first hits the front wall and on the rebound passes so closely to the server, or server's partner in doubles, that it prevents the receiver from having a clear view of the ball. (The receiver is obligated to take up good court position, near center court, to obtain that view.)

(i) Serving before the Receiver is Ready. A serve is made while the receiver is not ready as described in Rule 3.5(b).

### **Rule 3.10 OUT SERVES**

Any of the following results in an out:

(a) Two Consecutive Fault Serves. See Rule 3.9.

(b) Missed Serve Attempt. Any attempt to strike the ball that results in a total miss or in the ball touching any part of the server's body. 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, 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 which 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, 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. If the server, or doubles partner, enters into the safety zone before the served ball passes the short line, it shall result in the loss of serve.

### **Rule 3.11 RETURN OF SERVE**

(a) Receiving Position

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

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

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

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

(b) Defective 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 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 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.

3. Failure to Return Ball. Player or team fails to keep the ball in play as required by Rule 3.11 (c).

4. Avoidable Hinder. Player or team commits an avoidable hinder which results in an out. See Rule 3.15.

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

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

### Rule 3.13 RALLIES

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

(a) Legal Hits. Only the head of the racquet may be used at any time to return the ball. The racquet may be held in one or both hands. Switching hands to hit a ball, touching the ball with any part of the body or uniform, or removing the wrist safety cord during a rally results in 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 carried. (A carried ball is one which rests on the racquet long enough that the effect is more of a sling or throw than a hit.)

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

1. The ball bounces on the floor more than once before being hit.

2. The ball does not reach the front wall on the fly.

3. The ball is hit such that it goes into the gallery or wall opening or else hits a surface above the normal playing area of the court that has been declared as out-of-play. See Rule 2.1(a).

4. A ball which obviously does not have the velocity or direction to hit the front wall strikes another player.

5. A ball struck by one player on a team hits that player or that player's partner.

6. Committing an avoidable hinder. See Rule 3.15.

7. Switching hands during a rally.

8. Failure to use a racquet wrist safety cord.

9. Touching the ball with the body or uniform.

10. Carrying or slinging the ball with the racquet.

(d) Effect of Failure to Return. Violations of Rules 3.13 (a) through (c) result in a loss of rally. If the serving player or team loses the rally, it is an out. If the receiver loses the rally, it results in a point for the server.

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

(f) Broken Ball. If there is any suspicion that a ball has broken during a rally, play shall continue until the end of the rally. The referee or any player may request the ball be examined. If the referee decides the ball is broken the ball will be replaced and the rally replayed. The server will get two serves. The only proper way to check for a broken ball is to squeeze it by hand. (Checking the ball by striking it with a racquet will not be considered a valid check and shall work to the disadvantage of the player or team which struck the ball after the rally.)

(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 dead-ball hinder.

2. If a player loses any apparel, equipment, or other article, the referee shall stop play immediately and declare an avoidable hinder or dead-ball hinder as described in Rule 3.15 (i).

(h) Replays. Whenever a rally is replayed for any reason, the server is awarded two serves. A previous fault serve is not considered.

### Rule 3.14 DEAD-BALL HINDERS

A rally is replayed without penalty and the server receives two serves whenever a dead-ball hinder occurs. Also, see Rule 3.15 which describes conditions under which a hinder might be declared avoidable and result in loss of the rally.

(a) Situations

1. Court Hinders. The referee should stop play immediately whenever the ball hits any part of the court that was designated in advance as a court hinder (such as a vent grate). The referee should also stop play (i) when the ball takes an irregular bounce as a result of contacting a rough surface (such as court light or vent) or after striking a wet spot on the floor or wall and (ii) when, in the referee's opinion, the irregular bounce affected the rally.

2. Ball Hits Opponent. When an opponent is hit by a return shot in flight, it is a dead-ball hinder. If the opponent is struck by a ball which obviously did not have the velocity or direction to reach the front wall, it is not a hinder, and the player who hit the ball will lose the rally. A player who has been hit by the ball can stop play and make the call though the call must be made immediately and acknowledged by the referee. Note this interference may, under certain conditions, be declared an avoidable hinder. See Rule 3.15.

3. Body Contact. If body contact occurs 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.

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.

5. Backswing Hinder. Any body or racquet contact, on the backswing or on the way to or just prior to returning the ball, which impairs the hitter's ability to take a reasonable swing. This call can be made by the player attempting the return, though the call must be made immediately and is subject to the referee's approval. Note the interference may be considered an avoidable hinder. See Rule 3.15.

6. Safety Holdup. Any player about to execute a return who believes that striking the opponent with the ball or racquet is likely, may immediately stop play and request a dead-ball hinder. This call must be made immediately and is subject to acceptance and approval of the referee. (The referee will grant a dead-ball hinder if it is believed the holdup was reasonable and the player would have been able to return the shot. The referee may also call an avoidable hinder if warranted.)

7. Other Interference. Any other unintentional interference which prevents an opponent from having a fair chance to see or return the ball. 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.

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

(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 AVOIDABLE HINDERS

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

(a) Failure to Move. A player does not move sufficiently to allow an opponent a shot straight to the front wall as well as a cross-court shot which is a shot directly to the front wall at an angle that would cause the ball to rebound directly to the rear corner farthest from the player hitting the ball. Also when a player moves in such a direction that it prevents an opponent from taking either of these shots.

(b) Stroke Interference. This occurs when a player moves, or fails to move, so that the opponent returning the ball does not have a free, unimpeded swing. This includes unintentionally moving in a direction which prevents the opponent from making an open, offensive shot.

(c) Blocking. Moves into a position which blocks the opponent from getting to, or returning, the ball; or in doubles, a player moves in front of an opponent as the player's partner is returning the ball.

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

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

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

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

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

(i) 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 an avoidable 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 dead-ball hinder should be called. If the opponent's action is judged to have been avoidable, then the opponent should be called for an avoidable hinder.

### 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 after service motion has begun. Calling for a timeout when none remain or after service motion has begun, or taking more than 30 seconds in a timeout, will result in the assessment of a technical foul for delay of game.

(b) Injury. If a player is injured during the course of a match as a result of contact, such as with the ball, racquet, wall or floor, an injury timeout will be awarded. While a player may call more than one timeout for the same injury or for additional injuries which 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 are expected to use regular timeouts and time between games for adjustment and replacement of equipment. If a player or team is out of timeouts 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 unusual 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) Postponed Games. Any games postponed by referees shall be resumed with the same score as when postponed.

### 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. 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 which 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 which 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 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.

7. Intentional front line foot fault to negate a bad lob serve.

8. Anything the referee considers to be 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.** If a player's behavior is not so severe as to warrant a technical foul, a technical warning may be issued 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. Issuing a technical foul or warning has no effect on who will be serving when play resumes. If a technical foul occurs when the offender has no points or between games, the result will be that the offender's score becomes minus one (-1).

## **RULE MODIFICATIONS**

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

### **4.0 — DOUBLES**

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

#### **Rule 4.1 DOUBLES TEAM**

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

(b) A change in playing partners may be made so long as the first match of the posted team has not begun. For this purpose only, the match will be considered started once the teams have been called to the court. The team must notify the tournament director of the change prior to the beginning of the match.

#### **Rule 4.2 SERVE IN DOUBLES**

(a) **Order of Serve.** Each team shall inform the referee of the order of service which shall be followed throughout that game. The order of serve may be changed between games. At the beginning of each game, when the first server of the first team

to serve is out, the team is out. Thereafter, both players on each team shall serve until the team receives a handout and a side-out.

(b) **Partner's Position.** On each serve, the server's partner shall stand erect with back to the side wall and with both feet on the floor within the service box from the moment the server begins the service motion until the served ball passes the short line. Violations are called foot faults. However, if the server's partner enters the safety zone before the ball passes the short line, the server loses service.

(c) **Changes of Serve.** In doubles, the side is retired when both partners have lost service, except that the team which serves first at the beginning of each game loses the serve when the first server is retired.

#### **Rule 4.3 FAULT SERVE IN DOUBLES**

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

(b) A served ball that hits the doubles partner while in the doubles box results in a fault serve.

#### **Rule 4.4 OUT SERVE IN DOUBLES**

(a) **Out-of-Order Serve.** In doubles, when either partner serves out of order, the points scored by that server will be subtracted and an out serve will be called: if the second server serves out of order, the out serve will be applied to the first server and the second server will resume serving. If the player designated as the first server serves out of order, a sideout will be called. The referee should call "no serve" as soon as an out-of-order serve occurs. If no points are scored while the team is out of order, only the out penalty will have to be assessed. However, if points are scored before the out of order condition is noticed and the referee cannot recall the number, the referee may enlist the aid of the line judges (but not the crowd) to recall the number of points to be deducted.

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

#### **Rule 4.5 RETURN IN DOUBLES**

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

(b) If one player swings at the ball and misses it, both partners may make further attempts to return the ball until it touches the floor the second time. Both partners on a side are entitled to return the ball.

## **5.0 — MODIFICATIONS FOR THE "ONE SERVE" GAME**

The USRA's standard rules governing racquetball play will be followed except for the following:

#### **Rule 5.1 ONE SERVE**

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

#### **Rule 5.2 SCREEN SERVE**

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

#### **Rule 5.3 SERVE HITS PARTNER**

In doubles, 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.

#### **Rule 5.4 CONSECUTIVE FAULTS**

In doubles, either (i) a screen serve followed by hitting the non-serving partner or (ii) hitting the non-serving partner followed by a screen serve, results in an out.

## **6.0 — MULTI-BOUNCE MODIFICATIONS**

In general, the USRA's standard rules governing racquetball play will be followed except for the modifications which 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

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time. However, if the ball hits below the 1-foot line, it must be returned before it bounces twice. If the ball hits on or above the 3-foot line, the ball must be returned as described in the basic return rule.

#### **Rule 6.4 GAMES AND MATCHES**

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

## **7.0 — ONE-WALL AND THREE-WALL MODIFICATIONS**

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

#### **Rule 7.1 ONE-WALL**

There are two playing surfaces—the front wall and the floor. The wall is 20 feet wide and 16 feet high. The floor is 20 feet wide and 34 feet to the back edge of the long line. To permit movement by players, there should be a minimum of three feet (six feet is recommended) beyond the long line and six feet outside each side line.

(a) Short Line. The back edge of the short line is 16 feet from the wall.

(b) Service Markers. Lines at least six inches long which are parallel with, and midway between, the long and short lines. The extension of the service markers form the imaginary boundary of the service line.

(c) Service Zone. The entire floor area inside and including the short line, side lines and service line.

(d) Receiving Zone. The entire floor area in back of the short line, including the side lines and the long line.

#### **Rule 7.2 THREE-WALL WITH SHORT SIDE WALL**

The front wall is 20 feet wide and 20 feet high. The side walls are 20 feet long and 20 feet high, with the side walls tapering to 12 feet high. The floor length and court markings are the same as a four wall court.

#### **Rule 7.3 THREE-WALL WITH LONG SIDE WALL**

The court is 20 feet wide, 20 feet high and 40 feet long. The side walls may taper from 20 feet high at the front wall down to 12 feet high at the end of the court. All court markings are the same as a four wall court.

#### **Rule 7.4 SERVICE IN THREE-WALL COURTS**

A serve that goes beyond the side walls on the fly is an out. A serve that goes beyond the long line on a fly, but within the side walls, is a fault.

## **8.0 — WHEELCHAIR MODIFICATIONS**

### **Rule 8.1 CHANGES TO STANDARD RULES**

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

(a) Where USRA 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. Repeat offenders will be warned by the referee.

(c) Equipment Standards. To protect playing surfaces, the tournament officials will not allow a person to participate with black tires or anything which 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: (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.

## **9.0 — VISUALLY IMPAIRED MODIFICATIONS**

In general, the USRA's standard rules governing racquetball play will be followed except for the modifications which 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 dead-ball hinder will result in the rally being replayed without penalty unless the hinder was intentional. If a hinder is clearly intentional, an avoidable hinder should be called and the rally awarded to the non-offending player or team.

## **10.0 — DEAF [NRAD] MODIFICATIONS**

In general, the USRA's standard rules governing racquetball play will be followed except for the National Racquetball Association of the Deaf [NRAD] modifications which 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 NRAD tournament.

## **11.0 — PROFESSIONAL MODIFICATIONS**

### **International Racquetball Tour [IRT] & Women's International Racquetball Tour [WIRT]**

In general, competition on both the International Racquetball Tour [IRT] and Women's International Racquetball Tour [WIRT] will follow the standard rules governing racquetball established by the USRA, except for the modifications which follow. Modifications for both professional tours are consistent, with one exception as noted in Rule 11.4.

### **Rule 11.1 GAME, MATCH**

All games are played to 11 points, and are won by the player who scores to that level, with a 2-point lead. If necessary, the game will continue beyond 11 points, until such time as one player has a 2-point lead. Matches are played the best three out of a possible five games to 11.

### **Rule 11.2 APPEALS**

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

### **Rule 11.3 SERVE**

Players are allowed only one serve to put the ball into play.

### **Rule 11.4 SCREEN SERVE**

In IRT matches, screen serves are replayed. In WIRT matches, two consecutive screen serves will result in a sideout.

### **Rule 11.5 COURT HINDERS**

No court hinders are allowed or called.

### **Rule 11.6 OUT-OF-COURT BALL**

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

### **Rule 11.7 BALL**

All matches are played with the Penn Pro ball. The first, third, and fifth (if necessary) games of the match are started with a new ball.

### **Rule 11.8 TIMEOUTS**

Each player is entitled to one 1-minute timeout per game.

### **Rule 11.9 TIME BETWEEN GAMES**

The rest period between games is 2 minutes, with the exception of the break between game four and a fifth game tiebreaker, which is 5 minutes.

### **Rule 11.10 EQUIPMENT TIMEOUTS**

A player does not have to use regular timeouts 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.

## **COMPETITION POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

Sections A through D which follow contain mostly 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. In the next edition of the rulebook, they will be highlighted for ease of location.

### **A — TOURNAMENTS**

#### **A.1 DRAWS**

(a) If possible, all draws shall be made at least 2 days before the tournament commences. The seeding method of drawing shall be approved by the USRA.

(b) At USRA National events, the draw and seeding committee shall be chaired by the USRA'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 one or more contestants are entered in both singles and doubles, they may be required to play both singles and doubles on the same day with little rest between matches. This is a risk assumed on entering two singles events or a singles and doubles event. If possible, the schedule should provide at least 1 hour of rest between matches.

(b) Final Matches. Where one or more players has reached the finals in both singles and doubles, it is recommended that the doubles match be played on the day preceding the singles. This would assure more rest between the final matches. If both final matches must be played on the same day or night, the following procedure is recommended:

- (1) The singles match be played first, and;
- (2) A rest period of not less than 1 hour be allowed between the finals in singles and doubles.

#### **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.

#### **A.5 THIRD PLACE**

Players are not required to play off for 3rd place. However, for point standings, if one semifinalist wants to play off for third and the other semifinalist does not, the one willing to play shall be awarded third place. If neither semifinalist wishes to play off for 3rd then the points shall be totaled, divided by 2, and awarded evenly to both players.

#### **A.6 ROUND ROBIN SCORING**

The final positions of players or teams in round robin competition is determined by the following sequence:

- a. Winner of the most matches;
- b. In a two way tie, winner of the head-to-head match;
- c. In a tie of three or more, the player who lost the fewest games is awarded the highest position.

1. If a two way tie remains, the winner of the head-to-head match is awarded the higher position.

2. If a multiple tie remains, the total "points scored against" each player in all matches will be tabulated and the player who had the least "points scored against" them is awarded the highest position. Note: Forfeits will count as a match won in two games. In cases where "points scored against" is the tiebreaker, the points scored by the forfeiting team will be discounted from consideration of "points scored against" all teams.

#### **A.7 COURT ASSIGNMENTS**

In all USRA sanctioned tournaments, the tournament director and/or USRA 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 TOURNAMENT CONDUCT**

In all USRA 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).

### **B — OFFICIATING**

#### **B.1 TOURNAMENT MANAGEMENT**

All USRA sanctioned tournaments shall be managed by a tournament director, who shall designate the officials.

#### **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 who 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 in officiating the match.

#### **B.4 RULES BRIEFING**

Before all tournaments, all officials and players shall be briefed on rules as well as local court hindlers, regulations, and modifications the tournament director wishes to impose. The briefing should be reduced to writing. The current USRA 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.

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 USRA. For the purposes of rendering a prompt decision regarding protests filed during the course of an ongoing tournament, the stages of due process will be: first to the tournament desk, then to the tournament director, and finally to the tournament rules committee. In those instances when time permits, the protest may be elevated to the state association or, when appropriate, to the national level as called for in the USRA 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.)

A game will be forfeited by the referee for using an illegal racquet as specified in Rule 2.4(e).

(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 covered in the USRA 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. Any dispute shall be settled by the tournament director.

(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. If both line judges signal no opinion, the referee's call stands. If both line judges disagree with the referee, the referee must reverse the ruling. If one line judge agrees with the call and one disagrees, the referee's call stands. If one line judge agrees with the call and one has no opinion, the call stands. If one line judge disagrees with the referee's call 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 two serves.

## 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 which 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 which hit the shot in question loses the rally.

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

(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 pick-up is declared the loser of the rally.

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

(f) Court Hinder. If the referee makes a call of court hinder, 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.

### **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 sideout, or taking other corrective measures.

## **C — ELIGIBILITY & NATIONAL EVENTS**

### **C.1 PROFESSIONAL**

A professional is defined as any player who has accepted prize money regardless of the amount in any professional sanctioned (including IRT/WIRT) tournament or in any other tournament so deemed by the USRA Board of Directors. (Note: Any player concerned about the adverse effect of losing amateur status should contact the USRA National Office at the earliest opportunity to ensure a clear understanding of this rule and that no action is taken that could jeopardize that status.)

(a) An amateur player may participate in a professional sanctioned tournament but will not be considered a professional (i) if no prize money is accepted or (ii) if the prize money received remains intact and placed in trust under USRA guidelines.

(b) The acceptance of merchandise or travel expenses shall not be considered prize money, and thus does not jeopardize a player's amateur status.

### **C.2 RETURN TO AMATEUR STATUS**

Any player who has been classified as a professional can re-establish amateur status by requesting, in writing, this desire to be reclassified as an amateur. This application shall be tendered to the Executive Director of the USRA or a designated representative, and shall become effective immediately as long as the player making application for reinstatement of amateur status has received no money in any tournament, as defined in C.1, for the past 12 months.

### **C.3 USRA ELIGIBILITY**

(a) Any current USRA member who has not been classified as a professional (See C.1) may compete in any USRA sanctioned tournament.

(b) Any current USRA member who has been classified as a professional may compete in any event at a USRA sanctioned tournament that offers prize money or merchandise.

### **C.4 DIVISIONS**

(a) Open Division. Any player with amateur status.

(b) Adult Age Divisions. Eligibility is determined by the player's age on the first day of the tournament. Divisions are:

- "All-Age" (unrestricted, including juniors)
- 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. Divisions are:

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

### **C.5 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 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.

### **C.6 USRA REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS**

(a) Adult Regional Tournaments

1. Regional tournaments will be conducted at various metropolitan sites designated annually by the USRA and players may compete at any site they choose.

2. A person may compete in any number of adult regional tournaments, but may not enter a championship division (as listed in C.4) after having won that division at a previous adult regional tournament that same year.

3. A person cannot participate in more than two championship events at a regional tournament.

4. Any awards or remuneration to a USRA National Championship will be posted on the entry blank.

5. One-serve rules (see Rule 5.0) will be used in all open divisions at USRA National and Regional Championships. Their use is optional at other tournaments.

(b) Junior Regional Tournaments. All provisions of C.6(a) also apply to juniors, except:

1. Regional tournaments will be conducted within the following regions which are identified for the purposes of junior competition:

- Region 1 — Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut
- Region 2 — New York, New Jersey
- Region 3 — Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, Delaware,

- District of Columbia
- Region 4 — Florida, Georgia
- Region 5 — Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee
- Region 6 — Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma
- Region 7 — Texas, Louisiana
- Region 8 — Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois
- Region 9 — West Virginia, Ohio, Michigan
- Region 10 — Indiana, Kentucky
- Region 11 — North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Nebraska
- Region 12 — Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Colorado
- Region 13 — Montana, Wyoming
- Region 14 — California, Hawaii, Nevada
- Region 15 — Washington, Idaho, Oregon, Alaska
- Region 16 — North Carolina, South Carolina

2. A person may compete in only one junior regional singles and one junior regional doubles tournament each year.
3. The provisions of C.6(a)3 may not apply if tournaments (singles/doubles or adults/juniors) are combined.

### C.7 U.S. NATIONAL SINGLES AND DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIPS

The U.S. National Singles and Doubles Tournaments are separate tournaments and are played on different dates. Consolation events will be offered for all divisions. One serve rules (see Rule 5.0) will apply in all Open divisions.

(a) Competition in an Adult Regional singles tournament is required to qualify for the National Singles Championship.

1. Exception: Men of the age of 55 and over (55+), and women age 45 and over (45+), are not required to qualify for the National Singles Championship.

2. Exception: Any player who competes in either a junior or intercollegiate regional preceding the National Singles, will not be required to compete in an Adult Regional event.

(b) The National Tournament Director may handle the rating of each region and determine how many players shall qualify from each regional tournament.

(c) If a region is oversubscribed, a playoff to qualify players in a division may be conducted the day prior to the start of a National Championship.

**C.8 U.S. NATIONAL JUNIOR OLYMPIC CHAMPIONSHIPS**  
It will be conducted on a different date than all other National Championships and generally subject to the provisions of C.7.

**C.9 U.S. NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL CHAMPIONSHIPS**  
It will be conducted on a different date than all other National Championships. Consolation events will be offered for all divisions.

### C.10 U.S. NATIONAL INTERCOLLEGIATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

It will be conducted on a different date than all other National Championships. Consolation events will be offered for all divisions.

### C.11 U.S. OPEN RACQUETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

It will be conducted on a different date than all other National Championships, and include both pro and amateur competitive divisions.

## D — PROCEDURES

### D.1 RULE CHANGE PROCEDURES

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

1. Rule change proposals must be submitted in writing to the USRA National Office by June 1st.

2. The USRA Board of Directors will review all proposals at its October board meeting and determine which will be considered.

3. Selected proposals will appear in RACQUETBALL Magazine — the official USRA publication — as soon as possible after the October meeting for comment by the general membership.

4. 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.

5. Changes approved in May become effective on September 1st. Exception: changes in racquet specifications become effective 2 years later on September 1st.

6. 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.

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## RULEBOOK INDEX

<p>Apparel ..... 2.5</p> <p>Appeals</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Appeal Limit, Loss ..... B.7</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Outcome of Appeals ..... B.8</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">What May be Appealed . . . B.7(a)</p> <p>Blocking ..... 3.15(c)</p> <p>Body Contact ..... 3.14(a)3 &amp; 5</p> <p>Broken Ball</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">On the Serve ..... 3.8(b)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">On Return of Serve ..... 3.11(e)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">..... and 3.13(f)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">During the Rally ..... 3.13(f)</p> <p>Carries</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">On the Serve ..... 3.10(e)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">During the Rally ..... 3.13(b)</p> <p>Delays ..... 3.5</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">..... and 3.17(a)6</p> <p>Doubles</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Generally ..... 4.0</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Blocking ..... 3.15(c)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Change in Partners ..... 4.1(b)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Order of Serve ..... 4.2(a)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Out-of-Order Serve ..... 4.4(a)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Partner's Position</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">During Serve . . . 4.2(b) and 4.3(a)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Return Attempts ..... 4.5(b)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Team Classification. .... 4.1(a)</p> <p>Drive Serve Rule ..... 3.6</p> <p>Due Process (Player's Rights) . . B.5(c)</p> <p>Eyeguards ..... 2.5(a); 2.5(c);</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">..... and 3.17(a)9</p> <p>Five-Foot Rule ..... 3.11(a)</p> <p>Foot Faults ..... 3.9(a) and 4.2(b)</p> <p>Forfeits ..... B.5(d)</p> <p>Hinders—Avoidable ..... 3.15</p> <p>Hinders—Dead-ball</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Generally ..... 3.14</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Court Hinders ..... 3.14(a)1</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Safety Holdup ..... 3.14(a)6</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Screen ..... 3.14(a)4</p> <p>Issues Not Covered</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">by the Rulebook ..... B.5(g)</p>	<p>Legal/Illegal Hits ..... 3.10(e);</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">..... 3.13(a); and 3.13(b)</p> <p>Line Judges ..... B.6</p> <p>Loss of Apparel/</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Equipment ..... 3.15(i) and 3.13(g)2</p> <p>Multi-Bounce Modifications ..... 6.0</p> <p>Out-Of-Court Ball</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">..... 3.10(h) and 3.13(c)3</p> <p>Postponed Games ..... 3.16(e)</p> <p>Profanity ..... 3.17(a)1</p> <p>Professional Modifications ..... 11.0</p> <p>Protests ..... B.5(c)</p> <p>Racquet Specifications ..... 2.4</p> <p>Return of Serve ..... 3.11</p> <p>Referees</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Appointment and Removal . . . B.3</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Duties and Responsibilities . . . B.5</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Overturning the Referee's Call . . .</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">..... B.5(b)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Return of Serve ..... 3.11</p> <p>Rule Interpretations ..... B.9</p> <p>Safety Holdup ..... 3.14(a)6</p> <p>Safety Zone Violation</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">by Server ..... 3.10(i)</p> <p>Serves</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Changes of Serve . 3.12 and 4.2(c)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Dead-Ball Serves ..... 3.8</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Drive Serves ..... 3.6</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Doubles ..... 4.2</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Fault Serves ..... 3.9</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Order (Who Serves First) . . . . 3.1</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Out Serves ..... 3.10</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Screen Serves ..... 3.9(h)</p> <p>Spectators, Control of ..... B.5(f)</p> <p>Technical Fouls and Warnings . . 3.17</p> <p>Ten-Second Rule. .... 3.4 and 3.5</p> <p>Timeouts</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Regular ..... 3.16(a)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Injuries ..... 3.16(b)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Equipment ..... 3.16(c)</p> <p>Tournaments ..... A</p>
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# 40

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