



# INTERNATIONAL RACQUETBALL OFFICIAL RULE BOOK

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REVISED 1991



INTERNATIONAL  
RACQUETBALL  
FEDERATION



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**Rule 1.1 – TYPES OF GAMES**

RACQUETBALL may be played by two or four players. When played by two it is called "singles", and when played by four, "doubles".

**Rule 1.2 – DESCRIPTION**

RACQUETBALL, as the name implies, is a competitive game in which each player uses a 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 side makes an error, or is unable to return the ball before it touches the floor twice, or when a hinder is called.

**Rule 1.4 – POINTS AND OUTS**

Points are scored only when the serving side, serves an ace or wins a rally. When the serving side loses a rally, it loses the serve. Losing the serve is called an "out" 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 called a "side out".

**Rule 1.5 – GAME**

A game is won by the side first scoring 15 points.

**Rule 1.6 – MATCH**

A match is won by the side first winning two games. In the event that each participant or team wins one game, the match shall be decided by a fifteen (15) point tie-breaker.

Rule 2.1 – COURTS

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

a) *Dimension*

The dimensions shall be 20 feet wide, 20 feet high, and 40 feet long, with back wall at least 12 feet high.

b) *Lines and Zones*

Racquetball courts shall be divided and marked on the floors with 1½ inch wide lines as follows:

- 1 - Short line. The back edge of the short line is midway between and parallel with the front and back wall dividing the court into equal front and back courts.
- 2 - Service line. The front edge of the service line is parallel with and located 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 and service lines.
- 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 inside edges of the lines are 18 inches from the side walls.
- 5 - Receiving line. 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: the two lines are connected by an alternate series of six-inch spaces and six-inch lines (17 six-inch spaces and 16 six inch lines).
- 6 - 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.
- 7 - 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 outside edge of the line is three feet from the side wall.

## Rule 2.2 -- BALL SPECIFICATIONS

- a) The specifications for the standard racquetball are: the ball shall be 2 $\frac{1}{8}$ " in diameter; weigh approximately 1.4 ounces, and at a temperature of 70-74°F, with a 100 inch drop rebound is to be 68-72 inches; hardness, 55-60 durometer.
- b) *Official Ball*  
Any ball which carries the endorsement stamp or approval from the IRF is an official ball.

## Rule 2.3 -- BALL SELECTION

- a) The ball shall be selected by agreement between the players and at least two acceptable balls should be agreed upon before the match commences. If the players cannot agree, the referee shall make the selection and this decision shall be binding on the participants.
- b) During the course of a match the referee may at his discretion or at the request of both players/teams replace the ball. Only an IRF approved ball shall be used in all sanctioned tournaments.

## Rule 2.4 -- RACQUET SPECIFICATIONS

- a) *Dimensions*  
The racquet, including bumper guard and all solid parts of the handle, may not exceed 21 inches in length.
- b) The regulation racquet must include a thong that must be securely wrapped on the player's wrist.
- c) The regulation racquet frame may be made of any material, as long as it conforms to the above specifications, and is judged to be safe.
- d) The strings of the regulation racquet should be gut, monofilament or nylon. Metal strings are permitted only if they do not mark or deface the ball.

## Rule 2.5 -- UNIFORM

- a) The uniform and shoes may be of any color. The shirt may contain any insignia or writing considered in good taste by the referee (final determiner to be the tournament director). Doubles teams should wear similar colors to ease the identification problem. Players may not play without shirts in tournament competition.

- b) Each player shall have within easy access an extra shirt which he may be requested to put on, if in the judgement of the referee excess perspiration is creating hazardous playing conditions and causing unnecessary delay in play.
  
- c) All players competing in an IRF sanctioned event will be required to wear lensed eyewear that are manufactured for racquet sports, with the exception of prescribed non-breakable protective lenses. The eyewear must be worn properly, and not be altered in any way.

**Rule 3.1 – TOURNAMENTS**

All tournaments shall be managed by a committee or tournament director who shall designate the officials.

**Rule 3.2 – OFFICIALS**

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

**Rule 3.3 – REMOVAL OF A REFEREE**

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

**Rule 3.4 – RULE BRIEFING**

Before all tournaments, all officials and players shall be briefed on rules and on local court hindes or other regulations or modifications the tournament director wishes to impose. This briefing should be reduced to writing. The current IRF rules will apply and be made available. Any modifications the tournament director wishes to impose must be stated in writing and be available to all players at registration.

**Rule 3.5 – REFEREES**

**a) *Pre-Match Duties***

Before each match commences, it shall be the duty of the referee to:

- 1 - Check on adequacy of preparation of the court with respect to cleanliness, lighting and temperature.
- 2 - Check on availability and suitability of all materials necessary for the match such as balls, towels, score cards, pencils and time piece.
- 3 - Instruct players ON COURT.
- 4 - Point out court hindes and local regulations if applicable.

- 5 - Inspect equipment, toss coin and allow winner choice of serving or receiving.
- 6 - Check linespeople and score keeper (where applicable) and ask for reserve game ball upon assuming officiating position.
- 7 - Review any rule modifications in effect for this particular tournament.
- 8 - Start play by calling score (zero serving zero) when players indicate their readiness to begin.

b) *Decision*

During the match, the referee shall make all decisions with regard to the rules. Where linespeople are used the referee shall announce all final judgments. If both players in a single match and three out of four in a doubles match disagree with a call made by the referee, the referee is overruled.

c) *Protests*

Any decision not involving the judgment of the referee may on protest be decided by the tournament director, if present, or the delegated representative.

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 - After warning, any player leaves the court without permission of the referee during a game.
- 3 - Any player for a singles match, or any team for a doubles match fails to report to play. Twenty (20) minutes after the scheduled game time will be allowed before forfeiture. The tournament director may permit a longer delay if circumstances warrant such a decision.
- 4 - A third technical foul is assessed to any one player or team during the course of a match. See Rule 4.14.

### Rule 3.6 -- LINESPEOPLE

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

### Rule 3.7 -- APPEALS

In any match using linespeople, the following are appealable calls: fault serves (except screen serves), out serves, double bounce pick-ups, skip balls and receiving line violations. At no time may a player appeal a hinder of any type, technicals or other discretionary calls of the referee.

Each player will be allowed to make a maximum of five not accepted appeals per game. If one linesperson has no opinion and the other disagrees with the referee's call, the appeal will not count against the five appeal limit.

**Rule 4.1 – SERVE**

- a) The player or side winning the toss in the first game will have the option of serving or receiving in the first game. The second game will begin in reverse order of the first game. In a tie breaker the player or team accumulating the greatest number of points in the first two games shall have the option to serve or receive. If the total number of points is even for both players or teams, a coin toss will be used to determine who shall have the choice of serving or receiving in the tie breaker.
- b) *Start*  
Games are started by the referee's calling the score. (Zero serves zero).
- c) *Place*  
The server may not initiate the pre-service motion from outside of the service zone. Stepping on the short line (back), but not over, is permitted. After starting the service motion, the server may step over the service (front) line provided that some part of both feet remains on or inside the lines until the served ball passes the short line. See Rule 4.6 for violations.
- d) *Manner*  
A serve is commenced as the ball leaves the server's hand. The ball must bounce on the floor in the service zone and on the first bounce be struck by the server's racquet in an obvious attempt to serve the ball. The ball must strike the front wall first and on the rebound hit the floor back of the short line, either with or without touching one of the side walls.
- e) *Readiness*  
Once a rally has ended, the players are given a reasonable amount of time (according to the judgment of the referee) to return to their respective position, and then the score is called.

Once the score has been called the server has ten seconds to put the ball into play and the receiver has ten seconds to get ready to receive. The ten second rule is applicable to the server and receiver simultaneously. If the receiver is not ready, he must signal so by raising his racquet above his head or completely turning his back to the server. Delays on the part of the server or the receiver shall result in an "out" or point against the offender.

If the server continues to serve without checking the receiver, the referee may award a technical for delay of game. After the score is called, if the server looks at the receiver and the receiver is not signaling "not ready", the server may then serve. If the receiver attempts to signal "not ready" after that point, the signal shall not be acknowledged and the serve becomes legal.

#### **Rule 4.2 – SERVE, IN DOUBLES**

a) *Server*

At the beginning of each game in doubles, each side shall inform the referee of the order of service, which order shall be followed throughout the game. When the first server is out, the side is out. Thereafter both players on each side shall serve until a hand-out or side out occurs. It is not necessary for the server to alternate serves to their opponents.

b) *Partner's Position*

On each serve the server's partner shall stand erect with his back to the side wall and with both feet on the floor within the service box 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) There will be an automatic screen serve in doubles matches when the ball goes behind the body of the server's partner.

#### **Rule 4.3 – DRIVE SERVE ZONE**

The drive serve lines will be three feet from each side wall in the service box, dividing the service area into two 17-foot service zones for drive serves only. The player may drive serve to the same side of the court on which he is standing so long as the start and finish of the service motion takes place outside the three-foot line.

a) The drive serve zones are not observed for cross-court drive serves, the hard-Z, soft-Z 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 three-foot line is not part of the 17-foot zone. Dropping the ball on the line or standing on the line while drive serving to the same side is an infraction.

#### **Rule 4.4 -- 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 cancelling a prior illegal serve.
- b) ***Fault Serve***  
Two (2) fault serves result in a hand-out, an out or side out.
- c) ***Out serve***  
An out serve results in a hand-out, an out or side out.

#### **Rule 4.5 -- DEAD BALL SERVES**

Dead ball serves do not cancel any previous illegal serve. They occur when an otherwise legal serve:

- a) ***Hits Partner***  
Hits the server's partner on the fly on the rebound from the front wall while the server's partner is in the service box. Any serve that touches the floor before hitting the partner in the box is a short serve.
- b) ***Court Hinders***  
Hits any part of the court that under local rules is a dead ball.
- c) ***Broken Ball***  
If the ball is determined to have broken on the serve, a new ball shall be substituted and the serve replayed (not cancelling any prior fault serve).

#### **Rule 4.6 -- FAULT SERVES**

The following serves are faults and any two in succession results 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 line) before the served ball crosses the short line.

- 3 - In doubles, 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 of the service motion until the ball passes the short line. (See Rule 4.2 b)).
- 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 one side wall.
- c) *Three-Wall Serve*  
Any ball served that first hits the front wall and on the rebound hits two side walls on the fly.
- d) *Ceiling Serve*  
Any served ball that touches the ceiling after hitting the front wall either with or without touching one side wall.
- e) *Long Serve*  
Any served ball that first hits the front wall and rebounds to the back wall before touching the floor, with or without touching the side wall.
- f) *Out of Court Serve*  
Any ball going out of the court on the serve, without first hitting the floor.
- g) *Illegal Drive Serve*  
A drive serve in which the player fails to observe the 17-foot drive service zone (See Rule 4.3).
- 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 place himself in good court position to obtain that view.). The screen serve is the only fault serve which may not be appealed.
- i) *Bouncing Ball Outside Service Zone*  
Bouncing the ball outside the service zone as a part of the service motion is a fault serve.

#### **Rule 4.7 – OUT SERVES**

Any one of the following serves results in a hand-out:

- a) *Failure to Serve*  
Failure of server to put the ball into play according to 4.1 e).

- b) ***Missed Serve Attempt***  
Any attempt to strike the ball on the first bounce that results in a total miss or in the ball touching any part of the server's body.
- c) ***Non-Front Wall Serve***  
Any served ball that strikes the server's partner, or the ceiling, floor or side wall before striking the front wall.
- d) ***Touched Serve***  
Any served ball that on the rebound from the front wall touches the server or if the server's partner intentionally touches the served ball.
- e) ***Out-of-Order Serve***  
In doubles, when either partner serves out of order. Any points which may have been scored during an out-of-order serve will be automatically void with the score reverting to the score prior to the out-of-order serve. 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 first server serves out-of-order, a side out will be called.
- f) ***Crotch Serve***  
Any served ball that hits the crotch of the front wall and floor, front and side wall or front wall and ceiling. A crotch serve into the back wall is good and in play. A served ball hitting the side wall crotch beyond the short line is good and in play.
- g) ***Fake or Balk Serve***  
Such a serve is defined as a non-continuous movement of the racquet towards the ball as the server drops the ball for the purpose of serving.
- h) ***Safety Zone Violation***  
When the server or his partner enters the safety zone before the served ball passes the short line.
- i) ***Wetting the Ball***  
Deliberately wetting the ball.
- j) ***Illegal hit***  
Contacting the ball twice, carrying the ball, or hitting the ball with the handle of the racquet or any part of the body or uniform. (See Rule 4.10 a), b)).
- k) ***Ball Hits Partner***  
A served ball that hits the double partner while outside the doubles box results in loss of serve.

## Rule 4.8 -- 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 (five-foot) line. The follow-through may carry the receiver or his racquet past the receiving line.
- 3 - Neither the receiver nor his racquet may break the plane of the short line during the service return, except if the ball is struck after rebounding off the back wall.
- 4 - Any violation by the receiver results in a point for the server.

### b) *Legal Return*

After the ball is legally served, one of the players on the receiving side must strike the ball with the racquet either on the fly or after the first bounce and before the ball touches the floor the second time to 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 may not touch the floor before touching the front wall.

### c) *Failure to Return*

The failure to return a serve results in a point to the server.

## Rule 4.9 -- CHANGES OF SERVE

### a) *Hand-out*

A server is entitled to continue serving until:

- 1 - Out serve. An out serve is made as described under Rule 4.7 or;
- 2 - Fault serves. One makes two fault serves in succession under Rule 4.6 or;
- 3 - Ball hits partner. Player hits partner in an attempted return.
- 4 - Failure to return. Player or partner fails to keep the ball in play by returning it as required by Rule 4.8 b) and Rule 4.10 a), b), d), e).

- 5 - Avoidable hinder. Player or partner commits an avoidable hinder under Rule 4.12.

b) *Side Out*

In singles, retiring the server retires the side. In doubles the side is retired when both partners have been put out, or on the first serve as provided in Rule 4.2 a).

c) *Effect*

When the server or the serving team loses the serve, the server or serving team shall become the receiver; and the receiving team, the server.

**Rule 4.10 – RALLIES**

Each legal return after the serve is called a rally. Play during rallies shall be 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 the ball, touching the ball with any part of the body or uniform, or removing the wrist thong 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 in such a way that the effect is more of a sling or throw than a hit).

c) *Return Attempts*

- 1 - In singles, if a player swings at, but misses the ball in play, the player may repeat those attempts to return the ball until it touches the floor for the second time.
- 2 - In doubles, if one player swings at, but misses the ball, both the player and the partner 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.

d) *Touching Ball*

Except as provided in Rule 4.11 a)2, any touching of the ball before it touches the floor the second time by a player other than the one making a return results in a loss of the rally.

c) ***Failure to Return***

If player or his partner fails to keep the ball in play by returning it as required by Rule 4.8 b), it results in loss of the rally. If the ball obviously did not have the velocity or direction to hit the front wall and strikes the opposing player or if the ball is struck by one player on a team, hits that player or that player's partner, it results in loss of the rally.

f) ***Out of Court Ball***

- 1 - After return. Any ball returned to the front wall which on the rebound or on the first bounce goes into the gallery or through any opening in a side wall shall be declared dead and the serve replayed.
- 2 - No return. Any ball not returned to the front wall, but which caroms off a player's racquet into the gallery or into any opening in a side wall either with or without touching the ceiling, side or back wall shall result in loss of the rally.

g) ***Dry Ball***

During the game, and particularly on service, every effort should be made to keep the ball dry. Deliberately wetting the ball results in an out. The ball may be inspected by the referee at any time during the game.

h) ***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 a new ball shall be put into play and the point replayed. The server gets two serves. The only proper way to check for a broken ball is to squeeze it by hand.

i) ***Play Stoppage***

If foreign objects enter the court, or any outside interference occurs, the referee shall stop the play if such occurrences interfere with ensuing play or player's safety. (See Rule 4.11 a.8 and Rule 4.12g)

j) ***Replays***

Whenever a rally is replayed for any reason, the server is awarded two serves.

## Rule 4.11 -- DEAD BALL HINDERS

Hinders are of two types -- "dead ball" and "avoidable". Dead ball hinders as described in this rule result in the point being replayed. Avoidable hinders are described in Rule 4.12.

### a) *Situations*

When called by the referee the following are dead ball hinders:

- 1 - Court hinders. Ball hits any part of the court which under local rules is a dead ball.
- 2 - Ball hits opponent. When an opponent is hit by a return shot in flight. 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 that 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.
- 3 - Body contact. Any body contact with an opponent that interferes with seeing or returning the ball. Contact with the racquet or follow through normally is not considered a dead ball hinder.
- 4 - Screen ball. Any ball rebounding from the front wall close to the body of a player on the side which just hit the ball and which interferes with, or prevents the returning player or side from seeing the ball. (Does not apply for the serve. See Rule 4.6 g)).
- 5 - Straddle ball. A ball passing between the legs of the player on the side which just returned the ball, if there is no fair chance to see or return the ball.
- 6 - Backswing hinder. Any body or racquet contact on the backswing or in route to or just prior to returning the ball, which impairs the hitter's ability to make a reasonable swing. This call can be made by the player attempting the return, but it must be made immediately and is subject to the referee's approval. This interference may be considered an avoidable hinder by the referee.

- 7 - Safety holdup. Any player about to execute a return who believes he is likely to strike his opponent with the ball or racquet 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 he believes the holdup was reasonable and the player would have been able to return the shot, and the referee may also call an avoidable hinder if warranted.)
- 8 - Other interference. Any other unintentional interference which prevents an opponent from having a fair chance to see or return the ball. Example: The ball obviously skids after striking a wet spot on the court floor or wall.

b) *Effect*

A call by the referee of a "hinder" stops the play and voids any situation following, such as the ball hitting a player. The point will be replayed with the server receiving two serves.

c) *Avoidance*

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 the ball after it leaves the front wall. In the judgement of the referee however, the receiver must make a reasonable attempt to return the ball in order for a hinder to be called.

d) *In Doubles*

In doubles, both players on a side are entitled to a fair and unobstructed chance at the ball and either one is entitled to a hinder even though it naturally would be the partner's ball and even though the partner may have attempted to play the ball or may have already missed it. It is not a hinder when one player hinders his partner.

#### **Rule 4.12 – AVOIDABLE HINDERS**

An avoidable hinder results in the loss of a rally. An avoidable hinder does not necessarily have to be an "intentional" act and is a result of any of the following:

a) *Failure to move*

Does not move sufficiently to allow an opponent a shot.

b) *Blocking*

Moves into a position affecting a block on the opponent about to return the ball, or in doubles, one player moves in front of an opponent as the player's partner is returning the ball.

- c) *Moving into ball*  
Moves in the way and is struck by the ball just played by the opponent.
- d) *Pushing*  
Deliberately pushes or shoves opponent during a rally.
- e) *Stroke Interference*  
Moves so as to restrict opponent's swing so that the player returning the ball does not have a free, unimpeded swing.
- f) *Intentional distractions*  
Deliberate shouting, stamping of the feet, waving the racquet, or any manner of disrupting the player who is hitting the ball.
- g) If a partner loses any part of his equipment which interferes with play. The loss of eye protection is an automatic avoidable hinder.

#### Rule 4.13 – REST PERIODS

- a) *Time Outs*  
During a game each player in singles or each side in doubles either while serving or receiving may request a "time out". Each "time out" shall not exceed thirty (30) seconds. No more than three "time outs" in a game shall be granted each singles player or each team in doubles. No player shall call a time out once the score is called. Three time outs are allowed in the tie-breaker.
- b) *Injury*  
No time out shall be charged to a player who is injured during a play. An injured player shall not be allowed more than a cumulative total of fifteen (15) minutes of rest. If the injured player is not able to resume play after a cumulative rest of fifteen (15) minutes the match shall be awarded to the opponent(s). On any additional injury to same player, the tournament director or referee, after considering any available medical opinion, shall determine whether the injured player will be allowed to continue.
- c) *Referee Time-Out*  
A time out may be called by the referee at the request of a player and after substantiation by the referee, because of faulty equipment or uniform. Two (2) minutes are to be allowed for any uniform adjustment needed and thirty (30) seconds for any equipment adjustment.
- d) *Time-Outs Between Games*  
A two (2) minute rest period is allowed between the first and second game and a five (5) minute rest period between the second and third game.

e) *Postponed Games*

Any games postponed by referee shall be resumed with the same score as when postponed.

**Rule 4.14 -- TECHNICALS**

a) The referee is empowered to deduct one point from a player's or team's score when, in the referee's sole judgment, the player is being overly and deliberately abusive. The actual invoking of this penalty is called a "Referee's Technical". If the player or team against whom the technical was assessed does not resume play immediately, the referee is empowered to forfeit the match in favor of the opponent. Some examples of actions which may result in technicals are:

- 1 - Profanity. Profanity is an automatic technical and should be invoked by the referee whenever it occurs;
- 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 injury to the court or other players.
- 6 - Delay of game, either in the form of taking too much time during timeouts and between games, in drying the court, in excessive questioning of the referee on the rules, etc.;
- 7 - Intentional front line foot faults to negate a bad lob serve;
- 8 - Anything considered unsportsmanlike behavior.

b) *Technical Warning*

If a player's behavior is not so severe as to warrant a referee's technical, a technical warning may be issued without point deduction.

c) *Effect of Technical or Warning*

If a referee issues a Technical Warning, it shall not result in a loss of rally or point and shall be accompanied by a brief explanation of the reason for the warning. If a referee issues a Referee's Technical, one point shall be removed from the offender's score. The awarding of the technical shall have no effect on service changes or side outs. If the technical occurs either between games or when the offender has no points, the result will be that the offender's score will revert to a minus (-1).

#### **Rule 4.15 – PROFESSIONALS**

A professional is defined as any player (male, female or junior) who accepts prize money regardless of the amount at any PRO SANCTIONED tournament so deemed by the IRF Executive Committee.

- a) A player may participate in a PRO SANCTIONED tournament which awards cash prizes but will not be considered a professional if no prize money is accepted.
- b) The acceptance by a player of merchandise or travel expenses shall not be considered as prize money, and thus does not jeopardize a player's amateur status.

#### **Rule 4.16 – RETURN TO AMATEUR STATUS**

Any player who has been classified as a professional can recover 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 International Racquetball Federation and his or her National Federation and shall become effective immediately as long as the player making application for reinstatement of amateur status has received NO money for a period of 12 months from a recognized pro sanctioned tournament as classified as such by the IRF.

#### **Rule 4.17 - WHEELCHAIR DIVISION**

##### **a) *Qualifications and Adjustments***

Any individual with significant permanent neuro muscular skeleton disability (spinal cord disorder, poliomyelitis, amputation, etc.) who will benefit through their participation in sports and who would be denied the opportunity to compete were it not for the wheelchair adaptation is eligible. The participant may wear an appliance that is medically prescribed providing it does not jeopardize the safety of others and that they do not use it to any unfair advantage. The participant may secure any portion of their body to the wheelchair.

##### **b) *Equipment***

In order to protect playing surfaces the wheelchair must be equipped with a functional roller bar or similar protection under the foot platform. There should be no sharp edges anywhere on the outside parts of the chair that could cause injury or damage to the court and the chair must be equipped with non-marking tires.

- c) *Two Bounce Rule*  
Two bounces of the ball on the floor are permitted but not mandatory during all rallies and serves.
- d) *Wheel Faults*  
All four wheels of the wheelchair are considered equal to both feet of the able-bodied player and subsequent calls are made accordingly. The proper call is Wheel Fault.
- e) *Avoidable Hinder - Chair Control*  
Any player that intentionally alters the direction or speed of the wheelchair with their lower extremities will be assessed an avoidable hinder.
- f) *Maintenance Delay*  
Each player will be allowed up to two five minute maintenance delays per match for any malfunction and repair of a wheelchair, prosthesis or assistance device. These delays are irrespective of other game timeouts or injury timeouts.

#### **Rule 4.18 -- AGE GROUP DIVISIONS**

Age is determined as of the first day of the tournament.

#### **MEN's AND WOMEN's AGE DIVISIONS**

OPEN	- All players other than Pro
SENIORS	- 35 +
VETERAN SENIORS	- 40 +
MASTERS	- 45 +
VETERAN MASTERS	- 50 +
GOLDEN MASTERS	- 55 +
SENIORS GOLDEN MASTERS	- 60 +
VETERAN GOLDEN MASTERS	- 65 +
ADVANCED GOLDEN MASTERS	- 70 +
SUPER GOLDEN MASTERS	- 75 +

OTHER DIVISIONS

Disabled  
Novice Division  
Intermediate Division  
Open Division  
Multi-Bounce Division  
Junior Division

JUNIOR DIVISIONS

Age is determined as of January 1st of each calendar year.

JUNIOR BOYS' AND GIRLS' AGE DIVISIONS

18 & under  
16 & under  
14 & under  
12 & under  
10 & under  
8 & under (regular)  
8 & under (no-bounce)  
Doubles team - ages apply as above

**Rule 5.1 -- DRAWS**

- a) If possible, all draws shall be made at least two days before the tournament commences.
- b) The organization which has the authority to approve the draw and seeding method will vary according to whether it is national, regional or world competition.
- |   |   |                      |   |                        |
|---|---|----------------------|---|------------------------|
| 1 | - | WORLD COMPETITION    | - | IRF                    |
| 2 | - | REGIONAL COMPETITION | - | Regional organizations |
| 3 | - | NATIONAL COMPETITION | - | National organization  |

**Rule 5.2 -- 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 or night with little rest between matches. This is a risk assumed on entering both singles and doubles events. If possible, the schedule should provide at least a one hour rest period between all 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 matchup. 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.
- 2 - A rest period of not less than one (1) hour be allowed between the finals in singles and doubles.

**Rule 5.3 -- NOTICE OF MATCHES**

It is the responsibility of each player to check the posted schedules to determine the time and place of each match. If any change is made in the schedule after posting, it shall be the duty of the committee or chairperson to notify the players of the change.

#### **Rule 5.4 – THIRD PLACE**

Players are required to play off for 3rd place and 4th place. However, for point standings, if one semi-finalist wants to play off for third and the other semi-finalist does not, the one willing to play shall be awarded third place.

#### **Rule 5.5 – CONSOLATION MATCHES**

- a) This rule may be waived at the discretion of the Tournament Director but this waiver must be in writing on the application.
- b) In all IRF sanctioned tournaments, each entrant shall be entitled to participate in a minimum of two matches. This then means that losers of their first match shall be AUTOMATICALLY placed in the consolation bracket of their division.
- c) If a player draws a bye or wins their first match by forfeit and then loses the second round match, they shall be deemed to have played just one match and therefore shall be entitled to be entered into the consolation bracket of that division.
- d) Consolation matches for all rounds through the quarter finals shall be played without a referee with the participants keeping their own score.
- e) Semi-finals and finals in all consolation matches shall be officiated in the same manner as a regular tournament match.

#### **Rule 5.6 – TOURNAMENT MANAGEMENT**

In all IRF sanctioned tournaments the tournament director may decide on a change of courts after the completion of any tournament game if such a change will accommodate better spectator conditions.

#### **Rule 5.7 – TOURNAMENT CONDUCT**

In all IRF sanctioned tournaments the referee is empowered to default a match if an individual player or team conducts itself to the detriment of the tournament and the game.

#### **Rule 5.8 – IRF ELIGIBILITY**

Any paid-up IRF member in good standing, who has not been classified a professional may compete in any IRF sanctioned tournament.

**Rule 6.1 – ONE WALL AND THREE WALL RULES**

The rules for one-wall and three-wall racquetball are very similar to the standard indoor four-wall game. The exceptions follow:

**a) *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.

- 1 - Short line. The back edge of the short line is 16 feet from the wall.
- 2 - 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.
- 3 - Service zone. The entire floor area inside and including the short line, side lines and service line.
- 4 - Receiving zone. The entire floor area in back of the short line, including the side lines and the long line.

**b) *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, though the sidewall tapers down to 12 feet high. The floor length and court markings are the same as four wall.

**c) *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 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 four-wall.

**d) *Service in Three Wall Courts***

A serve that goes beyond the side walls on the fly is considered long. A serve that goes beyond the long line on a fly, but within the side walls, is the same as a short.

## Rule 7.1 - RULE CHANGE PROCESS

- a) Any participating country may propose a rule change to the I.R.F. Rules Committee. The rule changes must be submitted in writing to the I.R.F. Office, Colorado Springs, CO., before January 15th of the year in which the World Championships are held.
- b) The proposed rule changes will be submitted to the I.R.F. Rules Committee for review and evaluation. The committee will then submit its' recommendation to the I.R.F. Executive Board by June 1st of the year in which the World Championships are held.
- c) The Executive Board will present its' recommendation and the recommendations of the Rules Committee to the participating countries during the World Congress meeting at the World Championships.
- d) The participating countries at the World Congress will the vote on the proposed rule changes.
- e) Rule changes which receive the majority of yes votes will go into effect on September 1st of the year in which they are passed.



