



**USA Racquetball, a National Governing Body of the
United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee**

www.usaracquetball.com

What is Racquetball?

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

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 cut-throat.

POINTS AND OUTS

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

MATCH, GAME, TIEBREAKER

A match is won by the first side winning two games. In standard play, the first two games of a match are played to 15 points (win by one point). If each side wins one game, a tiebreaker game is played to 11 points. (Note: the IRT Professionals play the best of 5 games to 11 points.)

What equipment will I need?

To play a game of racquetball you only need a few things to get started. Most racquetball equipment and accessories can be purchased separately or starter kits can be purchased for about \$30 from a club pro shop or sporting goods retail store.

Racquet (Cost anywhere from \$20-\$200, depends on budget, and willingness to pay for feel and technology.)

Eyewear (Recommended and important, helps reduce the risk of injury if you are hit in the eye.)

Ball (Balls come in different colors such as blue, green, purple, black, red and pink. Any color will do.)

Glove (Optional, this will help you keep a firm grip on the racquet during those fast rallies.)

Shoes (Any type of indoor court or tennis shoe, there are shoes designed specifically for racquetball.)

For more information on how to play, tips from the pros, video instruction and more, visit **Racquetball University** online at <http://usaracquetball.com/RacquetballUniversity.aspx>.

Racquetball Resources on the Web

<http://www.usaracquetball.com>

Sign up for free e-Newsletter on home page

<http://usaracquetball.com/FacilityDirectory.aspx>

Find clubs in your area

Racquetball Organizations

- International Racquetball Federation (IRF)
- International Racquetball Tour (IRT)
- Military Racquetball Federation (MRF)
- National Masters Racquetball Association (NMRA)
- Women's Professional Racquetball Organization (WPRO)
- Women's Senior/Masters Racquetball Association (WS/MRA)
- World Outdoor Racquetball (WOR)

Note: A full listing of USA Racquetball's Sponsors and Partners along with links to their websites can be found at www.usaracquetball.com.

Racquetball Fitness Facts

- Racquetball offers both aerobic and anaerobic benefits, with both sustained high-level heart rate activity and quick burst of energy required during play.
- Racquetball works nearly every muscle group, including sustained, repetitive use of large muscles that increase calorie burn and reduce fat percentage.
- The average number of calories burned during racquetball play ranges from 640/hour to 794/hour.
- Racquetball players work at a constant rate of 75 to 85% of their maximum heart rate for the duration of a typical game.
- An average game will take 20 minutes, during which a player will run a distance of approximately 3,650 feet – or over two miles in one hour.

INTRO TO RACQUETBALL RULES & PLAY

COURT SPECIFICATIONS

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

Dimensions

The dimensions of an indoor court are 20 feet wide, 40 feet long and 20 feet high. Outdoor courts may be shorter and may not have back walls. All surfaces are in play; exceptions are any gallery opening and surfaces designated as out-of-play for a valid reason (such as being of very different material or not in alignment with the back wall).

Court Markings and Uses

Short Line. The short line is midway between the front and back walls. The serve must hit the front wall first and possibly one other wall (but not the ceiling), and then not bounce before crossing the short line.

Service Line. The service line is five feet in front of the short line. It is the line closest to the front wall.

Service Area. The service zone is the 5' x 20' area bounded by the short line and a dashed line parallel to the short line (receiving line). The zone is observed only during the serve. Neither the server nor receiver may enter the zone until the ball has either hit the floor or crossed the line in the air.

EYE GUARDS/WRIST TETHER

All players must wear lensed approved eyewear and keep their wrist tether on at all times for their safety and the safety of their opponents. No matter how careful you are, you never know when you may be hit by an errant shot, even if you are alone on the court. Wearing eye guards also allows you to watch the ball at all times, which will help keep you from being hit by your opponent and will let you anticipate better to where they are hitting the ball. **ALWAYS WEAR EYE GUARDS WHEN YOU PLAY, AND USE THE WRIST TETHER ON YOUR RACQUET!**

HOW TO BEGIN PLAYING

SERVING

To start playing, you have to decide who will serve first. You can do this by lagging, coin toss, or any other method you choose. To serve, the server must drop the ball in the service zone and hit it after it takes one bounce. The server gets two chances to put the ball into play. A good serve means that the ball hits the front wall first and does not hit more than one other wall before hitting the floor beyond the short line. Bad serves are called either fault serves or out serves. If a server commits two fault serves, he loses the serve, or if he commits one out serve, he loses the serve.

EXAMPLES OF FAULT SERVES

Short Service – the ball does not land over the short line.

3-Wall Serve – the ball hits more than two walls.

Ceiling Serve – the ball hits the ceiling after hitting the front wall.

Long Serve – the ball hits the back wall before hitting the floor.

Screen Serve – the ball passes so close to the server's body that the receiver cannot see it. The receiver must be in a good court position to make this call.

EXAMPLES OF OUT SERVES

Two Consecutive Fault Serves – serving two fault serves as described above.

Missed Serve Attempt – the server drops the ball and swings at it but completely misses it.

Non-Front Wall Serve – any ball that does not hit the front wall first.

Out of Court Serve – the ball leaves the court before it hits the floor after the serve.

CHANGE OF SERVE

A server is entitled to continue serving until one of the following occurs:

- He hits one *Out* serve.

- He hits two *Fault* serves in a row.

- He fails to keep the ball in play after the opponent's return of serve.

ABOUT THE RALLY

All of the lines on the court apply to serve and return of serve only and do not apply after a good serve has been returned and the rally has started.

During the rally, opponents alternate hitting the ball to the front wall. Players may hit the ball directly to the front wall or use any combination of the side wall, back wall, or ceiling, as long as the ball hits the front wall before touching the floor.

The non-hitting player/team must yield the right of way to the hitting player/team, including moving to a less advantageous court position if required.

The hitter should stop play whenever she believes she may injure another player with the ball, racquet or body. This is called a *Replay Hinder*, causing the last rally to be replayed. *Penalty Hinders* can also be called during play, most commonly by referees in tournaments. See the full rules for an explanation of Penalty Hinders.

WINNING A RALLY

A player wins the rally when her opponent does not make a good return by either:

- 1) *Two Bounce*. Opponent could not return the ball before the second bounce on the floor.

- 2) *Skip Ball*. Opponent's return hits the floor before touching the front wall.

Above are general rules. Official rules may be reviewed at: <http://www.usra.org/Rulebook.aspx>.