

# **RACKETBALL**

## **RULES for SINGLES**

(Effective from 1st JANUARY 1984)

### **1. THE GAME, HOW PLAYED**

The game of RACKETBALL is played between two players each using a standard racket, with a ball officially approved by the English Racketball Association and in a rectangular court of standard dimensions (32 feet x 21 feet), enclosed on all four sides.

### **2. THE SCORE**

A match shall consist of the best of 3 or 5 games at the option of the organisers of the competition. Each game is 15 points up; that is to say, the player who first wins 15 points wins the game, except that, on the score being called 14 all, the game shall be set to the 'best of five points', in which case the player who first scores three more points wins the game with a score of 17 points. A player who first scores 15 points shall win the fifth (3rd) game; in a five (3) game match, except that the player must win by a margin of two points over the opponent and where necessary that fifth (3rd) game shall be extended until this margin is achieved.

### **3. POINTS, HOW SCORED**

Points can be scored by either player. When a player fails to serve or to make a good return, in accordance with the rules, the opponent wins the point. When the Receiver wins a point, he/she becomes the Server and adds one to his/her score.

### **4. THE SERVICE**

a. The right to serve is decided by the spin of a racket or coin. Thereafter the Server continues to serve until he/she loses the point, whereupon the opponent becomes the Server, and so on throughout the match.

b. At the beginning of each game and each hand, the Server has the choice of either box and shall thereafter alternate for as long as he/she scores points and remains the Server. However if the Server serves a fault which is not taken, or a rally ends in a Let, he/she shall serve again from the same box. If the Server serves from the wrong box, there shall be no penalty and the service shall count as if served from the correct box, except that the Receiver may, if he/she does not attempt to take the service, demand that it be served from the other box.

c. The ball, before being struck, shall be dropped or thrown on to the floor, without touching the wall; it must be served direct on to the front wall between the board/tin and the out of court line, so that on its return, unless volleyed, it falls to the floor within the back quarter of the court opposite to the Server's box. Should a player, having dropped or thrown the ball on to the floor, make no attempt to strike it, it may be dropped or thrown again without penalty. A player with the use of only one arm/hand may utilise the racket to propel the ball on to the floor before striking it.

d. A service is good when it is not a fault or does not result in the Server serving his/her hand out in accordance with Rule 4(f). If the Server serves one fault, he/she shall serve again. The Receiver may take a fault, and if he/she attempts to do so, the service becomes good and the ball continues in play. The Receiver has not attempted to take a fault until he/she has clearly made a commitment to play the ball. (A second service fault cannot be played by the Receiver).

e. A service is a fault:

(i) If at the time of striking the ball the Server fails to have at least one foot in contact with the floor within the service box, and no part of that foot touching the line surrounding the service box (called a foot-fault). (ii) If the ball touches the back wall before touching the floor. It may touch the side wall before touching the floor. A ball which strikes the back wall and floor simultaneously is a good service.

(iii) If the ball first touches the floor on or outside the short or half court lines delimiting the

back quarter of the court required in Rule 4(c).  
(iv) If it is not bounced on the floor before serving.

Any combination of faults in the one service counts only as one fault and in (ii to iv) is called a fault.

f. The Server serves his / her hand out and loses the service and the opponent scores a point:  
(i) If two consecutive faults are served, excluding any that have been taken by the Receiver, when the ensuing rally has ended in a Let.  
(ii) If the ball touches the walls before being struck or if the Server fails to strike the ball after it has bounced or it is struck more than once.  
(iii) If the ball is served on to, or below, the board/tin, or out, or against any part of the court before the front wall.  
(iv) If the ball, before it has bounced twice on the floor or has been struck by the opponent, touches the Server or anything he wears or carries.

g. The Server shall not serve until the Marker has completed calling the score.

## 5. **THE PLAY**

After a good service has been delivered, the players return the ball alternately until one or other fails to make a good return, or the ball otherwise ceases to be in play, in accordance with the rules.

## 6. **GOOD RETURN**

A return is good if the ball, before it has bounced twice upon the floor, is returned by the striker on to the front wall above the board/tin, without touching the floor or any part of the striker's body or clothing, provided the ball is not hit twice or out. It shall not be considered a good return if the ball touches the board/tin after it hits the front wall.

## 7. **LET**

A Let is an undecided stroke, and the service or rally in respect of which a Let is allowed, shall not count and the Server shall serve again from the same box. A Let shall not cancel a previous first fault which was not taken by the Receiver.

## 8. **STROKES, HOW WON**

A player wins a stroke:

- (a) Under Rule 4(f);
- (b) If the opponent fails to make a good return of the ball in play;
- (c) If the ball in play touches the opponent or anything carried or worn by the opponent, except as is otherwise provided by Rules 9, 10, 13 (a) (i);
- (d) If one is awarded by the Referee as provided for in the Rules.

## 9. **HITTING OPPONENT WITH THE BALL**

If an otherwise good return of the ball has been made, but before reaching the front wall it hits the striker's opponent, or opponent's racket, or anything opponent wears or carries, then:

(a) If the ball would have made a good return, and would have struck the front wall without first touching any other wall, the striker shall win the stroke, except if the striker shall have followed the ball round, and so turned, taking the ball on the forehand rather than the backhand or vice-versa, a Let shall be allowed.

This includes the case where the striker plays the ball behind his/her back or between his/her legs. If the striker, having turned elects not to continue the rally for fear of striking opponent with racket or ball and, in the opinion of the Referee, is able to make a good return, then a let shall be allowed.

(b) If the ball would otherwise have made a good return, a Let shall be allowed unless, in the Referee's opinion a winning stroke has been intercepted, then the striker shall win the stroke.

(c) If the ball would not have made a good return, the striker shall lose the stroke. The ball shall cease to be in play, even if it subsequently goes up.

When a player has been struck by the ball as described in rule 9, the Marker shall call 'down'.]

#### **10. FURTHER ATTEMPTS TO HIT THE BALL**

If the striker strikes at and misses the ball, further attempts may be made to return it. If after being missed, the ball touches the opponent, or opponent's racket or wearing apparel, then:

- (a) If the striker would otherwise have made a good return, a Let shall be allowed, or
- (b) If the striker could not have made a good return, the striker loses the stroke.

If any such further attempt is successful, resulting in a good return being prevented from reaching the front wall by hitting the striker's opponent, or anything worn or carried by opponent, a Let shall be allowed in all circumstances.

#### **11. APPEALS**

- (a) An appeal may be made against any decision of the Marker, except for a call of 'fault' or 'foot-fault' to the first service.
- (b) If the Marker fails to call 'fault' or 'foot-fault' to the first service, the Receiver may appeal provided no attempt is made to return the ball. If the appeal is upheld the service shall be a fault.
- (c) If the Marker calls 'fault' or 'foot-fault' to the second service, the Server may appeal. If the appeal is upheld, a "let" shall be allowed, with 'one fault' standing.
- (d) If the Marker fails to call 'fault' or 'foot-fault' to the second service, the Receiver may appeal, either immediately or at the end of the rally if he/she has played the ball. If the appeal is upheld, the Receiver shall win the stroke.

In all cases where a Let is desired, an appeal shall be made to the Referee with the words "Let please". Play shall thereupon cease until the Referee has given his decision.

No appeal may be made after the delivery of a service for anything that occurred before that service was delivered.

#### **12. FAIR VIEW, FREEDOM TO PLAY THE BALL And INTERFERENCE**

- (a) After playing a ball, a player must make every effort to get out of the opponents way. That is :
  - (i) A player must make every effort to give the opponent a fair view of the ball, so that it may be sighted adequately for the purpose of playing it.
  - (ii) A player must make every effort not to interfere with, or crowd, the opponent in the latter's attempt to get to, or play, the ball.
  - (iii) A player must make every effort to allow the opponent, as far as the latter's position permits, freedom to play the ball directly to the front wall, or to either side wall to within approximately one metre of the front wall.
- (b) If any such form of interference has occurred, and, in the opinion of the Referee, the player has not made every effort to avoid causing it, the Referee shall on appeal, or stopping play without waiting for an appeal, award the stroke to the opponent, provided the opponent was in a position to make a good return.
- (c) However, if interference has occurred, but in the opinion of the Referee the player has made every effort to avoid causing it, the Referee shall on appeal, or stopping play without waiting for an appeal, award a Let, except that if the opponent is prevented from making a winning return by such interference or by distraction from the player, the Referee shall award the Stroke to the opponent.
- (d) When, in the opinion of the Referee, a player refrains from playing the ball, which, if played would clearly and undoubtedly have won the rally under the terms of Rule 9(a) or 9(b),

that player shall be awarded the Stroke.

(e) If either player makes unnecessary physical contact with his opponent, the Referee may stop play and award a Stroke accordingly.

The practice of impeding an opponent in the effort to play the ball by crowding or obscuring the view is highly detrimental to the game of Racketball. Unnecessary physical contact is also detrimental as well as being dangerous. Interfering with players must be interpreted to include the case of a player having to wait for an excessive swing of the opponent's racket.

### **13. LET, WHEN ALLOWED**

Notwithstanding anything contained in these rules, and provided always that the striker could have made a good return:

(a) A let may be allowed:

(i) If, owing to the position of the striker, the opponent is unable to avoid being touched by the ball before the return is made.

This rule shall be construed to include the case of the striker, whose position in front of his opponent makes it impossible for the latter to see the ball, or who shapes as if to play the ball and has a change of mind at the last moment, preferring to take the ball off the back wall, the ball in either case hitting the opponent, who is between the striker and the back wall. This is not, however, to be taken as conflicting in any way with the Referee's duties under rule 12.

(ii) If the ball in play touches any article lying in the court.

(iii) If the striker refrains from hitting the ball owing to a reasonable fear of injuring opponent.

(iv) If the striker, in the act of playing the ball, touches opponent.

(v) If the Referee is asked to decide an appeal and is unable to do so.

(vi) If a player drops the racket, calls out or in any other way distracts the opponent, and the Referee considers that such occurrence has caused the opponent to lose the stroke.

(b) A Let shall be allowed:

(i) If the Receiver is not ready, and does not attempt to take the service.

(ii) If the ball breaks during play.

(iii) If an otherwise good return has been made, but the ball goes out of court on its first bounce. (A ball which strikes the top of the glass backed wall is deemed to be out, unless it rebounds into the court in a uniform way).

(iv) As provided for in rules 9, 10, 11(b)(ii), 18 and 19.

(c) No Let shall be allowed when the player has made an attempt to play the ball except as provided for under rules 10, 13(a)(iv), 13(b)(ii) and (iii).

(d) Unless an appeal is made by one of the players, no Let shall be allowed except where these rules definitely provide for a Let, namely, rules 9(a) and (b), 10, 12, 13(b)(ii) and (iii).

### **14. NEW BALL**

At any time, when the ball is not in actual play, a new ball may be substituted by mutual consent of the players, or on appeal by either player, at the discretion of the Referee. It is the responsibility of the player losing a rally or game, to check that the ball is not broken, immediately the rally/game ends. When it is discovered to be broken, the preceding rally must be replayed immediately.

### **15. WARM-UP**

Immediately preceding the start of play, a period not exceeding five minutes shall be allowed, on court, for the purpose of warming-up. A further period shall be allowed to warm-up if the match is being resumed after a considerable delay or when the ball is replaced.

## **16. PLAY IN A MATCH TO BE CONTINUOUS**

After the first service is delivered, play shall be continuous as far as is practical, provided that:

(a) At any time play may be suspended owing to bad light or other circumstances beyond the control of the players, for such period as the Referee shall decide. In the event of play being suspended for the day, the match shall start afresh, unless both players agree to the contrary.

(b) The referee shall award a game to the opponent of any player who, in his opinion, persists, after due warning, in delaying the play in order to recover strength or wind, or for any other reason.

(c) An interval of one minute shall be permitted between games and of two minutes between the fourth and fifth of a 5-game match. A player may leave the court during such intervals, but must remain in earshot of the Referee and be ready to resume play at the end of the stated time. When 15 seconds of the interval permitted between games are left, the Marker shall call "fifteen seconds" to warn the players to be ready to resume play. Should either player fail to do so when required by the Referee, a game may be awarded to the opponent.

(d) In the event of an injury, the Referee may require a player to continue to play or concede the match, except where the injury is contributed to by his opponent, or where it was caused by dangerous play on the part of the opponent. In the former case, the Referee may allow time for the injured player to receive attention and recover, and in the latter, the injured player shall be awarded the match under rule 19(d)(ii).

No play is permitted while a wound is bleeding, which is not securely covered or where blood flow continues from an uncovered wound. In the event of a natural nose bleed, the Referee may allow up to 3 minutes for the player to recover. The player may concede a maximum of one game to obtain a further one minute ( 2 minutes if 2-all ) and if unable to continue shall concede.

(e) In the event of a ball breaking, a new ball may be warmed, as provided for in rule 15(b).

In allowing for a player to receive attention and recover, the Referee should ensure that there is no conflict with the obligations of a player to comply with rule 16(b). "Contributed to by the opponent" should not include the situation where the injury to the player results from that player occupying an unnecessarily close position to his opponent.

The practice of serving faults deliberately in order to obtain an additional period of rest is contrary to the spirit of the game and rule 16(b). When the Referee is satisfied that a player is doing so, he shall, after warning, in terms of rule 16(b), award the game to the opponent.

## **17. CONTROL OF A MATCH**

A match is normally controlled by a Referee, assisted by a Marker. One person may be appointed to carry out the functions of both Referee and Marker. When a decision has been made by a Referee, he/she shall announce it to the players and the Marker shall repeat it with the subsequent score.

Up to half an hour before the commencement of a match, either player may request a Referee and/or a Marker other than appointed, and this request may be considered and a substitute appointed. Players are not permitted to request any such change after the commencement of a match, unless both agree to do so. In either case the decision as to whether an official is to be replaced or not must remain in the hands of the Tournament Referee, where applicable.]

## **18. DUTIES OF THE MARKER**

(a) The Marker calls the play and the score, with the Server's score first. The Marker shall call "fault", "foot-fault", "not up", "out" or "down" as appropriate.

(b) If in the course of play the Marker calls "not-up", "out", or "down" or in the case of a second service, "fault" or "foot-fault", then the rally shall cease.

(c) If the Marker's decision is reversed on appeal, a Let shall be allowed, except as provided for in rules 11(b)(iii) and (iv) and 19(b)(iv) and (v).

(d) Any service or return shall be considered good unless otherwise called.

(e) After the Server has served a fault, which has not been taken, the Marker shall repeat the score and add the words "one fault", before the Server serves again. This call shall be repeated should subsequent rallies end in a Let, until the stroke is finally decided.

(f) When no Referee is appointed, the Marker shall exercise all the powers of the Referee.

(g) If the Marker is unsighted or uncertain, the Referee shall be called upon to make the relevant decision; if the latter is unable to do so, a Let shall be allowed.

## **19. DUTIES OF THE REFEREE**

(a) The Referee shall award Lets and Strokes and make decisions where called for by the rules, and shall decide all appeals, including those against the Marker's calls and decisions. The decision of the Referee shall be final.

(b) The Referee shall in no way intervene in the Marker's calling except:

(i) Upon appeal by one of the players.

(ii) As provided for in rule 12.

(iii) When it is evident that the score has been incorrectly called, in which case he should draw the Marker's attention to the fact.

(iv) When the Marker has failed to call the ball "not up", "out" or "down" and, on appeal, the Referee rules that such was in fact the case, the stroke should be awarded accordingly.

(v) When the Marker has called "not up", "out" or "down" and, on appeal, the Referee rules that this was not the case, a Let shall be allowed except that, if in the Referee's opinion, the Marker's call had interrupted an undoubted winning return, the Referee shall award the stroke accordingly.

(vi) In exceptional circumstances when the Referee is absolutely convinced that the Marker has made an obvious error in stopping play or allowing play to continue, the Referee shall immediately rule accordingly.

(c) The Referee is responsible that all times laid down in the rules are strictly adhered to.

(d) In exceptional cases, the Referee may order:

(i) A player, who has left the court, to play on.

(ii) A player to leave the court and to award the match to the opponent.

(iii) A match to be awarded to a player whose opponent fails to be present on court within ten minutes of the advertised time of play.

(iv) Play to be stopped in order to warn that the conduct of one or both of the players is leading to an infringement of the rules. A Referee should avail himself / herself of this rule as early as possible when either player is showing a tendency to break the provisions of rule 12.

(e) If after warning, a player continues to contravene rule 15(c), the Referee shall award a game to the opponent. [

## **RULES FOR DOUBLES**

The RULES of DOUBLES are the same as for the SINGLES game with the following alterations:

### **SIDES:**

Sides shall consist of two players each.

### **SERVER:**

Each side shall nominate its SERVER for the whole of a particular game, in any match, with the

alternative player serving in the second and, if played, the fourth game. In the final game (3rd or 5th) when the first side's score reaches "seven", the server shall change, with each team.

**RETURN OF SERVICE & SUBSEQUENT PLAY:**

At the beginning of each game, each side shall designate one of its players to receive service in the right-hand service court and the other to receive service in the left-hand service court. Throughout the course of such game, the service must be received by the players so designated.

Only the Receiver may be positioned in the service court opposite the Server's service court, at the point of impact of the service.

Until the ball has been touched or has hit the floor twice, it may be struck at any number of times by either or both players on a side, in rotation.

(N.B. The order of striking shall be : The Server, the Receiver, followed by the Server's partner, followed by the Receiver's partner).

**LET:**

If either player on the striking side is inadvertently hindered by either of his/her opponents from reaching or striking at the ball, a let shall be allowed.

Note to Referees: Under rule 12c, where interference has occurred and the player has made every effort to avoid causing it, a let shall be allowed and the Referee shall not consider whether a winning stroke has been prevented. This shall not affect the Referee's duties in awarding strokes, as otherwise required in Rule 12 of the "Singles Game".

**WARM-UP:**

At the request of either side, the referee shall allow to either side or to the two sides together, a period of five minutes, immediately prior to the start of the match for the purpose of a warm-up. The right to warm-up first shall be decided by the spin of a racket or coin.

**NOTES ON LETS & STROKES ---- DOUBLES:**

If either player on the striking side is inadvertently hindered by either of his/her opponents from reaching or striking the ball, a LET shall be allowed.

If, in the opinion of the Referee, interference to the striker is unnecessary or created, he/she shall stop play and award a STROKE to the hindered side.

Unnecessary CROWDING shall also be penalised by a STROKE. If the ball, after being struck from a good service or a good return and before reaching the front wall, hits one of the striker's opponents or his/her racket or anything he/she wears or carries, it shall be a LET if the ball strikes the front wall fairly or would have done so but for such interference but if the return would not have been good, the striker's side shall lose the point.

When a fairly struck ball hits the striker's PARTNER, it is a point to the other side.