

# HOW TO PLAY RACQUETBALL

## THE GAME

### TYPES OF GAMES

Racquetball is played by two (singles) or four players/two teams (doubles). A variation of the game played by three players (two on one) is called cut-throat.

### 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/team:

1. **is unable to hit the ball** before it bounces twice,
2. **is unable to return the ball** so that it touches the front wall before it touches the floor, or
3. **causes a hinder** to be called.

### POINTS AND OUTS

Points are scored only by the serving side. If the returning side wins the point, it is a “side out” and they serve. In doubles, when the first server loses the serve, the second server then serves. After 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. 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 (in all games, win by one point).

## HOW TO BEGIN PLAYING

### SERVING

To start playing you must 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 hit the front wall first and did 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 2 fault serves, they lose the serve, or if they commit one out serve, they lose 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 2 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** - when the ball passes so close to the server’s body that the receiver cannot see it. The receiver must be in good court position to make this call.

### EXAMPLES OF OUT SERVES

- **Two Consecutive Fault Serves** - serving two fault serves as described above results in an out.
- **Missed Serve Attempt** - when 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** - If the ball goes out of the court before it hits the floor on the serve.

### WHEN THERE IS A CHANGE OF SERVE

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

- They hit one Out serve.
- They hit two Fault serves in a row.
- They fail to keep the ball in play after their opponent’s return of serve.

### ABOUT THE RALLY

All 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 take turns 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, if the ball hits the front wall before touching the floor.

The non-hitting team must yield the right of way to the hitter, including moving to a worse court position if required.

The hitter should stop play whenever they believe they 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 are also called during tournament play. See the full rules for an explanation of that type of hinder.

### WINNING A RALLY

A player wins the rally when their 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 hit the floor before touching

## COURT SPECIFICATIONS

### COURT MARKINGS AND USES

**Short Line.** The short line is midway between the front and back walls. The serve must hit the front wall and then not bounce before crossing the short line in the air.

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

**Service Zone.** The service zone is bounded by the short line and the service line. A player’s feet must remain within the service zone while serving. In doubles, the teammate of the server must stand inside one of the service boxes on either side of the service zone.

**Receiving Line.** The player returning the serve must not cross or break the plane of this line until the ball bounces on a serve or crosses the line in the air.

### EYE GUARDS/WRIST TETHER

All players must wear lensed eyewear and always keep their wrist tether on for safety. Wearing eye guards also allows you to always watch the ball, which will keep you from being hit by your opponent and will let you anticipate better where they are hitting the ball. ALWAYS WEAR EYEGUARDS WHEN YOU PLAY AND USE THE WRIST TETHER ON YOUR RACQUET!

