USA Racquetball

Official Rules of Racquetball

As of September 1, 2026

Fellow Players,

Welcome to USA Racquetball's Official Rulebook, applicable to all sanctioned and non-sanctioned racquetball play in the United States.

It is critically important for all players—especially those playing in USAR-sanctioned events—to familiarize themselves with the current rules. For instance, in 2023, USA Racquetball's Board of Directors approved several modifications to the Rulebook, including increasing the length of timeouts to one minute; limiting the number of timeouts per game to two; and decreasing the time between games to two minutes.

- **Sections 1-3** cover the rules and regulations of racquetball, including structure of the game, courts and equipment, and play regulations.

- **Sections 4-9** cover modifications, including the specific rules applicable to doubles, wheelchair racquetball, and multi-bounce racquetball.

  Sections 10-12 are rule modifications applicable to allied organizations, such as the International Racquetball Tour (IRT), the Ladies Professional Racquetball Tour (LPRT), World Outdoor Racquetball (WOR), and the National Masters Racquetball Association (NMRA).

- **Sections A-E** cover competition policies and procedures, including tournament structure and officiating standards.

The sport of racquetball continues to change and evolve, and with it, these rules must adapt to meet the needs of the racquetball community. As such, any USA Racquetball Member may contact me with proposed rule changes that will then be presented to the Rules Committee for consideration. Of course, any member may email me at any time with rules questions or interpretations. I can be reached at rulescommissioner@usaracquetball.com.

Sincerely,

Joshua M Jones

Joshua Jones
National Rules Commissioner
USA Racquetball

USAR Official Rules & Regulations of Racquetball

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USAR Official Rules of Racquetball

USAR Official Rules & Regulations

1 - The Game

Rule 1.1 Types of Games

Tournament racquetball is played by two or four players. When played by two, it is called singles and when played by four, doubles. Cut-throat is the name generally applied to several non-tournament variations of the standard game when played by three players.

Rule 1.2 Description

Racquetball is a competitive game in which each player/team uses a strung racquet to take turns at serving and returning the ball within a closed court.

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 else 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 either a hand or half out and when the team's second server loses the serve, it is a side out.

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, then a tiebreaker game is played to 11 points. Unless a rule exception exists, the first side reaching the requisite score is the winner.

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. Generally, all surfaces shall be in play, with the exception of any gallery openings, surfaces designated as out of play for a valid reason (such as being of a significantly different material or not in alignment with the back wall).

(b) Markings. Racquetball courts shall be marked with visible 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 5 feet in front of the back edge of the short line.
3. **Service Zone.** The service zone is a 5-foot x 20-foot area bounded by the bottom edges of the side walls and by the outer edges of the short line and the service line.
4. **Service Boxes.** The service boxes, used only for doubles play, are located at each end of the service zone, and are designated by lines parallel with the side walls [see 4.2(b)]. 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 define the drive serve zones, are parallel with the side wall and are within the service zone. For each line, the edge of the line nearest to the center of the court shall be 3 feet from the nearest side wall.
6. **Receiving Line.** The receiving line is a broken line parallel to the short line. The receiving line forms a vertical plane from the floor to the ceiling. 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 alternating series of six-inch spaces and six-inch lines. This will result in a line composed of 17 six-inch spaces, 16 six-inch lines, and 2 twenty-one-inch lines. A solid line is acceptable.
7. **Safety Zone.** The safety zone is the 5-foot x 20-foot area bounded by the bottom edges of the side walls and by the back edges of the short line and the receiving line. This zone is observed only during the serve.

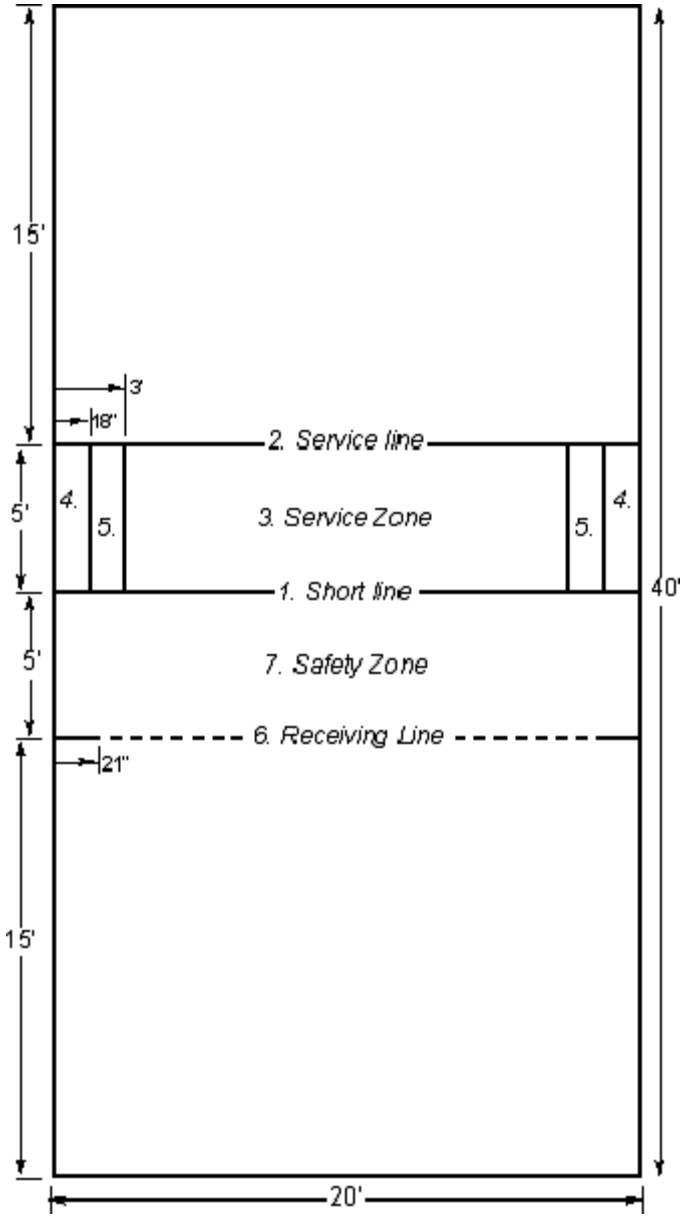


Figure 2.1-1

Rule 2.2 Ball Specifications

(a) The standard racquetball shall be close to 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 approved by the USAR may be used in a USAR 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 replace the ball at his own discretion or at his agreement with the request of a player or team. Balls that are not round or which bounce erratically shall not be used.

(b) If possible, the referee and players should also 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) Racquet terminology. Definitions for parts of a racquet are as follows:

1. **Head.** The component of the racquet frame that contains the strings and together creates the surface used to hit the ball.
2. **Throat.** The component of the racquet frame that joins the head and handle.
3. **Handle.** The component of the racquet frame that the player generally uses to hold the racquet.
4. **Frame.** The combination of head, throat, and handle that creates the solid structure of a racquet.
5. **Racquet.** The combination of all racquet components: frame (head, throat, and handle), bumper guard, string, wrist cord, and grip.
6. **Bumper Guard.** An optional component that may be attached to the head to protect the racquet.
7. **String.** Strings are attached to the head to create the main hitting surface.
8. **Wrist Cord.** A safety feature that is attached to the handle and is required to be worn on the player's wrist.
9. **Grip.** An optional component that can be wrapped over the handle.

(b) The racquet frame, including the bumper guard and all solid parts of the handle, may not exceed 22 inches in length. The racquet frame may be any material deemed safe.

(c) Using a racquet frame that exceeds 22 inches will result in forfeiture of the game in progress or, if discovered between games, forfeiture of the preceding game.

(d) The penalty for playing with a racquet frame that does not exceed 22 inches, but has a grip extending beyond the 22-inch limit, if noted during the course of a game, shall be a technical foul and a timeout to correct the problem. Subsequent violations will result in the loss of the game in progress. If a player challenges a racquet during a game that is found to be within the 22-inch limit, then a timeout is charged to the player who made the challenge. There is no penalty if the grip issue is noted and corrected before or between games.

(e) The racquet frame must include a cord securely attached to the player's wrist. The wrist cord can be no longer than 18 inches as measured from one end of the cord to the other. When stretched to its maximum length, the cord cannot be longer than 24 inches. Players using non-complying cords will be charged with a time-out to make the necessary change and, if none remain, a technical foul will be assessed to make the change.

(f) 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.

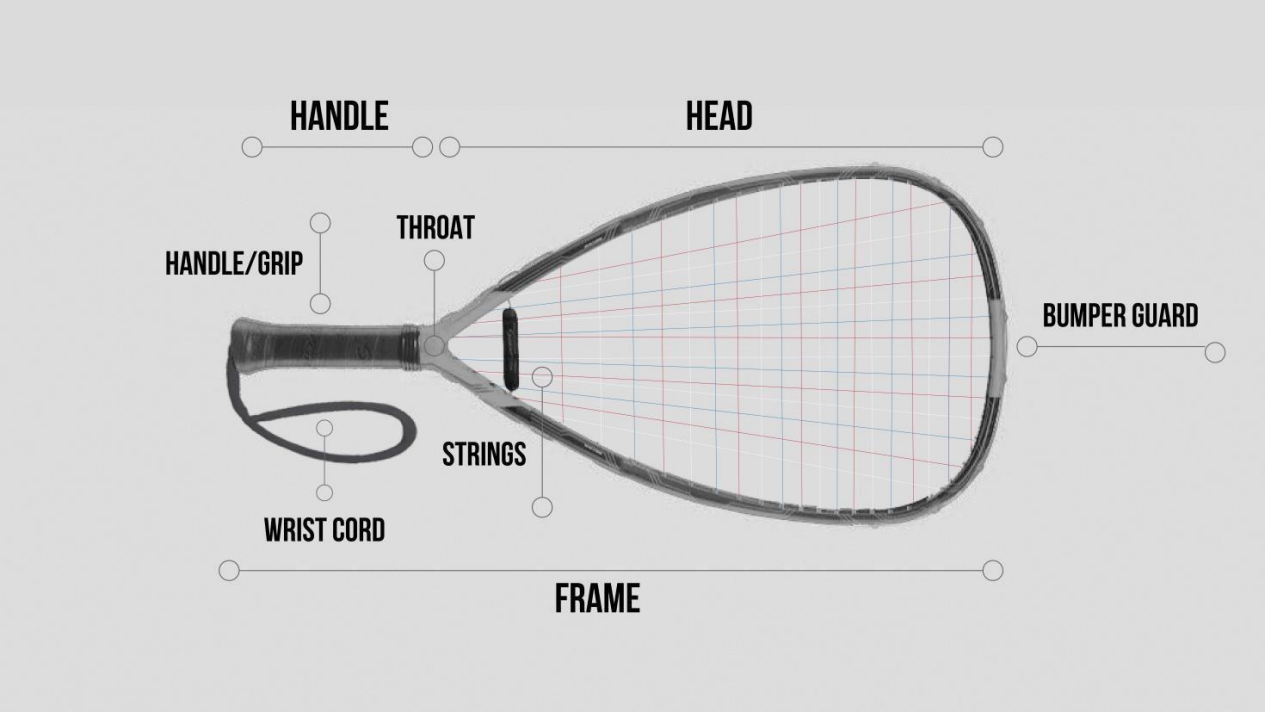


Figure 2.4-1

Rule 2.5 Apparel

(a) Eye Protection. In any USA Racquetball sanctioned event, every competitor, whether they require corrective lenses or not, must wear lensed eye wear as designed for racquet sports by the eye wear's manufacturer. Selecting protective eye wear that meets or exceeds the latest ASTM-F803 standard is the sole responsibility of individual participants. If questioned by the referee or tournament director, the competitor must produce documentation that proves the protective eye wear meets that ASTM Standard. Street wear spectacles and any un-lensed eye wear do not meet the protective standard. USA Racquetball does not test, evaluate, or certify any eye wear as being compliant or not with ASTM-F803 standards. All players must wear lensed eye wear that has been warranted by its manufacturer or distributor as having:

(1) Been designed specifically for use in racquetball and
(2) Met or exceeded the ASTM F803 standard for racquetball protective eye wear that was current as of the date the protective eye wear was made.

The protective eye wear must be unaltered and worn as it was designed at all times that the ball is in play or about to be put into play. A player who fails to wear proper protective eye wear will be assessed a technical foul (loss of a point) without warning and a timeout to obtain proper protective eye wear as covered in Rule 3.17(a)9. A second infraction in the same match will result in immediate forfeiture of the match.

(b) Clothing and Shoes. The clothing may be of any color; however, the referee may require a player to change wet, extremely loose fitting, or otherwise distracting garments. Insignias and writing on the clothing must be considered to be in good taste as judged by the referee/Tournament Director. Shoes must be worn as designed and have soles that do not mark or damage the floor. Players may not play in socks only or in bare feet.

(c) Audio Devices. Players may not wear audio devices during play unless they are used to amplify one's hearing.

(d) Equipment Requirements During Warm-up. Proper protective eye wear [see 2.5(a)] and wrist cords must be used as designed during any on-court warm-up period. The referee should give a technical warning to any person who fails to comply during warm-up and assess a technical foul (without additional warning) if that player continues to not comply after receiving a warning about non-compliance during warm-up.

3 - Play Regulations

Rule 3.1 Serve

In all USAR sanctioned competition, the server will have two opportunities to put the ball into play.

The player or team winning the coin toss (preferred method) has the option to either serve or receive at the start of the first game. The second game will be served first by the player or team that did not serve first in the first game. In a tiebreaker game, the player or team scoring the most total points in games 1 and 2 will have the option to either serve or receive first. If both players or teams happen to score an equal number of total 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 referee shall call the score or “second serve” as both server and receiver prepare to return to their respective positions, shortly after the previous rally has ended -- even if the players are “not yet ready”. The server may not start the service motion until the referee has called the score or "second serve." (See Rule 3.17(a)6) The serve is started while standing any place in the service zone. 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 line is permitted. 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 is contacted by the server. The server (and the non-serving partner in doubles) may step outside of the Service zone as soon as the served ball is contacted by the server’s racquet. However, their movements may NOT interfere with the return attempt. See Rules 3.9(a) for the penalty for violations.

Rule 3.3 Manner

After taking a set position inside the service zone, a player may begin the service motion. The service motion is defined as any continuous movement that results in the ball being served. Once the service motion begins, after the ball leaves the hand, it must bounce on the floor in the service zone and then, without the ball touching anything else, be struck by the racquet before the ball bounces on the floor a second time. After being struck, the ball must hit the front wall first and, on the rebound, be capable of hitting the floor beyond the back edge of the short line, either with or without touching one of the side walls. However, the receiver may return the ball “on the fly” before those things happen as long as Rule 3.11 is followed.

Rule 3.4 Readiness

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

Rule 3.5 Delays

The referee may issue a technical warning or declare a technical foul for delays exceeding 10 seconds. See Rule 3.17(a)(6).

(a) The 10-second rule applies to the server and receiver simultaneously. Concurrently, they are allowed up to 10 seconds after the score is called to serve and be ready to receive. It is the server's responsibility to check and be certain the receiver is ready. If a receiver is not ready, they must signal that by either raising the entire head of their racquet above their head or else completely turn their back to the server. These are the only two acceptable signals of NOT being ready to receive.

(b) Serving while the receiving player/team is signaling that they are “not ready” is a fault serve.

(c) After the score or “second serve” is called, if the server looks at the receiver and the receiver is not signaling that he is “not ready”, the server may then serve. If the receiver attempts to signal they are “not ready” after that point (the server

has seen them **not** signaling that they are "not ready"), the signal shall not be acknowledged and the serve, if made, is "in play" and legal if it lands in fair play.

Rule 3.6 Drive Service Zones

There is a drive serve line 3 feet from each side wall in the service zone. Viewed one at a time, each drive serve line divides the 20-foot long service zone into a 3-foot and a 17-foot section. The player may drive serve between their body and the side wall nearest to where the service motion began only if the player, the racquet, and the ball (only until it is struck by the server) starts and remains outside of the 3-foot drive service zone until the ball is served. Any violation is a fault serve. See Rule 3.9(h) Illegal Drive Serve.

(a) The drive serve zones are observed only for hard, low (below the server's shoulders) drive serves. Cross-court drive serves, the hard-Z, soft-Z, lob, and half-lob serves are exempt from being regarded as violations of this rule.

(b) The 3-foot line is part of the 3-foot zone and defines a plane that, if broken, is an infraction. (See Rule 3.9(h))

(c) Any serve that does NOT violate the previous conditions may still be a screen serve if it meets the conditions of Rule 3.9(i).

Rule 3.7 Defective Serves

Defective serves of three types result in penalties as follows:

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

(b) Fault Serve. One of the two serves allowed is used. Thus, two consecutive fault serves result in an out (either a side out or a handout).

(c) Out Serve. An out serve results in an immediate out (either a side out 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.

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

(c) Out-of-Court Serve. A served ball that first hits the front wall and, after 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)).

(d) Safety Hold-Up: Any served ball that cannot be returned due to a Safety Hold Up or hitting the server in a non-Penalty situation. See Rules 3.14(a)6 and Rule 3.14(a)(2)

Rule 3.9 Fault Serves

The following serves are faults and any combination of two in succession result in an out:

(a) Foot Faults. A foot fault results when:

1. At the start of or during the service motion, any part of the server (or non-serving partner), including their racquets, touches the floor outside of the service zone.

2. Before contacting the ball with the racquet, the server steps with either foot on the floor beyond the service line (with no part of that foot on the line or inside the service zone).

(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 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, including the ball touching a side wall as a part of the service motion, is a fault serve.

(g) Serving the Ball Without a Bounce. Tossing the ball into the air and serving it without a bounce is a fault serve.

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

(i) 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. (A referee noting a ball that passes “close” should NOT call it a screen until he is also sure that the opponent’s attempt to return the ball was impaired by that “closeness”.) Generally, the call should work to the advantage of the offensive player.

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

Rule 3.10 Out Serves

Any of the following results in an out:

(a) Two Consecutive Fault Serves. As described in Rule 3.9.

(b) Missed Serve Attempt. During the service motion, any attempt to serve/strike the ball that results in a total miss or in the ball touching any part of the server's body, including the foot. Also, allowing the ball to bounce more than once for the serve.

(c) Touched Serve. Any served ball that on the rebound from the front wall touches the server or server's racquet before touching the floor, 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 that 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 referee has an option of declaring it "no serve" and having that serve replayed without penalty.

(e) Illegal Hit. An illegal hit includes contacting the ball twice, intentionally 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 (as opposed to both walls at the same time).

(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). This includes the ball touching two intersecting surfaces at nearly the same time -- such that which one it touched first cannot be ascertained. However, a serve into the crotch formed by the back wall and floor, as well as the crotch formed by either sidewall beyond the short line, is a good serve and 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)].

Rule 3.11 Return of Serve

(a) Receiving Position (Encroachment)

1. The receiver(s) may not break the plane of the receiving line with their racquet or body until the ball either bounces in the safety zone or else crosses the receiving line. For example, if the receiver steps on the dashed receiving line with either foot (with any part of the foot contacting the line) before either of the two preceding things happen, a point shall be called for the server.

2. While the follow through of one's stroke might carry the receiver or their racquet past the receiving line, neither the receiver nor racquet may break the plane of the short line -- unless the ball is rebounding off the back wall and is still in play.

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

(b) Touched Serve. During the return of serve, a player on the receiving side may not intentionally catch or touch a served ball (such as a serve seemingly destined to be long or short) until the referee has made a call or the ball has touched the floor for a second time or the ball is out of play as a result of a Fault Serve as described in Rule 3.9. Violation results in loss of the rally, i.e. a point for the server. Players should be certain the referee agrees that the ball is "out of play" before touching the ball.

(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 legally 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 Rule 3.17.

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. Penalty Hinder. Player or team commits a penalty hinder which results in an out. See Rule 3.15.

(b) Side out. Retiring the server in singles is called a side out.

(c) Effect of Side out. When the server (or serving team) receives a side out, the server becomes the receiver and the receiver becomes the server.

Rule 3.13 Rallies

All play that occurs after a legal serve and subject to all provisions defined in 3.11 is called the rally. Play thereafter shall be conducted according to the following rules:

(a) Responsibility. While making an attempt to return the ball, the offensive player is entitled to a sufficiently clear view of the ball, a straight path to get to the ball, an unimpeded swing at the ball, and two paths (see Rule 3.15(a)) for the ball to travel to the front wall. It is the defensive player's primary responsibility to move sufficiently to afford the offensive player these entitled elements for executing the return. The offensive player is responsible for making a reasonable effort to move towards the ball and there must be a reasonable chance the player could have gotten to the ball had there been no hinder and that the ball, when hit, would reach the front wall before touching the floor before a hinder of either type can be assessed. Generally, an interference becomes a Penalty Hinder rather than a Replay Hinder, when the player on defense (1) did something they did not have to do, or else (2) fails to have done something that they could have done.

(b) Legal Hits. Only the head or throat of the racquet (not the handle or the hand) may be used at any time to return the ball. The racquet may be held in one or both hands. Removing the wrist cord to switch hands to hit a ball, touching the ball with any part of the body or uniform, or removing the wrist safety cord or losing one's eye protection during a rally, results in a loss of the rally. Players may hold the racquet in either hand as long as the wrist cord remains securely attached and complies with the length restrictions of Rule 2.4(d) from the start of the service motion until the rally has ended.

(c) 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 intentionally carried. (A carried ball -- one that rests on the racquet slightly longer than a true "hit" -- is allowed only if done unintentionally.)

(d) 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 or else "rolls out" before being hit.

2. The ball does not reach the front wall on the fly after being struck (skip ball), e.g. the ball touching the floor before reaching the front wall or becoming stuck in the racquet strings.

3. The ball is hit such that it goes, without first touching the floor, 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 that obviously does not have the speed or direction to reach the front wall "on the fly" strikes another player.

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

6. Committing a penalty hinder. See Rule 3.15.

7. Undoing the wrist cord to switch hands during a rally. Either or both hands may be used if the wrist cord remains secured.

8. Failure to use a racquet wrist safety cord as intended.

9. Touching the ball with the body or uniform.

10. Intentionally carrying or slinging the ball with the racquet. Also, the ball becoming lodged in one's strings or clothing.

(e) Effect of "Failure to Return". Violations of Rules 3.13 (b) through (d) 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.

(f) Return Attempts. The ball remains in play until it touches the floor a second time; regardless of how many walls it contacts – including the front wall. If a player swings at the ball and misses it, the player or their partner may continue to attempt to return the ball until it touches the floor for the second time.

(g) Broken Ball. If there is any suspicion that a ball has broken during a rally, play shall continue until the end of the rally. Players should not hit the ball after that point. The referee or any player may then request the ball be examined by the referee. If the referee decides the ball is broken, the ball will be replaced, and the prior rally replayed. The server resumes play with the first serve. The only proper way to check for a broken ball is to squeeze it by hand. If the referee is certain that the ball was broken during, and not after, the previous rally, then he can call for that rally to be replayed. However, checking the ball by any player's hard striking of it with a racquet will not be considered a valid check and shall work to the disadvantage of the player that struck the ball. Defective (untrue) balls will also be replaced, but without affecting the immediately prior rally.

(h) 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 replay hinder.

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

(i) Replays. Generally, whenever a rally is replayed for any reason, the server resumes play at first serve. A previous fault serve is generally not considered.

(j) Ball in Play Touches a Player. During a rally, if a ball in play hits the front wall and then touches a player, it results in a loss of rally for the player that was touched.

Rule 3.14 Replay Hinders

A rally is replayed without penalty and the server resumes play at first serve whenever a replay hinder occurs. Depending on the circumstances, several of the replay hinders described below could be serious enough body contact to be penalty hinders (see Rule 3.15). The differences between replay and penalty hinders may be small and therefore involve referee judgment. Please also read Rule 3.15, which describes conditions under which a penalty hinder might be called instead and result in loss of the rally for the offender.

(a) Situations

1. Court Hinder. The referee should stop play immediately (i) when the ball takes an observed irregular bounce as a result of contacting a very irregular surface or object (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. This also includes any ball that leaves the court after legally touching the front wall and then bouncing on the floor.

2. Ball Hits Opponent. Generally, when an opponent is hit by a return shot in flight, it is a replay hinder. But if the opponent is struck by a ball, that obviously did not have the speed or direction to reach the front wall, then it is not a hinder of any kind and the player who hit the ball loses the rally. A player who has been hit by the ball can immediately stop play and make the call though the call must be made immediately and acknowledged by the referee. Depending on the players' positioning, this type of interference may be declared a penalty 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 replay hinder. Incidental body contact in which the offensive player clearly will have an advantage should not be called a replay hinder unless the offensive player obviously stops play. NOTE: Contact with the racquet on the follow-through normally is not considered a hinder of either type for either player. See Rule 3.15.

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. (A referee noting a ball that passes "close" should NOT call it a screen until he is also sure that the opponent's attempt to return the ball was impaired by that "closeness".) 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. See Rule 3.15

5. Backswing Hinder. Any racquet or body 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. Interference with one's backswing is most likely a penalty hinder, but if it is obviously unavoidable, it can be deemed a replay hinder instead. 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 replay hinder. This call must be made immediately and is subject to acceptance by the referee. The referee shall grant a replay hinder if it is believed the holdup was reasonable and the player would have been able to return the shot. The referee may also declare it a penalty hinder if warranted. See Rule 3.15.

7. Other Interference. Any other unintentional interference that 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. See Rule 3.15.

(b) Effect of Hinder. The referee's call of hinder stops the rally immediately and also voids any situation that follows, such as the ball hitting a player. The only hinders that allow a player to stop playing are described in rules (2), (5), and (6) above, and all of them are subject to the acceptance of the referee. If accepted, they to void situations that followed them. A replay hinder stops the rally and the rally is replayed. The server resumes play at first serve. For all other hinders and other issues, such as a serve thought to be "short" or a possible hinder not called, the player should raise his off hand or racquet to signal/denote the problem but continue to play the rally. Such issues are to be resolved after the rally ends.

Rule 3.15 Penalty Hinders

A penalty hinder results in the immediate loss of the rally. A penalty hinder does not have to be an intentional act, but an intentional hinder would be a penalty hinder. Replay hinders are described in Rule 3.14. The following actions or failure to act are prime examples of actions that should result in a penalty 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 such an angle that would cause the ball to rebound directly to the rear corner farthest from the player hitting the ball. In addition, when a player moves in such a direction that it prevents an opponent from taking either of these shots. Any type of shot that has the speed and direction to reach the front wall has the potential of being called a penalty hinder if the ball would have traveled along a path directly to the front wall. The referee must continue to visualize the projected path of the ball to determine this. Jumping is a popular maneuver to clear the path of the ball; however, the defensive player jumping does not negate a potential penalty hinder call; it all depends if the ball had a direct path to the front wall. In the event the defensive player is struck with the ball while jumping, play stops, but the referee must continue to visualize the projected path of the ball to determine if the ball would have traveled along a path direct to the front wall and would have made it to the front wall.

(b) Swing Interference. This may occur when a player moves, or fails to move, such that the opponent returning the ball does not have a free, unimpeded swing at the ball. This includes unintentionally moving in a direction that prevents the opponent from making a shot. There are three types of possible swing interference.

(1) **Backswing Hinde**r. Any racquet or body 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. Some backswing hinders, such as those that cannot be avoided, may be considered a replay hinder. See Rule 3.14.

(2) **Stroke Interference.** Whenever there is contact during the racquet's forward (toward the ball) movement up to and until the point that ball leaves the racquet.
(3) **Follow through Contact.** After the ball leaves the racquet, any contact with an opponent or his equipment is normally not considered a hinder of any kind for either player.

(c) Blocking. Moves into a position which blocks the opponent from getting to, or returning, the ball; or in doubles, the offensive player who is not returning the ball hinders or impedes either defensive player's ability to move into a position to cover the pending shot that comes into play.

(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 intentionally disrupting one's opponent.

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

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

(i) Apparel or Equipment Loss. If a player loses (becomes fully dislodged from their person) any apparel, equipment, or other article they brought onto the court, play shall be immediately stopped and that player shall be assessed a penalty hinder, unless the last shot that was hit could not be retrieved. Note that if the loss of equipment is caused by a player's opponent, then a replay hinder should be called instead. If the opponent's action is judged to have been avoidable, then the opponent should be called for a penalty hinder.

Rule 3.16 Timeouts

(a) Rest Periods. Each player or team is entitled to two 1-minute timeouts per game. Timeouts may not be called by either side after the service motion (see Rule 3.3) has begun. Calling for a timeout when none remain or after the service motion has begun will result in the assessment of a technical foul for delay of game. If a player takes more than 1-minute for a single timeout, the referee may automatically charge any remaining timeouts, as needed, for any extra time taken. Once all time allowed has expired, a delay of game technical warning or technical foul may be assessed. A player who leaves the court should call a timeout or else advise the referee of the reason for leaving the court. If a player leaves the court without advising the referee, a timeout may be charged to that player. If none remain, the referee may assess a technical warning or technical foul for delay of game; however, the referee may excuse a delay if the player's reason for leaving was to correct a problem affecting the playability of the court, such as obtaining a towel to dry the court or disposing of some foreign material from the court. See Rule 3.17(a)(6) for guidance on delays.

(b) Injury. If a player is injured during a match because of contact, such as with the ball, racquet, wall, floor, or a player, an injury timeout will be awarded without regard to the player's use of regular timeouts. A player may call more than one timeout for the same injury or for additional injuries that occur during the match, but a player is not allowed more than a total of 15 minutes of rest for injuries 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 and mitigating steps taken.

2. Muscle cramps and pulls, fatigue, and other ailments that are not caused by direct contacts on the court will not be considered an injury. Injury time is also not allowed for any pre-existing conditions.

(c) Equipment Timeouts. Players are expected to keep their clothing and equipment in good, playable condition and must use regular timeouts for adjustment and replacement of equipment (such as broken strings or racquet) during play. If a player or team has no regular timeouts left 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 extenuating circumstances such as the distance to the locker room or car.

(d) Between Games. The rest period between games is 2 minutes.

(e) Postponements. Any game/match postponed by a referee or the Tournament Director shall be resumed with the same scores and player serving as when postponed. Referees should note these matters on the scorecard, for example, so they can be recalled correctly when play resumes.

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. A prior warning is not required, but a warning may be enough to correct the behavior (see Rule 3.17(b)). 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 that can result in technical fouls (or warnings) are:

1. Profanity.

2. Excessive arguing.

3. Threat of any nature to the opponent or referee.

4. Excessive or hard striking of the ball between rallies.

5. Hard striking of the racquet against walls or floor, slamming the door, or any action that might result in damage to the court or injury to other players.

6. Significant or repetitive delays of the same kind warrant the assessment of a Technical Foul (deduction of a point). However, in many cases, issuing a Technical Warning may be enough to correct most short delaying behaviors without deducting a point. Here are some examples of delays that referees should watch for and seek to eliminate:

(i) Taking too much time to dry the court,

(ii) Excessive questioning of the referee about the rules,

(iii) Exceeding the time allotted for warm-up (see Policy A.8), 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 the serve.

(vi) Serving before the score or “second serve” is called.

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

8. Anything the referee considers unsportsmanlike behavior.

9. Failure to wear proper protective eye wear designed for racquet sports [See Rule 2.5(a)] during a rally is an automatic technical foul on the first infraction, plus a mandatory timeout (to acquire the proper protective eye wear) 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. There are varying degrees of unsportsmanlike behavior, particularly with delays, so if a player's behavior is not as severe as to warrant a technical foul and deduction of a point, the referee may, at his discretion, issue a technical warning instead -- without the deduction of a point. The decision whether to issue a technical warning or technical foul is solely at the discretion of the referee.

(c) Effect of Technical Foul or Warning. If a referee issues a technical foul, one point shall be removed from the offender's score and play resumed from that point. 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 of the unsportsmanlike behavior. Issuing a technical foul or warning has no effect on who will serve when play resumes. If a technical foul occurs when the offender has no points or it is between games, the result will be that the offender's score is reduced into negative numbers such as minus one (-1).

RULE MODIFICATIONS

The following sections (4.0 through 12.0) detail the additional or modified rules that apply to variations of the singles game described in Sections 1 through 3.

4 - Doubles

The USAR'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 that; otherwise it will not be recognized.

Rule 4.2 Serve in Doubles

(a) Order of Serve. At the beginning of each game, when the first server of the first team to serve is out, the team is out. After that, either partner can serve first each time the team steps in to serve. Both players on each team shall serve until there is both a handout and a side out -- i.e. both players are out. The referee must make certain that neither partner is allowed to serve again after that partner has previously lost a rally while the team is serving.

(b) Partner's Position. On each serve, the server's partner shall stand erect with their back facing the side wall and with both feet flat on the floor and within the service box from the moment the server begins the service motion until the server hits the ball. Any violation is called a foot fault.

(c) Changes of Serve. In doubles, the side is retired when both partners have lost service, except that the team that 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 (but not necessarily against) the sidewall when the server begins the service motion.

(b) A served ball that hits the non-serving partner while that partner is in the service box results in a fault serve.

(c) Two consecutive fault serves – such as (i) a screen serve followed by hitting the non-serving partner or (ii) hitting the non-serving partner followed by serving while the receiver is not ready -- results in an out.

Rule 4.4 Out Serve in Doubles

(a) Out-of-Order Serve. If either partner serves after that same partner has previously lost a rally while serving, the penalty is an immediate out for that team and the deduction of any points that may have been scored during that improper player serving.

(b) Ball Hits Partner. A served ball that hits the non-serving doubles partner, while any part of the body or equipment is touching the floor outside of 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.

(a) Both partners on a side are entitled to return the ball. If one player swings at the ball and misses it, both partners may still make further attempts to return the ball until it touches the floor the second time. Any hinder caused by one's opponents after this point is likely a replay hinder.

Rule 4.6 Cross-Reference

This is a list of all areas where doubles is mentioned in Sections 1-3 of the rulebook: 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1(b)(4), 3.2, 3.9(2)(i), and 3.15(c).

5 - Multi-Bounce

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

Rule 5.1 Basic Return Rule

In general, the ball remains in play if 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 5.2.

NOTE: Sometimes, multi-bounce for youths may be played following the basic standard rules with the only exception being the number of bounces allowed, such as either two or three, with the decision being left to the Tournament Director.

Rule 5.2 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 5.3 Front Wall Lines

Two parallel lines (use of blue painter's tape is advised) 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 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 multi-bounce return rule.

Rule 5.4 Games and Matches

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

WOR Rule Modifications

§ - Outdoor Racquetball, World Outdoor Racquetball (WOR)

There are many rule variations in the outdoor game. Generally, the standard USAR rules also apply outdoors. Variations acknowledged by WOR are described below, but there may be local rule exceptions that supersede them. Tournament Directors are advised to put any local rule exceptions in writing and all participants are advised to ask about them prior to playing. Also, check with the Tournament Director about the rules being followed.

Rule 6.1 Court Specifications

Outdoor courts vary in size and there is no "official court size." Generally, outdoor courts either have no or an extremely limited ceiling. They usually have no back walls; however, some courts may have a non-connected back wall surface considered part of the playing area. Outdoor courts can be classified as one of two general types.

(a) One-Wall. A one-wall court has no side walls that extend more than a few feet.

(b) Three-Wall. The front wall is usually at least 20 feet wide and at least 20 feet high. The side walls generally are at least 20 feet long and 20 feet high where they meet the front wall and are often tapered as they come toward the back court.

Rule 6.2 Court Markings

Generally, the markings are the same as the USAR's standard rules, except that on an outdoor court, there is no receiving (5-foot) line. Since the size of outdoor courts may vary, the exact placement of other lines may also vary. Some outdoor courts may also have singles service lines to reduce the server's advantage. These lines are usually placed 18 inches inside each sideline and run from the short line to the back line. These lines are only in force during the serve and are not used for doubles play.

Rule 6.3 Apparel

Shirts are not required in the outdoor game.

Rule 6.4 Play Regulations

(a) All divisions for the WOR are one serve only. Generally, a rally must be played for the receiver(s) to take possession of the serve.

(b) In doubles, the non-serving partner may take a position in the normal service box or outside the court beyond the back line or sideline. If the non-serving partner hinders the receiving team on the return of serve, the referee may call a penalty hinder. In one wall, the non-serving partner may not step onto the playing zone of the court until serve has passed the short line.

(c) On the return of serve, the receiver(s) may not break the plane of the short line and doing so results in a point for the server.

(d) If the ball bounces on a sideline or the back line on its first bounce, the ball is considered "in". When the singles service line is used, a served ball that bounces on it is "in". If the ball hits the beveled end of a side wall or the beveled top of the front wall or a side wall and remains in play, the shot is good. A ball that bounces over a side wall is legal; however, local rules may declare that such a shot is out when long-wall courts are used.

(e) Generally, there are no court hinders. Local rules, however, may designate a feature of the court as a court hinder. The elements of nature, such as sun, wind, rain, etc., may not serve as the basis for a hinder. A ball that strikes a light pole that is inside the playing area, but outside the "in" zone, without bouncing is considered out. However, if the ball first bounces "in", and then hits such a light pole, it is a court hinder as soon as the ball touches the pole. A court hinder may also be called when a returned ball hits a light attached to the end of a side wall if the ball would have otherwise reached the front wall.

(f) A safety holdup (replay hinder) also includes consideration given to players on an adjacent court or any spectators who are not part of the stationary crowd. The player must be able to hit the ball prior to it reaching the stationary crowd. Any vehicle that enters the playing area can be grounds for a safety holdup. Parked vehicles are classified as part of the stationary crowd.

(g) Intentionally launching a ball following a rally is a technical foul for delay of game against the player who sent the ball sailing. This includes launching a ball prior to the referee or opponent confirming that it is broken.

(h) When line judges are in place, they will be used exactly like indoors except for calling side lines. The line judge will have the first call on sidelines, not the referee. If a ball is out, the line judge should say “OUT” and stop play. If there is an appeal on the line judge’s call on a sideline, the appeal will only go to the referee. If the referee disagrees with the line judge’s call, then the rally will be replayed. If the referee agrees or has no opinion, the call stands. The opposite sideline judge does not render an opinion.

7 - Wheelchair Racquetball

Rule 7.1 Modifications to Standard Rules

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

(a) Where USAR 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 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 7.2 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 7.3 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. The referee will warn repeat offenders.

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

(d) Start of Serve. 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 7.4 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.

8 - Low Vision Racquetball

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

Rule 8.1 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 8.2 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 8.3.

Rule 8.3 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 8.4 Hinders

A replay hinder will result in the rally being replayed without penalty unless the hinder was intentional. If a hinder is clearly intentional, a penalty hinder should be called and the rally awarded to the non-offending player or team.

9 - Deaf/Hard of Hearing Racquetball

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

Rule 9.1 Eligibility

An athlete shall have a hearing loss of 55 dB or more in the better ear to be eligible for any tournament for deaf athletes.

IRT Rule Modifications

10 - Men's Professional, International Racquetball Tour (IRT)

The Professional divisions at IRT events will follow USAR rules, with the following modifications.

10.1 Appeals

(a) In any match using instant replay or line judges, players are allowed 2 lost appeals per game, both in games to fifteen and in the tiebreaker to eleven. Players may not leave the court during an appeal. An appeal is considered lost when the referee's call is upheld, unless the ruling is inconclusive.
(b) A match-ending rally can be appealed even if no appeals remain.

Rule 10.2 Court

(a) There are no court hinders. All surfaces shall be in play, with the exception of any gallery opening, surfaces designated as out-of-play for a valid reason and objects that are not considered part of the court determined before play begins by the IRT Representative. Anything inside the court is considered part of the court, making it in play unless it is added such as a microphone, speaker, etc.
(b) The referee should stop play immediately whenever the ball hits any part of the court that was designated in advance as out-of-play.
(c) The referee should stop play if after striking a wet spot on the first surface that the ball hits after the front wall only on the serve. If play is not stopped by the referee, play continues as usual. If the ball hits a wet spot during play, play continues.
(d) A noise outside the court does not result in a replay if a player stops play. Play must continue.

Rule 10.3 Serve

(a) The referee should call a screen serve immediately and not consider whether the receiver requests one by raising their hand. Factors to consider when assessing whether the ball passed "too close to the server" are, where the ball would have or did hit the back wall; the angle of the ball toward the corner; whether the receiver paused before moving; the height of the serve; whether the server dodged to avoid being hit by the serve; and whether the receiver was in a center court position.
(b) The server (and partner in doubles) may leave the service zone as soon as the ball is struck on the serve.

Rule 10.4 Time Between Serves

(a) The 10-second rule applies to the server and receiver simultaneously when both players are in the general vicinity of their serve or return positions. Collectively, they are allowed up to 10 seconds after the score is called to serve and be ready to receive.
(b) The referee shall call the score and the 10-second count shall commence; if more than 10 seconds is taken, a technical warning is issued for delay of game. Each infraction thereafter will result in a technical foul.
(c) It is the server's responsibility to look and be certain the receiver is ready. If the server serves while the receiver is signaling "not ready", that serve will be replayed, with no penalty and without canceling any previous fault serve. If the server repeats this, a technical foul for delay of game shall be called on the server.
(d) Any intentional delay of game such as kicking the ball, hitting the ball after the rally out of frustration or any other delay in the referee's judgement shall result in a delay of game warning and then each infraction afterwards shall result in a technical foul.

IRT Rule Modifications

Rule 10.5 Timeouts

(a) Each player is entitled to one, one-minute timeout per game.
(b) The player must make the referee aware of the time-out and may not leave the court until the referee acknowledges the time out. A technical foul will be assessed if a player leaves the court without the permission of the referee.
(c) The referee is responsible for informing the players when 10 seconds remain in the timeout. The referee will strictly enforce the 60-second timeout length. The first infraction of this rule will warrant a technical warning. The second and subsequent infractions will result in a delay of game technical foul.

Rule 10.6 Equipment Timeouts

(a) Players are expected to keep all clothing and equipment in good, playable, and safe condition. Adjustment and replacement of equipment is expected during regular timeouts and time in between games.
(b) However, if the referee determines that an equipment change or adjustment is necessary for fair and safe continuance of the match, the referee may grant an equipment timeout not to exceed 30 seconds.
(c) Equipment worn or played with by the player applicable to a referee granted 30 second equipment timeout includes: broken racquet frame, broken racquet strings, broken eye guards, broken or untied safety wrist strap, wet shirt (shirt considered to be wet if during diving the court becomes excessively wet and slows the game down for continual drying or water from shirt drips onto the court), wet kneepads, torn clothing, torn/ripped glove, broken shoe lace or torn shoe or any other item deemed in need of change or adjustment by the referee so as to continue the match fairly and safely.
(d) Wet gloves will not be included as part of a referee granted equipment timeout. Each player will be expected to use the time prior to the start of the match, the regular timeout granted during the game, or time between games to secure a dry glove for continued play.
(e) The referee is responsible for informing the players when 10 seconds remain in the equipment timeout. The referee will strictly enforce the 30-second equipment timeout length. The first infraction of this rule will warrant a warning from the referee. The second and subsequent infractions will result in a delay of game technical foul.
(f) If a player is unable to obtain replacement equipment, the referee may consult with the IRT Commissioner or IRT representative, and the match bay be forfeited.

Rule 10.7 Injury Timeouts

(a) If a player is injured during the course of a match as a result of contact, such as with the ball, racquet, wall, floor, or opponent, an injury timeout will be awarded. While a player may call more than one timeout for the same injury or for additional injuries that occur during the match, the player has a total of 15 minutes for injury timeouts during a match. If the injured player is unable to resume play after the 15 minutes is used, the match shall be awarded to their opponent.
(b) Should any external bleeding occur, the referee must halt play as soon as the rally is over, a referee timeout is called to allow the player to stop the bleeding in a reasonable amount of time determined by the referee and/or IRT Commissioner. Play shall not continue until the court has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected if necessary.

Rule 10.8 Time Between Games

The referee is responsible for informing the players when 20 seconds remain between games. The referee will strictly enforce the 2-minute time between games. The first infraction of this rule will warrant a technical warning. The second and subsequent infractions will result in a delay of game technical foul.

IRT Rule Modifications

Rule 10.9 Match Start Times and Times Between Matches

(a) The first matches of each round will start at the times stated on the draw, provided that the players receive 15 minutes to warm up on the court. Subsequent matches will begin 15 minutes after the previous match has ended. For example, if a match ends at 6:15pm, the next match begins at 6:30pm.
(b) Players will be checked in automatically for their IRT matches.
(c) Warm-up time: In singles, both players are allowed 15 minutes of shared court warm-up time. In doubles, each team will receive 7.5 minutes of warm-up time. The lower seeded team will warm up first.
(d) Players do not have to wear eye wear or wrist cords during warm-up, but they must use them as designed once play begins.
(e) It is the responsibility of the players/teams to be ready to warm up.
(f) If a player is not at the club, or prepared to play, a technical foul will be assessed for each minute the match is delayed. After 4 technical fouls, the referee may declare a forfeit.

Rule 10.10 Questioning/Arguing Referee Calls

A player may only question a rule or interpretation of a rule. Excessive arguing with the referee may result in a technical warning or a technical foul. The first offense is a technical warning and any additional offenses are technical fouls resulting in loss of point. See Rule 10.1 regarding appeals.

Rule 10.11 Rules Arbitration

(a) The IRT Commissioner will have the final call on all rules questions or disputes. If the Commissioner is not available, an IRT designated official will have the final say.
(b) The IRT Commissioner or IRT representative will have the authority to answer questions and resolve conflicts on site and during matches. At any time during a match, a player may request a ruling from the IRT Commissioner or IRT representative. The opinion of only the acting official is necessary to resolve any issue that may arise. There is no appeal.

Rule 10.12 Broken Balls

(a) If the receiver or server makes contact with the ball with their racquet after the end of the rally and the ball is then determined to be broken, the previous rally shall not be replayed and will stand as is, unless it is determined by the referee that the ball was indeed broken during the rally; the rally will then be replayed.
(b) If the ball is squeezed by hand after the rally is over and before it is struck by a racquet and determined to be broken, the previous rally will be replayed.
(c) Purposely striking the ball after the rally with the intent to impede the above rule shall result in a technical foul for unsportsmanlike conduct.

Rule 10.13 Penalty Hinders: Jumping

A “cross-court” shot is defined as a shot from the point of contact to the front wall that would bounce from the front wall toward either back corner without touching a side wall. A “straight-in” shot is one that contacts the front wall directly in front of the contact point. Both “cross-court” and “straight-in” shots must contact the front wall either on the same horizontal plane as the contact point or at the bottom of the front wall. If a defensive player jumps and clears that plane on either a “cross-court” or “straight-in” shot but is contacted by the ball or else the hitting player holds up, a replay hinder will be called.

LPRT Rule Modifications

§ – Women's Professional. Ladies Professional Racquetball Tour (LPRT)

The Professional divisions at LPRT events will follow USAR rules, with the following modifications.

Rule 11.1 Pre-Match Requirements

(a) Matches begin (i.e. players are on court with the referee and ready to begin) when the match is scheduled or no later than 15 minutes following a previous match if the schedule is delayed. A player is responsible for warming up before that time.
(b) A player may not warm up after the designated start time or, if the schedule is delayed, after 15 minutes following the previous match.
(c) A player who is not available to play within 5 minutes following the official start time automatically receives a forfeit.
(d) A player who is not on the court with the referee ready to play at the designated start time, but arrives before the 5-minute forfeit time limit, will receive a technical for delay of game. The player is not entitle to a warm up and must immediately begin the match.
(e) If a player arrives before the 5-minute forfeit time limit, but is not immediately ready to play (e.g. they must change shoes), the player will receive a technical for delay of game, and the official will deduct a one-minute timeout from the player's first game. If the player needs one additional minute, the final timeout can be assessed. If the player is still not ready to begin, a second technical is assessed for an additional delay of game. Consequently, the player is forfeited from the competition for 2 identical technicals.
(f) If a player is on the court (e.g. warming up) but is not ready to play when called to do so by the official (e.g. they need to change clothes, use the bathroom), a technical will be assessed. If the player does not respond to the call to play, even after the technical has been assessed, the official may assess a second technical. Consequently, the player is forfeited from the competition for 2 identical technicals.
(g) The match official, LPRT Commissioner, and Deputy Commissioner all have the authority to enforce warnings or technicals when necessary.

Rule 11.2 Illegal Racquets

The penalty for using an illegal racquet is a technical. The opposing player/team may request a racquet evaluation. The penalty for requesting that an opponent's racquet be evaluated (commonly for length) resulting in the racquet being declared legal will be a technical on the requesting team/player for delay of game.

Rule 11.3 Rallies

(a) One Touch. The player or team attempting 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 that rests on the racquet long enough that the effect is more of a sling or throw than a hit.

(b) Out of Court Ball.

1. After return (with a bounce). Any ball returned to the front wall which, after its first bounce on the floor, goes above the out-of-court line or through any opening in a side wall shall be declared dead and the rally replayed.

2. After return (without a bounce). Any ball which, on the rebound, does not bounce on the floor and goes above the out-of-court line shall be an out or point against the offending player. If the ball goes through any opening in a side wall, it shall be declared dead and the rally replayed.

LPRT Rule Modifications

Rule 11.4 Avoidable Hinders

An avoidable hinder results in the loss of the rally for the offending player. An avoidable hinder does not necessarily have to be an intentional act.

Equipment Interference. If a player loses any part of their equipment that interferes with play the referee will halt play and call an avoidable hinder. The loss of eye protection is an automatic avoidable hinder, as is the dislodging of the safety cord from the wrist.

Rule 11.5 Equipment Timeouts

A timeout may be called by the referee at the request of a player and after substantiation by the referee, because of faulty equipment or clothing. Two minutes are to be allowed for any clothing adjustment needed and thirty seconds for any equipment adjustment.

Rule 11.6 Technical Fouls and Warnings

Coaching. Where coaches are involved, coaches or team representatives are bound by the same rules as far as technicals are concerned and any infractions are charge against the player. No coaches or representatives are allowed onto the courts at any time during a match unless granted permission by the referee. Failure to observe this rule is a technical and will be charged against the player. Any coach or player conducting themselves in a negative manner towards the referee or linesperson of a match shall receive the following penalties:

(a) First Offense-technical warning (minimum).

(b) Subsequent Offenses-technical on the coach/person's player or team.

Rule 11.7 Serve in Doubles

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, once the referee has been notified.

Rule 11.8 Fault Serve in Doubles

There will be an automatic screen serve in doubles when the ball goes behind the body of the server's partner.

Rule 11.9 Appeals

In any match using line judges, players are allowed 3 lost appeals per game. An appeal is considered lost when the referee's call is upheld, unless the ruling is inconclusive.

Rule 11.10 Questioning Referee Calls

If a player feels the referee has interpreted the rules incorrectly, the player may require the referee, commissioner, or deputy commissioner 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.

NMRA Rule Modifications

9 - National Masters Racquetball Association (NMRA)

In general, competition will follow the standard rules governing racquetball established by the USAR, except for the modifications that follow. Consult the NMRA President regarding any changes after this publication. The NMRA President or other designated person will resolve all NMRA rules questions or disputes.

Rule 12.1 Eligibility

Players at least 40 years of age are eligible to compete in an NMRA event. Competition is offered at 5-year age increments. Players must play in their proper age group as determined by their age on the first day of the tournament. You must be a current member of the USAR as of the first and last day of the tournament to compete.

Rule 12.2 Draws

All NMRA events are played as round robins. If there are more than 12 players/teams in an age bracket, then it will be split into pools. The top finisher from each pool will play a single elimination playoff to determine the champion. When there are only two flights, the top three players/teams are selected for the playoff. Playoff matches are two games to 15 points with a tiebreaker game to 11 (if necessary).

Rule 12.3 Game, Match

Games will be played to 15 points. A match consists of two games. Ties are possible.

Rule 12.4 Match Score

Each player/team receives credit for every point scored during the match. They also earn two added points for each game they win, plus 4 additional points if they win the match by scoring more overall points than their opponent. However, if each player/team wins a game and the scores are the same, then there is no match winner and the match is recorded as a “tie”. A “tie” match results in each player/team earning 2 points for the game they won, plus 2 more points, i.e. one-half of the 4 additional points usually earned by the winner of the match.

Rule 12.5 Order of Finish

The finishing positions of the players/teams are determined based on who earned the highest average number of points (total overall points earned divided by total number of games played).

If a tie exists between two or more players/teams after considering who had the highest average number of points, then the winner of their "head-to-head" match or matches will receive the higher place of finish.

If a tie still exists between two or more players/teams, then the higher place of finish goes to whichever player/team had the lowest average of points scored against them. Forfeits will not be considered for this calculation.

Should a tie still remain between two players/teams, then a "Tiebreaker Game" played to 11 points will determine the higher place of finish. If there are three players/ teams still tied after applying the preceding paragraphs, then the player/team with the higher seeding shall get a bye and play the winner of the 11-point “Tie-Breaker Game” played by the two other “tied” players/ teams. By mutual consent of ALL tied players/teams involved, a singles coin flip can be substituted for playing a "Tiebreaker Game".

Rule 12.6 Forfeits

The basic USAR forfeit rule (Policy B.5(d)) applies with the added provisions that follow. Since it is the goal at the multi-day NMRA events to play a lot of matches, some flexibility is possible. If a player or team must forfeit a match, the tournament director can decide to forfeit the team out of the tournament or allow subsequent matches to be played. Medals will not be awarded unless all matches are played. If a team/player forfeits a match, they receive zero points for that match and their opponents receive the maximum total points for the match.

Competition Policies and Procedures

Sections A through E that follow contain 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 formal rule change procedures.

A - Tournaments

A.1 Draws

(a) If possible, all draws shall be finalized at least two (2) days before the tournament commences. Seeding the draw by using the USAR's current National Rankings is the generally preferred method. The USAR's current tournament management software can do this automatically. The method used to seed national events may vary slightly from this, but the method used will be published at the USAR's website prior to it being used.

(b) For USAR National championships, the draw and seeding body shall be chaired by the USAR's Executive Director or another individual they may designate. The body shall consist of the National Tournament Director and other persons who have a good understanding of seeding draws and players' abilities. The composition of the seeding body shall be approved by the Executive Director. The body should be an odd number of persons so that any tie can be broken. No other persons shall participate in the draw or seeding unless at the invitation of the chair.

(c) In local and regional tournaments, the draw shall be the responsibility of the Tournament Director.

A.2 Consolation Matches

(a) If court times permit, each entrant should be scheduled to participate in a minimum of two matches per division entered. This is usually accomplished by having losers of their first match compete in a consolation bracket of their own division. For smaller draws, consider using a "round robin" draw type. For larger draws, use of "pool play" round robins with a single elimination playoff round can be utilized. See Policy A.6 about how to determine the winner of a round robin event.

(b) Consolation matches may be scheduled at the discretion of the Tournament Director, and information regarding consolation match format should be in writing on the tournament application or else posted at the tournament's website.

(c) Preliminary consolation matches may be two of three games to 11 points. However, semifinal, and final matches should follow the standard scoring format.

A.3 Scheduling

(a) Preliminary Matches. If contestants are entered in more than one division, it is likely that they will be required to play several times on the same day with little rest between matches. This is a risk assumed on entering multiple categories of play. If possible, schedules should provide a reasonable amount of time to rest between matches.

(b) Final Matches. Where the possibility exists of one or more players reaching the finals in multiple divisions, it is recommended that these matches be scheduled far enough apart to assure reasonable rest between the final matches.

(c) Conflicts. If a player is scheduled to play two matches at the same time, then the tournament director will decide which will be played first. It is recommended that the tournament director consult the players involved before making the decision.

A.4 Notice of Matches

After the first round of matches, it is the responsibility of each player to check the schedules that are normally posted on-line to determine the time and place of each subsequent match. If on-line schedules are being used, they will be the official ones. However, if any change is made in the schedule after the tournament begins, the Tournament Director should attempt to notify the affected players of the change -- especially if the revised date or time is earlier than was originally planned.

A.5 Finishes

Finalists must play off for first and second place or determine a winner by some mutually acceptable method. If a third place match is offered, semi-finalists are not required to play off for third place. However, if one semifinalist wishes to play in a scheduled third place match and the other does not, the one willing to play shall be awarded third place. If neither wishes to play, then a double forfeit will be entered, and no third-place award given.

A.6 Round Robin Scoring

The final places of players or teams in round robin competition are determined in the following sequence:

(a) The winner of the most matches wins the top place.

(b) If two are tied for any particular place having won the same number of matches, then the winner of their head-to-head match is awarded the place that they are tied for in all cases.

(c) If three or more are tied in the number of matches won, the place is determined as follows:

1. Determine the net difference between the number of games that each tied player won and lost when they played each other. Games played against persons NOT involved in the tie are NOT considered. The player with the largest positive difference in games differential (i.e. games won minus games lost) is awarded the highest place for which there exists a tie.
2. If a multiple tie of more than two remains after tallying the games differentials (Step 1), determine the net difference between the points that each tied player won and lost when they played each other. Again, points won or lost involving persons NOT involved in the tie are NOT considered. The player with the largest positive difference in point differential (i.e. points won minus points lost) is awarded the highest place for which there exists a tie.
3. If a multiple tie (more than two) remains after applying steps 1 and 2 above, then the player who scored the highest average points per match is awarded the highest place in question. As always, points scored against persons NOT involved in the tie are NOT counted.

(d) Once any one or more of the three steps described in paragraph c. above have been applied to reduce the number tied for a particular place to two players, then the winner of the remaining two players' head-to-head match is awarded the higher place for which there exists a tie. For the purposes of determining place, a forfeited match should be treated as a match won in two games by a score of (0,0).

(e) When a round robin event is formed by combining two or more other smaller divisions, an award will not be given for the combined division. However, the outcome of every match in that combined division is important since those relative finishing places will be used to calculate the final order of finish for the players/teams in the divisions they originally entered. The results of all matches played in the combined division may affect the final outcome when the original divisions entered are broken back out from the others to determine final places and awards. All players/teams are encouraged to not only play all matches, but also to play them as if the divisions had not been combined.

(f) USAR's tournament management system automatically performs calculations and place determinations for both single and combined round robin divisions.

(g) Players should not be automatically forfeited from playing future scheduled round robin matches simply because they forfeit an earlier one.

A.7 Court Assignments

In all USAR sanctioned tournaments, the Tournament Director and/or USAR official in attendance may decide on a change of court after the completion of any game of an on-going match if such a change will accommodate better spectator conditions.

A.8 Warm-Up Times

Once all players in a match have been informed what court they will be playing on, singles players are allowed up to total 5 minutes of on-court warm-up time and these warm-up times run concurrently. For doubles, each team is allowed up to 5 minutes for on-court warm-up. While these times do not run concurrently, both teams' warm-ups must be completed generally within a 10-minute period that starts when the first team is informed what court they will be playing on.

A.9 Tournament Conduct

In all USAR sanctioned tournaments, the referee and Tournament Director are 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).

A.10 Spectator Conduct

In the event of disruptive or threatening behavior on the part of any spectator, relative, parent, guardian, or coach at any USAR sanctioned event, the referee is empowered to address a first offense by applying sanction (a) described below. For additional infractions, the Tournament Director or USAR official in attendance, either of their own accord or at the request of the referee, is empowered to apply either sanctions (b) or (c) as warranted.

(a) For the first offense, the violator may observe, but not speak (as determined by whether the referee hears the person), while the athlete's match is being played.

(b) For the second offense, the violator may not watch that match in person, but may remain within the building.

(c) For the third offense, violator will be barred from the club for the duration of the tournament, and appropriate authorities advised of the restriction. If a given situation so warrants, the Tournament Director or other USAR official may invoke the (c) sanction immediately and without previous offenses in the interest of general safety.

B - Officiating

B.1 Tournament Management

A designated Tournament Director shall identify the various officials and manage every USAR sanctioned tournament.

B.2 Tournament Rules Committee

The Tournament Director shall appoint several qualified persons to a Tournament Rules Committee to handle any escalations as required. It is advisable that this committee be comprised of five or more persons. The committee should be comprised of qualified individuals who are likely to be in attendance and will be prepared to gather on short notice.

Whenever an issue arises that cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of a player by the referee, or through escalation to the Tournament Director, the Tournament Director will form an Ad Hoc committee from the Tournament Rules Committee. The Ad Hoc committee must be comprised of an odd number of persons (three or more), who have no conflict of interest regarding the outcome. The referee and Tournament Director cannot be members of this Ad Hoc 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 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. A non-certified 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. However, a certified referee shall not be removed if line judges are being used or unless the tournament director or his designated representative has observed the match and determined that referee's replacement is necessary for the fair conduct of the match. If 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 with officiating the match.

B.4 Rules Briefing

Before every tournament, all officials and players should be briefed on rules as well as local court hinders, regulations, and rule modifications the Tournament Director wishes to impose. The briefing should be reduced to writing or posting at the tournament website. The current USAR rules will apply and be made available. Any rule modifications the Tournament Director wishes to impose must be stated on the entry form and posted at the tournament website and be made 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, court hinders, 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 if used. 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 hinders; 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, such as screen serves and calling hinders.
5. Inspect players' equipment; identify the line judges; verify selection of a primary and alternate ball.
6. Toss coin or use another equally random method and offer the winner the choice of serving or receiving in the first game.

(b) Decisions. During the match, the referee shall make all decisions regarding 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 any call made by the referee, the referee is overruled, except for technical fouls and match forfeitures.

(c) Protests. Any decision not involving the judgment of the referee will, on protest, be accorded due process as set forth in the By-Laws of USAR. For the purposes of rendering a prompt decision regarding protests filed during an ongoing tournament, the stages of due process will be:

1. first to the Tournament Director,
2. then to the Tournament Rules Committee.

In 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 USAR By-Laws.

(d) Forfeitures. A match may be forfeited by the referee or Tournament Director when:

1. Any player refuses to abide by the referee's decision or engages in unsportsmanlike conduct.

2. Any player or team 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. One possible circumstance would be when there is no open court on which to play the match in question. However, after the scheduled time, the players/teams must remain readily available until a court is assigned to them at which time a final 10-minute forfeit time will begin. See Rule 3.17(a)6 for guidance on delays.
3. Note: game will be forfeited by the referee for using an illegal racquet as specified in Rule 2.4 (b).

(e) Defaults. A player or team may be forfeited by the Tournament Director or designated 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 any matter regarding the match that is not specifically covered in the USAR 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 shall be used for semifinal and final matches, when (1) requested by a player or team or (2) the referee or Tournament Director so desires. However, whether line judges will be used or not is subject to availability and the discretion of the Tournament Director.

(b) Replacing Line Judges. If any player objects to a person who will be serving as a line judge before the match begins, all reasonable effort shall be made to find a replacement acceptable to both the referee 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. A standing position is usually preferable -- if possible. The Tournament Director shall settle any dispute about the line Judge placement. They should obtain as different a perspective of the court as possible from each other and the referee.

(d) Duties and Responsibilities. Line judges are designated to help decide appeals on calls that may be questioned. In the event of an appeal, and after a very brief explanation by the referee of what his/her call was, the line judges must independently indicate their agreement, disagreement, or “no opinion” about the call in question.

(e) Hand Signals. Line judges shall extend their arm horizontally and give a hand signal as follows: (i) thumb up to show agreement with the referee's call meaning “I observed and know what play is being appealed and **AGREE** with the Referee's call relative to it", (ii) thumb down to show disagreement meaning "I observed the play that is being appealed, but **DISAGREE** with the referee's call relative to it", and (iii) hand open with palm facing downward to indicate either "no opinion" or that the play in question wasn't seen meaning “I am NOT SURE about the play being appealed or I did NOT SEE the play clearly enough to be sure, so I have **NO OPINION** about the referee's call." Figure B.6-1 illustrates the three possible line judge hand signals. Consider printing multiple copies of this figure so that line judges can use it as a ready reference during a match.

Figure B.6-1

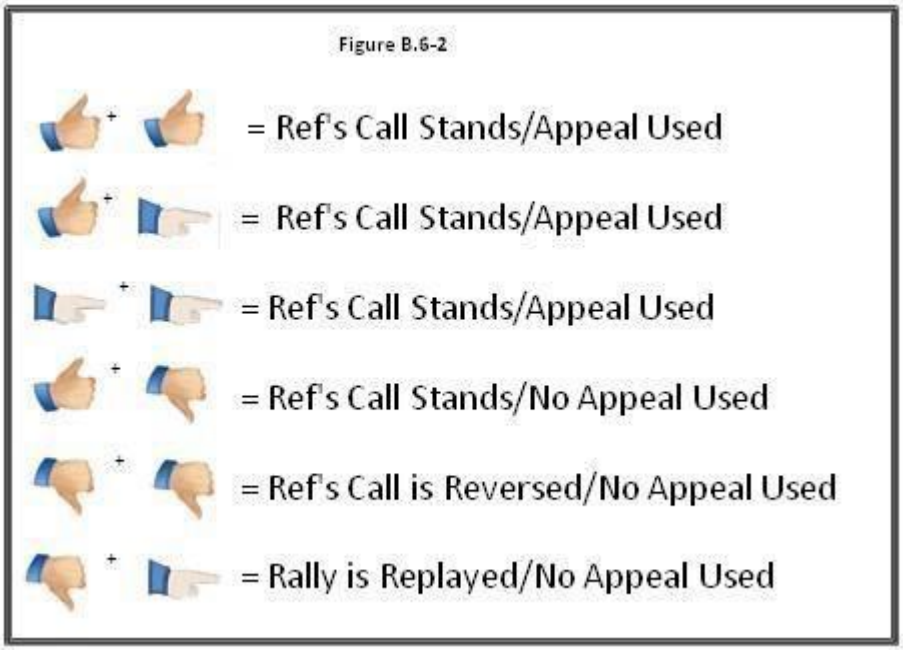
= "I observed the play being appealed and I AGREE with what the referee called regarding it."

= "I observed the play being appealed, but I DISAGREE with what the referee called regarding it."

= "I cannot express an opinion about the referee's call because I am not sure what play is being appealed or else, I did not observe the play clearly enough to be certain about what the right call should be."

(f) Manner of Response. Line judges must not signal until the referee announces what his call was and asks for a ruling from them. When responding to the referee's request, line judges must try to not see each other's signal and indicate their opinions quickly after the referee's request is made and display it promptly in clear view of the players and referee. If at any time a line judge is unsure of what is being appealed or what the referee's call was, the line judge may ask the referee to repeat and identify the call being appealed. If there is no mutual agreement (player, referee, and both line judges) about the specific call or play being appealed, then the appeal is cancelled.

(g) Result of Response. The referee's call stands if at least one line judge agrees with the referee or if neither line judge has an opinion. If both line judges disagree with the referee, the referee must reverse the call. If one line judge disagrees with the referee and the other signals no opinion, the rally is replayed. Any replays, except for appeals on the second serve itself, will result in resumption of play at first serve.



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 match forfeiture.

(b) How to Appeal. A verbal appeal by a player must be made directly to the referee only and 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 does not 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 match forfeitures can be appealed. The following outcomes cover several of the most common types of appeals, but not all possible appeals are addressed. Should the appeal encompass the possibility of there being more than one outcome (such as it being “no hinder”, “replay hinder”, or “penalty hinder”), the referee should state what he called and that he said it was not the others. Therefore, referee's discretion and common sense should govern the outcomes of 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 that 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 that 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 rally is replayed – unless the referee considered the serve to have been irretrievable, in which case a point should be 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, the result will be a “fault serve” serve”.

(c) Out Serve. If the referee calls an "out serve", and the call is reversed, the first serve will be replayed, unless the serve was obviously a fault, instead, in which case the call becomes a “fault serve”. However, if the call is reversed and the serve was considered an ace, a point should 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 unless it is declared a “fault 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 pickup is declared the loser of the rally.

(e) Receiving Line Violation (Encroachment). If the referee makes a call of “encroachment” by a receiver, but the call is overturned, the serve shall be replayed unless the return was deemed irretrievable in which case a “side out” (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 during a rally or return of serve, 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. If a court hinder occurs on a second serve prior to the receiver hitting the ball, play resumes at second serve.

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. If it is determined that a misapplication or misinterpretation of a rule has occurred, the referee must correct the error by replaying the rally, awarding the point, calling “Side out”, or taking appropriate corrective measures. While there is no time limit specified for this process, it should be used sparingly, and the referee may assess whether it is being abused and call the offender for a delay of game.

C - Eligibility & National Events

C.1 Eligibility

To be eligible to compete in any USAR sanctioned event, a player must be a current registered member of USA Racquetball.

C.2 Amateur Athletic Waiver & Release

In consideration of being allowed to participate in any USA Racquetball athletics/sports program, and related events and activities, all member signatories must:

(a) Agree that prior to participating, they will inspect the facilities and equipment to be used, and if they believe anything is unsafe, they will immediately advise their coach, supervisor, or USAR personnel of such condition(s) and refuse to participate.

(b) Acknowledge and fully understand that each participant will be engaging in activities that involve risk of serious injury, including permanent disability and death, and severe social and economic losses which might result not only from their own actions, inaction, or negligence but the actions, inaction, or negligence of others, the rules of play, or the condition of the premises or of any equipment used. Further, that there may be other risks not known to us or not reasonably foreseeable at this time.

(c) Assume all the foregoing risks and accept personal responsibility for the damages following such injury, permanent disability, or death.

(d) USA Racquetball's recommended Event Release Form (waiver) can be viewed and downloaded as a form by going to: https://www.teamusa.org/-/media/USA_Racquetball/Documents/Programs/State-Director-Forms/2018/2018-Waiver-Event-Release.pdf?la=en&hash=F49A4DD8ED6458390B5EC60ADAEB889EDCF060ED

(e) By signing a waiver and release on the USAR Membership Application, the signor indicates that he has read the preceding with the understanding that they have given up substantial rights, has done so voluntarily, and agrees to adhere to the USAR Code of Conduct, as well as all rules and by-laws.

C.3 Recognized Divisions

Title opportunities at national championships will be selected from the division lists that follow. Other combined Age + Skill divisions may also be offered to provide additional competitive opportunities for other than open level entrants. For ranking consistency, state organizations are encouraged to use these guidelines to form divisions when establishing competition in all sanctioned events.

(a) Open Division. Any eligible player, as defined in C.1.

(b) Adult Age Divisions. Eligibility is determined by the player's age on the first day of the tournament that anyone begins playing in that division. The age designated divisions generally begin with 24 & Under, then next to 25 + and thereon are divided into 5-year age upward progressing increments, as needed.

(c) Junior Age Divisions. Eligibility is determined by the player's age on January 1st of the current calendar year. The division, are generally divided into 2-year groupings beginning with the 8 & Under division and thereon divided into 2-year upward progressing increments with the highest designated age being 18 & Under. Special Multi-bounce Rules are specified for age groupings of players 6 & Under and 8 & Under.

(d) Skill Divisions. Eligibility is probably best determined by the player's national ranking. (https://www.usaracquetballevents.com/rankings.asp). That ranking will place the player into one of the skill level groupings that the USAR has published ranges for at the USAR's website (https://www.teamusa.org/USA-Racquetball/Rankings/Ranking-Guidelines). USAR has also published specific seeding criteria used for National events. For other than National tournaments that use the USAR's tournament management software, this same ranking data and rankings may be used as is or else modified as appropriate. It is further suggested that after entries are closed, the relative rankings of all entrants in every skill level division be examined to ensure that there are no players with badly outlying rankings allowed to play in an event. It is acceptable for a player to play in a skill event with a range that is higher than his own current ranking but allowing higher skilled players to play in a skill division with a range that is below their ranking should be avoided. Subjective decisions about players' individual skills and what division they should play in will often be required where they do NOT have national ranking or if skill ranges are modified for the event.

(e) Age + Skill Divisions. Player eligibility is determined by the player's age on the first day of the tournament combined with their National ranking skill level or some other skill level certification or verification by a state association official. Such combinations of age and skill level may be offered for players who do not fall into the "Open" or designated age levels of "Open" age play. They may be labeled as being, for example: 24- A/B; 30+ B; 35+ C/D; 40+ A; 65+ A/B, etc.

C.4 Division Competition by Gender

Athletes must compete in men's/boys' and women's/girls' divisions in accordance with the USA Racquetball Competition Category policy. However, if there are not enough women/girl players to warrant play in a separate women's/girls' division, a tournament director may combine two or more women's/girls' events or place the entrants in a comparably competitive men's/boys' division. A tournament director may also form and name a skill level division(s) with no sex designated if the tournament director deems it appropriate based on the skill level of entrants/potential entrants. For the purpose of encouraging the development of women's racquetball, numerous state associations and tournament directors permit women/girls to play in men's/boys' divisions, including in mixed doubles events substituting for a man, when a comparable skill level is not available in the women/girls' or mixed divisions.

D - Self-Officiating - "When There is No Assigned Referee"

Safety Is the Responsibility of Every Player Who Enters the Court

At no time should the physical safety of the participants be compromised. Players are entitled, and expected, to hold up their swing, without penalty, any time they believe there might be a risk of physical contact. Any time a player claims to have held up to avoid contact, even if being over-cautious, they are entitled to at least a replay hinder and perhaps a penalty hinder depending on the circumstances.

D.1 Score

Since there is no referee, it is critical that the server announce and for both players/teams to agree on both the server's and receiver's score BEFORE each serve. The server should do this before serving to ensure there is a mutual understanding of how the previous rally ended, such as with a loss of rally, replay hinder, or penalty hinder.

D.2 During Rallies

In the spirit of good sportsmanship, in a self-refereed game, it is up to the players to decide the outcome of each rally. Each rally should play to conclusion unless the hitter makes a call against themselves. As a matter of etiquette, players are expected to make calls against themselves any time they are not sure. In the event that an outcome cannot be agreed upon, the preceding rally should be replayed.

D.3 Serve

Fault Serves. The receiver has the primary responsibility to make this call, though either player may make it. The receiver must make the call immediately, and not wait until the ball has been hit to gain the benefit of first seeing how good the return was that they have made. It is not an option play. Also, the receiver does not have the right to play a serve they know was short.

Screen Serves. The screen serve call is the sole responsibility of the receiver. Basically, the screen serve is demonstrated by the receiver NOT trying to return the serve. If the receiver has taken the proper court position, near center court, and the ball passes so close to the server that the closeness causes impairment of the receiver's attempt to return the serve, a screen serve should be called immediately. The receiver may not call a screen after attempting to hit the ball or after taking himself out of proper court position by starting the wrong way. The server may not call a screen under any circumstance and thus, must always expect to play the rally unless the receiver verbally calls "screen serve".

Other Situations. Foot faults, 10-second violations, receiving zone violations, and other similar calls generally require a referee. However, if there can be no agreement on a call, either player can immediately bring the matter to the tournament director's attention.

D.4 Replay Hinders

Generally, hinder calls should work like the screen serve does -- as sort of an option play for the hindered party. Only the person going for the shot can stop play by calling a hinder and must do so immediately and not wait to see how good the resulting shot was. If the hindered party believes they can make an effective return despite some physical contact or impairment that has occurred, they may continue to play, but should not claim a hinder thereafter.

D.5 Penalty Hinders

Penalty hinders are usually unintentional, so they can occur even in the friendliest matches. A player who realizes that they have caused such a hinder should simply declare their opponent to be the winner of the rally. If a player feels that his opponent caused a penalty hinder, but the opponent does not make the call himself, after the rally, the offended player should point out that a penalty hinder may have occurred. However, unless the opponent agrees that a penalty hinder occurred, the rally should simply be replayed. Often just pointing out what appears to have been a penalty hinder will prevent the opponent from such an action on future rallies.

D.6 Disputes

Should either player, for any reason, desire to have a referee, then a referee should be sought, although participants should realize that there could be some delay in the match while the person is sought.

E - Procedures

E.1 Rule Change Procedures

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

NOTE: Changes to rules and regulations in Sections 1 through 5 and 7 through 9 must adhere to published rule change procedures. Remaining sections may be altered by vote of the USAR Board of Directors*. Changes to rules and regulations in Sections 6, 10, 11, and 12 are subject to their own governing body's approval procedures.

(a) Rule change proposals must be submitted in writing to the USAR National Office by June 1st each year.

(b) A preferred format involves citing the current rule (or that none exists), offering a reason for adding, deleting, or changing a rule, and then proposing a specific wording of the added or changed rule.

(c) The National Rules Committee will make recommendations to the USAR Board of Directors as to which proposals seem viable.

(d) The USAR Board of Directors will review all proposals referred by the committee at its Fall board meeting and determine which will be further considered.

(e) Selected proposals will be made publicly available as soon as possible after the Fall board meeting for polling and comment by the general membership. If practical, an on-line voting method can be used, and its availability will be announced to the general membership via email.

(f) After reviewing membership input and the subsequent recommendations presented by the National Rules Committee and National Rules Commissioner, the proposals are discussed and voted upon at the Board of Directors Annual Meeting usually held in May.

(g) Changes approved at the Board of Directors Annual Meeting become effective on September 1st of the same year. Exception: changes in equipment specifications become effective on September 1st of the year following their approval at the Annual Meeting following .

(h) Proposed rules considered for adoption in one year but are not approved by the Board of Directors at the Board of Directors Annual Meeting of that year, will not be considered for adoption the following year. However, a proposed rule that is tabled at the Board of Directors Annual Meeting for additional discussion or review, must be adjudicated by the Board of Directors by July 1 of the same year or else they will be automatically reconsidered at the Board of Directors Annual Meeting of the following year.

* The following policies & procedures segments are subject to stated rule change procedures outlined in E.1:

A.6 Round Robin Scoring
A.9 Tournament Conduct
B.5 (d-g) Forfeitures, Defaults
B.6 Line Judges
B.7 Appeals
B.8 Outcome of Appeals

E.2 USAR National Rules Commissioner

Joshua M. Jones
National Rules Commissioner
St. Louis, Missouri
Email: rulescommissioner@usaracquetball.com

Apparel and Equipment	
Equipment Timeouts	Rule 3.16(c)
Generally	Rule 2.5
Loss of During Rally	Rule 3.15(i)
Wear During Warm-up	Rule 2.5(d)
Appeals	
How to Appeal	Policy B.7(b)
Limits on Use of	Policy B.7(d)
Loss of Appeals	Policy B.7(c)
Outcome of Appeals	Policy B.8
What Can Be Appealed	Policy B.7(a)
Audio Devices, Use of	Rule 2.5(c)
Ball	
Selection, Change	Rule 2.3
Specifications	Rule 2.2
Stuck in Strings	Rule 3.13(d)2
Blocking	Rule 3.15(c)
Body Contact	Rule 3.14(a)(3), Rule 3.14(a)(5), Rule 3.15(b)(1)
Broken Ball	
During the Rally	Rule 3.13(g)
On the Return of Serve	Rule 3.11(e)
On the Serve	Rule 3.8(b)
Proper Method of Checking	Rule 3.13(g)
Carries	
During the Rally	Rule 3.13(d)(10)
On the Serve	Rule 3.10(e)
Court	
Hinders Caused by	Rule 3.14(a)(1) and Rule 3.8(a)
Player Damaging the Court	Rule 3.17(a)(5)
Special Markings for Multi-bounce	Rule 5.3
Specifications	Rule 2.1
Dead-ball Serves	Rule 3.8
Delays	
Penalties for Various Types of	Rule 3.17(a)(6)
During the Serve	Rule 3.5
During Timeouts	Rule 3.16(a)
Doubles Rule Modifications	Rule 4
Drive Serve (3') Rule	Rule 3.6
Due Process (Player's Rights)	Policy B.5(c)
Encroachment	
Markings on the Floor	Rule 2.1(b)(6)
Examples of Appeals About	Policy B.8(e)
Rule	Rule 3.11(a)
Readiness	Rule 3.4
Fault Serves	Rule 3.9
Foot Faults	
Generally	Rule 3.9(a)
In Doubles	Rule 4.3

Forfeits
- Appealability of — Policy B.7(a) and Policy B.8
- By Referee or Tournament Director — Policy A.9 and Policy B.5(d)
- For Improper Eye Wear — Rule 2.5(a)
- For Illegal Racquet — Rule 2.4(c)
- Generally — Policy B.5(d)
- Of Round Robin Matches — Policy A.6(g)

Grievance Procedures — Policy B.5(c)
Hearing Impaired Play — Rule 9

Hinders
- Body Contact — Rule 3.14(a)3
- Failure to Move — Rule 3.15(a)
- Hinders, Penalty — Rule 3.15
- Hinders, Replay — Rule 3.14
- Responsibility of Players — Rule 3.13(a)

Swing Interference
- Contact on Backswing — Rule 3.15(b)(1)
- Contact on Stroke — Rule 3.15(b)(2)
- Contact on Follow Through — Rule 3.15(b)(3)

IRT — Rule 10
Issues Not Covered in the Rulebook — Policy B.5(g)

Legal/Illegal Hits
- Legal — Rule 3.13(b)
- Illegal — Rule 3.10(e)

Line Judges
- Generally — Policy B,6
- Signals to Make (Illustrated) — Policy B.6(e), (Figure B.6-1)
- Signals Assessment (Illustrated) — Policy B.6(f), (Figure B.6-2)

Loss of Apparel/Equipment — Rule 3.15(i) and Rule 3.13(h)(2)
LPRT — Rule 11
Multi-bounce Modifications — Rule 5
National Masters (NMRA) — Rule 12
National Rules Commissioner — Policy E.2
Out Serves — Rule 3.10

Out-of-Court Ball
- On the Serve — Rule 3.8(c) and Rule 3.10(h)
- During Return of Serve or Rally — Rule 3.13(d)(3) and Rule 3.14(a)(1)

Outdoor Racquetball (WOR) — Rule 6
Postponed Games/Matches — Rule 3.16(e)
Profanity — Rule 3.17(a)(1)

Professional Rule Modifications
- Men's (IRT) — Rule 10
- Women's (LPRT) — Rule 11

Protective Eye Wear — Rule 2.5(a), Rule 2.5(d), Rule 3.17(a)(9)
Protests — Policy B.5(c)
Racquet Specifications — Rule 2.4
Rallies — Rule 3.13

Receiving (5') Line Rule
- Markings on the Floor — Rule 2.1(b)(6)
- Examples of Appeals About — Policy B.8(e)
- Rule — Rule 3.11(a)

Readiness — Rule 3.4

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Appointment and Removal	Policy B.3
Duties and Responsibilities	Policy B.5
Overturning the Referee's Call	Policy B.5(b)
Playing Without a Ref	Policy D
Return of Serve	Rule 3.11
Revising the Rules	Policy E.1
Rule Interpretations	Policy B.9
Safety Holdup	Rule 3.14(a)(6)
Safety Zone	
Lines on the Court	Rule 2.1(b)(7)
Violation by Receiver(s)	Rule 3.11(a)
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USAR Official Rules of Racquetball

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