

USA Racquetball Proposed Rule Changes

If approved by the USA Racquetball Board of Directors, these proposed rule changes would take effect on September 1, 2026

Change #1 Name Change to Rule 9.1

Current Name:

“Hearing Impaired Racquetball”

New Name:

“Deaf/Hard of Hearing Racquetball”

Change #2: Name Change to Rules 8.1-8.4

Current Name:

“Visually Impaired Racquetball”

New Name:

“Low Vision Racquetball”

Change #3: Preamble to Rule 3.13

Current Rule:

All play that occurs after the successful return of serve to the front wall is called the rally. Play thereafter shall be conducted according to the following rules:

Proposed Revision:

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:

Change #4: Rule 3.8

Current Rule:

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. In addition, any serve that hits any surface designated by local rules as an obstruction rather than being out-of-play.
- (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)).

Proposed Revision:

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. In addition, any serve that hits any surface designated by local rules as an obstruction rather than being out-of-play.
- (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).

Change #5: Rule 3.15(a) (Penalty Hinders for Failure to Move)

Current Rule:

(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.

Proposed Revision:

(a) Failure to Move. A penalty hinder occurs when a player deprives an opponent either a direct shot to the front wall or a cross-court shot (which is a shot directly to the front wall at an angle that would cause the ball to rebound to the far rear corner). This rule applies only when the opponent is deprived an offensive opportunity—meaning the opponent is set up for an offensive shot that, in the referee’s judgment, has a high likelihood of ending the rally.

In addition, a penalty hinder occurs when a player moves in such a direction that it prevents an opponent from taking either a direct shot to the front wall or a cross-court shot. 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.

Change #6: Court Hinder Rules

Current Rule 3.14(a)(1):

Court Hinder. The referee should stop play immediately whenever the ball hits any part of the court that was designated prior to the match as a court hinder (such as a vent grate). The referee should also stop play (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.

Proposed Revision:

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.

Current Rule 2.1(a)

(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), and designated court hinderers.

Proposed Revision:

(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).

Current Rule 3.8(a)

(a) Court Hinderers. 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. In addition, any serve that hits any surface designated by local rules as an obstruction rather than being out-of-play.

Proposed Revision:

(a) Court Hinderers. 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.

Current Rule B.5(a)(4):

Before each match begins, it shall be the duty of the referee to . . .

Go onto the court to make introductions; brief the players on court hinderers (both designated and undesignated); 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 hinderers.

Proposed Revision:

Before each match begins, it shall be the duty of the referee to . . .

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.