

Racquetball Rules

Play begins with the serve. The serving player must bounce the ball on the floor once and hit it directly to the front wall, making the ball hit the floor beyond the short line; otherwise the serve counts as a fault. The ball may touch one side wall, but not two, prior to hitting the floor; hitting both side walls after the front wall (but before the floor) is a "three wall serve," and a fault. Also, serving the ball into the front wall so that it rebounds to the back wall without hitting the floor first is a long serve, and a fault.

Other fault serves include a ceiling serve in which the ball touches the ceiling after the front wall and serving before the receiving player is ready. Also, the server must wait until the ball passes the short line before stepping out of the service box, otherwise it is a fault serve.

If the server hits the ball directly to any surface other than the front wall the server immediately loses serve regardless of whether it was first or second serve.

After the ball bounces behind the short line, or passes the receiving line, the ball is in play and the opposing player(s) may play it.

Usually, the server is allowed two opportunities (called first serve and second serve) to put the ball into play (two serve rule), although elite level competitions often allow the server only one opportunity (one serve rule).

After a successful serve, players alternate hitting the ball against the front wall. The player returning the hit may allow the ball to bounce once on the floor or hit the ball on the fly. However, once the player returning the shot has hit the ball, it must strike the front wall before striking the floor. Unlike during the serve, a ball in play may touch as many walls, including the ceiling, as necessary so long as it reaches the front wall without striking the floor.

Hinders

Due to the nature of the game, players often occupy the space their opponent(s) want(s) to occupy. This may result in a player blocking his opponent's ability to play the ball. A hinder is a replay of the current rally. A type of hinder is a screen in which the player is unable to see the ball prior to it passing the opponent.

There is also a "court" hinder in which some part of the playing field caused the ball to bounce untrue. Often this is the door frame or (recessed) handle or a flaw in the floor or walls. In this case, the rally is a re-serve.

Scoring

Points can only be scored by the serving player or serving team in a doubles game, and points are the result of winning a rally that began with a successful serve.

During play, a player loses the rally if any one of the following occurs:

1. The ball bounces on the floor more than once before being struck.
2. The ball skips, or does not reach the front wall on the fly.
3. The ball flies into the spectator's gallery or wall opening or strikes an out-of-bounds surface above the court's normal playing area.
4. A slow ball strikes another player without the estimated speed and/or direction to strike the front wall.
5. A ball struck by a player hits that player or that player's partner.
6. A penalized hindrance.
7. Switching racquet hands during a rally.
8. Touching the ball with either the body or uniform.
9. Carrying or slinging the ball with the racquet.