

Section 1: The game

History

In the 1840's, in a London debtor's prison, the sport we now know as PADDLEBALL was then called "RACKETS."

RACKETS was invented by tennis players who adapted the game of tennis to the prison courtyard. They whittled solid paddles out of wood planks and played their new game against a single wall of the prison.

This game is the parent sport of the games we know today as racquetball, squash and PADDLEBALL.

Description

PADDLEBALL is a game in which a wood paddle is used to serve and volley a tennis ball on a one-wall court.

It is a challenge or "pick-up" game, and may be played either competitively or recreationally.

Objective

The objective is to win each rally by serving or returning the ball so that the opponent is unable to keep the ball in play. A serve or rally is won when the opponent is unable to return the ball before it touches the floor twice.

Types of games

PADDLEBALL may be played by two or more people. Its most common forms are singles and doubles. Cutthroat (3 players) and Jai-alai (4 to 8 players) are also played.

Scoring

Rule 1-1: It is necessary for a player to be serving in order to score a point.

Rule 1-2: Games are played to 15 points and must be won by a two-point margin.

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Section 2:

The Court & Equipment

Paddleball is a game played on many different types of courts and surfaces. A court at one park may be wider or longer than at another, or the walls may differ in height. If you play on a tennis practice wall, you will find no long line. If you play on a handball court, you will find no low line. Players should be able to agree upon enough rules to cover any problems the court may present.

DIMENSIONS (See Diagram)

Rule 2-1: The following dimensions will define the fair playing area of a one-wall paddleball court.
Length: 36ft. Width: 20ft. Height: 16ft

LINES AND ZONES

Rule 2-2: One-wall courts are divided and marked as follows;

(a) **LOW LINE-** The low line is marked on the wall and runs the width of the wall at a height of 36 inches.

(b) **SHORT LINE-** The short line is 15 feet from and parallel to the wall.

(c) **LONG LINE-** The long line is 30 feet from and parallel to the wall.

(d) **RECEIVING ZONE / SERVICE ZONE.** 25 feet from and parallel to the wall, lines are drawn on each side of the court extending inward 16 inches.

CRACKS AND FLAWS

Rule 2-3: No replays will be given for balls which bounce irregularly due to cracks or holes in the floor or wall surfaces of the court. The ball is considered good and in play if it should hit such a flaw.

Rule 2-4: Some courts are constructed of a concrete floor raised slightly above an asphalt apron. On these raised courts, a ball landing on the corner edge of a sideline or backline will “kick” off in an

unusual manner. This ball is considered to be an out and will result in a loss of point or service from the striker.

Rule 2-5: On courts with painted lines only (not raised) a ball landing on a line will be considered good, except for a served ball which lands on a sideline or backline, which shall be an out serve.

THE PADDLE

Rule 2-6: The paddle must be made of wood and must have a reinforced handle. It must have a solid face and may not have any foreign or abrasive substance on its faces such as tape or strings. The total of its length and width must not exceed 27 inches. The paddle must be secured to the player’s wrist by means of a wrist strap of good quality. Switching hands during tournaments is not allowed and will result in a loss of point or service from the offender.

THE BALL

The official tournament ball of PADDLEBALL is the Wilson Regular Duty Felt Tennis Ball.

Section 3: The Serve

All the interior lines on a PADDLEBALL court are used to limit the player’s actions and the fair playing area for the first stroke of a rally, the serve. After the serve, the interior lines have no effect on play.

MANNER

Rule 3-1: A serve is begun by bouncing the ball to the floor in the service zone. On the first bounce the ball must be struck by the server’s paddle so that it hits the wall above the low line and on the rebound hits the floor between the short and the long lines.

Section 3: continued

PLACE

Rule 3-2: The server may serve from anyplace in the service zone. Stepping on the line but not beyond it is permitted. The server must be in the service zone when the served ball is struck and may not enter into the receiver's zone until the served ball has passed. The server must serve to the major portion of the court.

DOUBLES

Rule 3-3: At the beginning of each game of doubles only the first server may serve for the side the first time up. When the first server is retired, the side is retired. Thereafter, both players on both sides may serve until the side is retired.

PARTNER'S POSITION

Rule 3-4: The server's partner must stand with both feet off the court, between the short line and the service marker, and may not enter the court until the served ball is struck, nor enter into the receiver's zone until the served ball has passed.

FAULT SERVES

Rule 3-5: The following serves are fault serves. Any two faults served in succession will result in a loss of service. A server cannot double-fault with one serve, such as a serve which is both low and short. Such serves count as one fault only.

- (a) **FOOT FAULTS:** A server's foot extends beyond the service zone.
- (b) **FOOT FAULT, DOUBLES:** Server's partner violates rule 3-4.
- (c) **LOW SERVE:** A served ball hits on or below the low line.
- (d) **SHORT SERVE:** A served ball which on rebounding from the wall lands on or before the short line.
- (e) **LONG SERVE:** A served ball which on rebounding from the wall lands on or in back of the long line.
- (f) **MINOR COURT SERVE:** A served ball not hit to the major portion of the court.
- (g) **BEHIND PARTNER:** A served ball, otherwise fair, which passes behind the server's partner.

OUT SERVES

Rule 3-6: Any one of the following will result in a loss of service.

- (a) **MISSES WALL:** A served ball which fails to reach the wall on the fly.
- (b) **MISSES FLOOR:** A served ball which on

rebounding from the wall fails to land in the fair playing area of the court floor.

- (c) **HITS SERVING SIDE:** A served ball which on rebounding from the wall hits either the server or the server's partner before bouncing twice.
- (d) **PINCH SERVE:** A served ball which strikes the floor and wall simultaneously.

Rule 3-7: If a served ball should be both a fault and an out serve, such as a serve which lands on the wall as a low serve and then lands on the floor as an out serve, it is an OUT SERVE.

RETURN OF SERVE

The player who is to return the serve is called the receiver. The limits of the receiver's position and actions are as follows:

Rule 3-8: **Receiving Position:** The receiver (s) must stand behind the service markers until the ball has been struck by the server.

Rule 3-9: **SERVE MUST BOUNCE:** The receiver(s) must not play the ball on the fly.

Rule 3-10: **LEGAL RETURN:** After the ball is legally served, one of the players on the receiving side must strike the ball after it has bounced once and before it bounces twice.

VIOLATION OF RULES 3-8, 3-9, OR 3-10 WILL RESULT IN A POINT FOR THE SERVER.

Rule 3-11: LOSS OF SERVE

A server is entitled to continue serving until:

- (a) An OUT serve is made
- (b) TWO FAULT serves are made in succession.
- (c) The server hits his partner with an attempted return.
- (d) The serving side fails to keep the ball in play.

CHANGE OF SERVE

When the serving side loses the serve, it then becomes the receiving side and vice versa and so alternately in all subsequent services of the game. In singles, retiring the player retires the side. In doubles, the side is retired when both players have retired, except on the first service of a game. (Rule 3-3)

Section 4: The Play

IT IS THE DUTY OF THE PLAYERS TO ALTER THEIR SWING TO AVOID HITTING THE OPPONENT. IT IS ALSO THE DUTY OF THE PLAYERS TO ALLOW THE OPPONENT A FAIR CHANCE TO PLAY A BALL.

RALLIES

Rule 4-1: The legal play after the serve and return of serve is called the RALLY. Play during rallies must accord with the following:

- (a) Only the paddle may be used to hit the ball.
- (b) The ball must reach the ball on the fly.
- (c) The ball must be returned before it bounces twice.
- (d) The ball may be played on the fly or after one bounce.
- (e) In attempting returns, both players may swing at the ball, their paddles may come in contact, but only one paddle may hit the ball.
- (f) Any contact of the ball in play by a player other than the one making the return is a loss of point or service from the offender.
- (g) If a ball is broken during a rally, the point is replayed.
- (h) Should a foreign object enter the court, such as a ball, person, etc., or if any other outside interference occurs, play must stop and the point is replayed.
- (i) **MISSED BALL.**
If a player swings at but misses completely a ball in play, both that player or that player's partner may take repeated attempts to hit the ball before it bounces twice.
- (j) **ROLLERS**
A ball which strikes the wall and on the rebound rolls out flat on the court floor is a **WINNER**.
- (k) **PINCHES**
A ball which hits the floor and the wall simultaneously is **NOT GOOD**.

Section 5: Replays

BLOCKS, HINDERS, INTERFERENCE

A player has the right to a clear swing and the right to a clear path to the ball. Blocks are called by the players, and if honored, the point is replayed.

Rule 5-1: A block call must be made prior to ball contact.

Rule 5-2: Block Situations:

- (a) **HITTING OPPONENT.** When a returned ball touches an opponent on the fly before reaching the wall
- (b) **BODY CONTACT.** When body contact with an opponent interferes with the act of returning a ball.
- (c) **SCREENS.** When a player's path to a ball is blocked by an opponent.
- (d) **SAFETY BLOCKS.** When a ball passes too close to an opponent a player must call a block to avoid injuring an opponent.
- (e) **PADDLE CONTACT.** When on the backswing a player's paddle touches an opponent.
- (f) **STRADDLE.** When a ball rebounding from the wall passes between the legs of an opponent.
- (g) **OTHER INTERFERENCE.** Any other unintentional interference which prevents a player from having a clear path or a clear swing.

Rule 5-3: A call of BLOCK stops play and voids any situation that may follow.

Rule 5-4: DOUBLES. In doubles, both players are entitled to a fair chance at playing a ball. Either one is entitled to call a **BLOCK** even though it might naturally be the partner's ball, and even though a partner might have attempted to play the ball and missed. A player can not call a block on a partner.

Rule 5-5: VISUAL BLOCKS. There is no such thing. Deliberate interference, though, is not allowed.

Rule 5-6: INTENTIONAL BLOCKS. Deliberate interference will result in a loss of point or service from the offender. Intentional blocks occur when:

- (a) A player does not move sufficiently to allow an opponent a shot.
- (b) A player deliberately moves into a position that blocks an opponent.
- (c) A player deliberately pushes or shoves an opponent.

Section 6: Tournaments

OFFICIATING

Rule 6-1: All tournaments should be managed by a director who shall appoint all officials. Officials should include a referee, a scorer and linesmen. All officials should be experienced or trained, and should be familiar with these rules and with local playing conditions.

Rule 6-2: DECISIONS. During the game the referee shall decide all questions that may arise in accordance with these rules.

Section 6: Tournaments

CONTINUED

Rule 6-3- APPEALS. A player may appeal a questionable call made by and official. The referee may then consult all officials, consider their opinions, judgment and proximity to the even, and either honor or deny the appeal.

Rule 6-4: LINESMEN. Linesmen should be positioned at the back corners of the court and should make all calls in a loud and clear manner.

REST PERIODS, TIME-OUTS, INJURIES

Rule 6-5: TIME-OUTS. Each player or team has (2) two-minute time outs per game

Rule 6-6: DELAYS. Deliberate delays exceeding 20 seconds by either the server or the receiver is not allowed. Play will never be delayed to allow a player a chance to regain strength or wind.

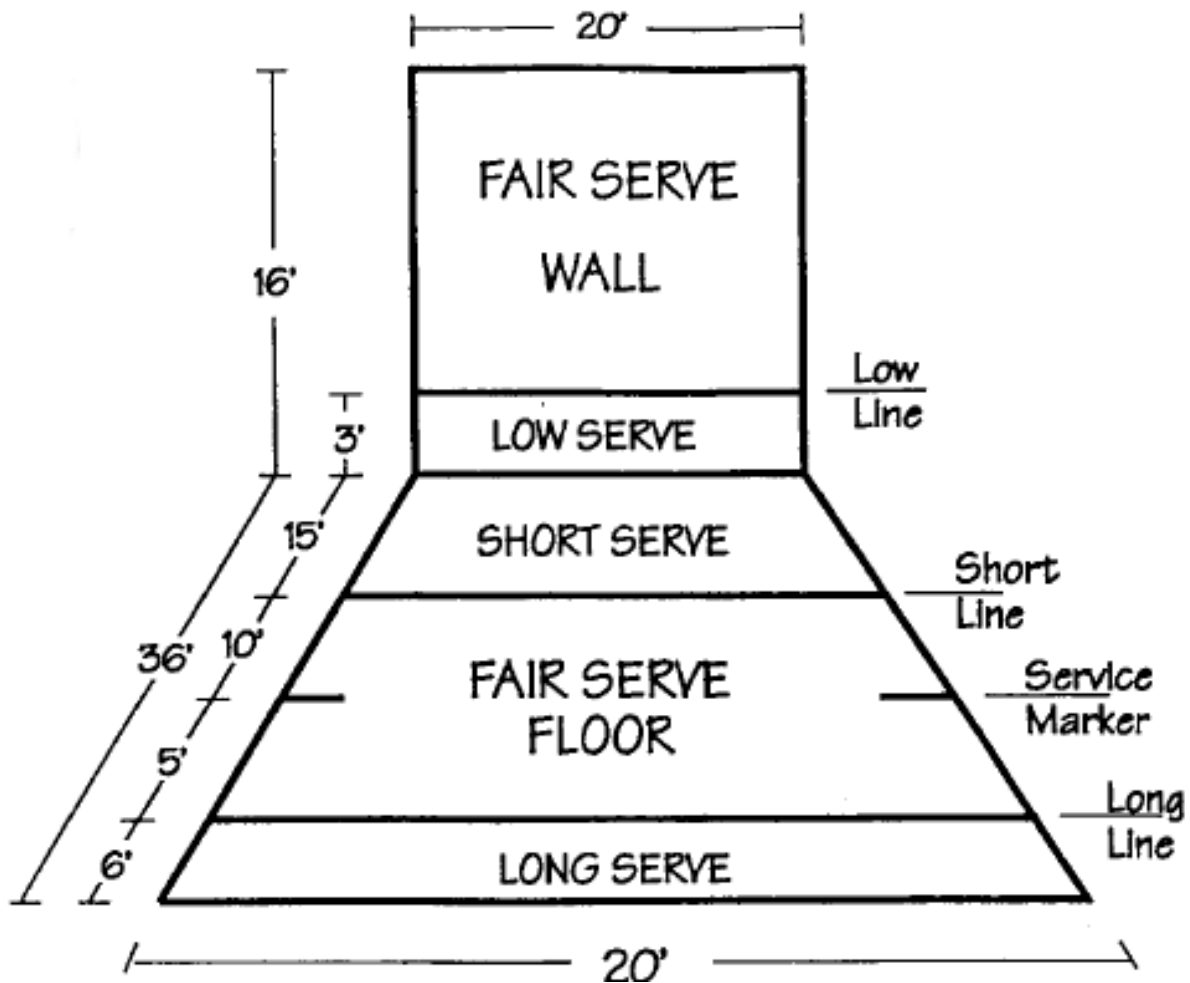
Rule 7-7: INJURIES. No time-outs will be charged to a player injured during play. An injured player will be allowed 15 minutes to resume play. If the injured player is unable to continue after this time, the game may be awarded to the opponent. However, if the injury was the result of a foul play by the opponent, the game may be awarded to the injured player.

Rule 6-8: A game that is suspended due to rain or darkness will resume at the point and situation where play was interrupted.

PENALTIES

Rule 6-9: Penalties are assessed by the referee. Foul or abusive language is not allowed nor is any unsportsmanlike play. The penalties can be a warning, a loss of point or service, or forfeiture, depending on the severity and frequency of the offences. A game may also be forfeited when a player leaves the court without permission during a game, or when a player fails to report on time to play. Normally, 10 minutes after the scheduled starting time is allowed before forfeiture.





Paddleball

GUIDE TO PLAY

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Tournament rules



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