

Squash Doubles Playing Rules

Official Playing Rules of North American Doubles as maintained by the United States Squash Racquets Association in co-operation with Squash Canada, and approved by the World Squash Federation. Revised 9th October 2004.

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1. Game

(a) The object of the game is to win by scoring points. Each side or team, consisting of two players, shall earn points either by winning a rally or by being awarded them. Each point won by or awarded to a side shall add one to its score. Each point taken away from a side shall subtract one from its score.

(b) The side which first scores fifteen points wins the game excepting that:

- (1) At "thirteen all" the side which has first reached the score of thirteen must announce one of the following before the next serve:
 - (i) Set to five points--making the game eighteen points.
 - (ii) Set to three points--making the game sixteen points.
 - (iii) No set, in which event the game remains fifteen points.

- (2) At "fourteen all," provided the score has not been "thirteen all," the side which has first reached the score of fourteen must announce one of the following before the next serve:
 - (i) Set to three points--making the game seventeen points.

 - (ii) No set, in which event the game remains fifteen points.

2. Match

(a) The side which first wins three games wins the match, except that a side may be awarded the match at any time upon the retirement, default or disqualification of the opposing side.

3. Service

- (a) The service begins the play of each point and is the striking of the ball with the racquet in accordance with this entire Rule 3. At the start of a match the choice to serve or receive shall be decided by the spin of a racquet. The two partners of a side shall serve in succession, the first retaining his serve until his side has lost a point. On the loss of a subsequent point the side shall be declared "out" and the serve revert to the opponents. On the first serve of every game, however, the "in" side shall be declared "out" after it has lost one point only. The order of serving within a side shall not be changed during the progress of a game. At the end of a game the side which has won the game shall have the choice of serving or receiving to commence the next game.

- (b) The server, from the beginning of the service motion until the ball has left the racquet from the service, must stand with at least one and the same foot touching the floor wholly within and not touching the line surrounding the service box and serve the ball onto the front wall above the service line and below the 20' line before it touches any other part of the court, so that on its rebound (return) it first strikes the floor within, but not touching, the lines of the opposite service court, either before or after touching any other wall or walls within the court. This player must be in control of and holding on to the racquet at the moment of contact. A ball so served is a good service, otherwise it is a Fault. If the referee calls a foot-fault and the server believes the service was proper, the server may appeal the referee's call.

- (c) If the first service is a Fault, the server shall serve again from the same side. If the server makes two consecutive Faults, he loses the point. A service Fault may not be played, but the receiver may volley any service which has struck the front wall in accordance with Rule 3(b).

- (d) At the beginning of each game and each time a side becomes "in" the ball shall be served from whichever service box the first server for the side elects, and thereafter

alternately until the side is "out" or until the end of the game. If the server serves from the incorrect box there shall be no penalty and the service shall count and the play shall proceed as if the box served from was the correct box, except that if the receiver does not attempt to return the service, he may demand that it be served from the other box, or if, before the receiver attempts to return the service, there is a Let (See [Rule 7](#)), the service shall be made from the other box.

- (e) A ball is in play from the moment at which it is struck with the racquet until:
 - (1) the point is decided;
 - (2) a Fault, as defined in Rule 3(b), is made; or a Let occurs (See Rules 6 and 7).
- (f) If, in the act of serving the ball, a player strikes at but misses the ball, a fault shall result.

4. Return of Service and Subsequent Play

- (a) A return is deemed to be made at the instant the ball touches the racquet of the player making the return. This player must be in control of and holding on to the racquet at the moment of contact. If the racquet leaves his hand in the act of striking the ball, it shall be deemed that he was not "in control of" it in accordance with this [Rule 4](#)(a), and he shall lose the point even if the ball subsequently makes a good return. To make a good return of a service or of a subsequent return the ball must be struck on the volley or before it has touched the floor twice, and reach the front wall on the fly above the tell-tale and below the 20' line, and it may touch any wall or walls within the court before or after reaching the front wall. On any return the ball may be struck only once. It may not be "carried" or "double-hit."
- (b) At the beginning of each game each side shall designate one of its players to receive service in the right hand service court and the other to receive service in the left hand service court and throughout the course of such game the service must be received by the players so designated.
- (c) If the designated receiver fails to make a good return of a good service, the serving side wins the point. If the designated receiver makes a good return of service the sides shall alternate making returns until one side fails to make a good return. The side failing to make a good return loses the point.
- (d) Until the ball has been touched or has hit the floor twice, it may be struck at any number of times by either player on a side.
- (e) If at any time after a service the ball hits outside the playing surfaces of the court (the ceiling and/or lights, or on or above a line marking the perimeters of the playing surfaces of the court), the side so hitting the ball loses the point except as provided in [Rule 7](#)(c)(5).

5. Right to Play the Ball

- (a) Immediately after he or his partner has struck the ball, each player must get out of his opponents' way and must:
 - (1) Give his opponents a fair view of the ball;

- (2) Give his opponents a fair opportunity to get to and strike at the ball in and from any position on the court elected by an opponent. A player will be deemed to have failed to give his opponents a fair opportunity to get to and strike the ball when he has used an excessive follow through so that an opponent has to wait for an excessive swing;
- (3) Allow either opponent to play the ball to any part of the front wall or back wall and to that part of each side wall in front of the red floor service line; and,
- (4) Refrain from creating a visual or audible distraction.

6. Let Point

- (a) A Let Point shall be awarded to a side:
 - (1) When an opponent, in violating [Rule 5](#), deprives a player of a clear opportunity to attempt a winning shot; or
 - (2) When an opponent, in violating [Rule 5](#), fails to make the effort within the scope of his normal ability to avoid the violation thereby depriving a player of an opportunity to attempt a shot; or
 - (3) When an opponent, in violating [Rule 5](#), has caused repeated Lets, no one of which individually constitutes a Let Point.
 - (4) When the striker hits the ball back at himself and the opponent is ready to hit the ball but unable to do so because of the striker's position, it is a violation of [Rule 5\(3\)](#) and a Let Point for the opponent, regardless of whether or not a winner would have been struck by the opponent.
- (b) The Referee shall not award a Let Point as defined in this [Rule 6](#) unless a Let Point or a Let (See [Rule 7](#)) is requested by a player.
[See Rule 6 Interpretation](#)

7. Let

- (a) A Let mandates the playing over of a point.
- (b) On the replay of the point the server
 - (1) is entitled to two serves even if a Fault occurred in the original point,
 - (2) must serve from the correct box even if he served from the incorrect box on the original point, and
 - (3) provided he is a new server, may serve from a service box other than the one selected on the original point.
- (c) In addition to the Lets described elsewhere, the following are Lets if the player on the side whose turn it is to strike the ball could otherwise have made a good return:
 - (1) When an opponent of such player violates [Rule 5](#) except for those violations described in [Rule 6](#).
 - (2) When such player refrains from striking at the ball because of a reasonable fear of injuring an opponent.
 - (3) When such player before or during the act of striking or striking at the ball is touched by either of his opponents, their racquets or anything either of them wears or carries.

- (4) When on the first bounce from the floor the ball hits on or above the seven foot line on the back wall; and
 - (5) If a player thinks the ball has broken while play is in progress, he must nevertheless complete the point and then immediately request a Let, giving the ball promptly to the Referee for inspection. The Referee shall allow a Let only upon such prompt request if the ball in fact proves to be broken (See [Rule 11\(c\)](#)).
- (d) A player may request a Let or a Let Point (See [Rule 6](#)). A request by a player for a Let shall automatically include a request for a Let Point. Upon such request, the Referee shall allow a Let, Let Point or no Let.
- (e) No Let shall be allowed on any stroke a player makes unless he requests such before or during the act of striking or striking at the ball or immediately after doing so in the event of an obstructed swing.
- (f) The Referee shall not call or allow a Let as defined in this [Rule 7](#) unless such Let is requested by a player; provided, however, the Referee may call a Let at any time (1) when there is interference with play caused by any factor beyond the control of the player, or (2) when he fears that a player is about to suffer severe physical injury.

8. Ball in Play Touching Player

- (a) If a ball in play after hitting the front wall, but before being returned again, shall touch any player, or anything he wears or carries (other than the racquet of the player who makes the return) the side of the player so touched loses the point, except as provided in [Rule 7\(c\)\(1\)](#) or [7\(c\)\(2\)](#).
- (b) If a ball in play touches the player who last returned it or his partner or anything either of them wears or carries before it hits the front wall, the side of the player so touched loses the point, except as provided in [Rule 7\(c\)\(2\)](#).
- (c) If a ball in play, after being struck by a player on a return, hits either of the player's opponents or anything either of them wears or carries before reaching the front wall:
 - (1) The side of the player who made the return shall lose the point if the return would not have been good.
 - (2) The point shall be a Let (See [Rule 7](#)) if the return would have hit the front wall fairly except for such interference.
- (d) If a player strikes at and misses the ball, he and his partner may make further attempts to return it. If, after being missed, the ball touches either of their opponents or anything they wear or carry:
 - (1) If the player or his partner would otherwise have made a good return, the point shall be a Let.
 - (2) If the player or his partner could not have made a good return, their side shall lose the point.

9. Continuity of Play

- (a) Play shall be continuous from the first service of each game until the game is concluded. Play shall never be suspended solely to allow a player to recover his strength or wind. The

provisions of this Rule 9 shall be strictly construed. If the Referee believes a player is violating this Rule during a game, the Referee may deduct one point from the offender's side's score for each such violation or the Referee may default the offender's side.

- (b) Between any two successive games play may be suspended by either player for a period not to exceed two minutes. If a player is not on court ready to play at the expiration of the applicable time period, the Referee may deduct one point from the offender's side's score for each 30 seconds or fraction thereof he is late or the Referee may default the offender's side.
- (c) Except as otherwise specified in this Rule 9, the Referee may suspend play for such reason and for such period of time as he may consider necessary.
- (d) If play is suspended by the Referee because of an injury to one of the players, such player must resume play within one hour from the point and game score existing at the time play was suspended or his side shall default the match, provided however, if a player suffers cramps or pulled muscles, play may be suspended by the Referee once during a match for each such player for a period not to exceed five minutes after which time such player must resume play or his side shall default the match.
- (e) In the event the Referee suspends play other than for injury to a player, play shall be resumed when the Referee determines the cause of such suspension of play has been eliminated, except that if such cause of delay cannot be rectified within one hour, the match shall be postponed to such time as the Tournament Committee determines. Any suspended match shall be resumed from the point and game score existing at the time the match was stopped.

10. Attire and Equipment

- (a) A player's attire, including, but not restricted to, its color, design, insignia, advertisements, statements and slogans, shall be within the normal standards of good taste associated with the game of squash racquets. A side shall have matching major items of attire.
- (b) A standard doubles ball as specified in the Court, Racquet and Ball Specifications of this Association shall be used.
- (c) A racquet as specified in the Court, Racquet and Ball Specifications of this Association shall be used.
- (d) Approved protective eye guards must be worn properly over the eyes at all times during play. [See Rule 10 Interpretation](#)

11. Condition of Ball

- (a) No ball, before or during a match, may be heated, chilled or otherwise artificially treated except by the mutual consent of the sides or by decision of the Referee.
- (b) At any time, when not in the actual play of a point, another ball may be substituted by the mutual consent of the sides or by decision of the Referee.

- (c) A ball shall be determined broken when it has a crack which extends through both its inner and outer surfaces. The ball may be squeezed only enough to determine the extent of the crack. A broken ball shall be replaced and the preceding point shall be a Let (See [Rule 7\(c\)\(6\)](#)).
- (d) Upon determination of a cracked (but not broken) ball, the ball shall be replaced and the preceding point shall stand. If a ball breaks during the last point of a game and this is not discovered until after the game is over, the point shall stand.

12. Court

- (a) The doubles court shall be as specified in the Court, Racquet and Ball Specifications of this Association.
- (b) No equipment of any sort shall be permitted to remain in the court during a match other than the ball used in play, the racquets being used by the players, and the clothes worn by them. All other equipment must be left outside the court. A player who requires a towel or cloth shall keep same in a pocket or in his waistband.

13. Referee

- (a) A Referee shall control the game. This control shall be exercised from the time scheduled for the match and/or from the time that at least one player is on the court. The Referee may limit the time of the warm up period to five minutes, or shall terminate a longer warm up period so that the match commences at the scheduled time.
- (b) The Referee's decision on all questions of play shall be final except as provided in [Rule 13\(c\)](#).
- (c) Two Judges may be appointed to act on any appeal by a player to a decision of the Referee. When such Judges are acting in a match, a player may appeal any decision of the Referee through the Referee to the Judges, except a decision under Rules 11 and 13(a). If one Judge agrees with the Referee, the Referee's decision stands. If both Judges disagree with the Referee, the Judges' decision is final. If the Referee is not overruled, his decision stands. A Referee serving with judges, if unsighted, or otherwise unable to decide on a fair return or a Let appeal, shall ask both judges for their opinions. If they agree, the decision shall stand. If they disagree, the Referee shall order that a Let be played. The Judges shall make no ruling unless an appeal has been made. The decision of the Judges shall be announced promptly by the Referee.
- (d) A player may not request the removal or replacement of the Referee or a Judge during a match. Any such request must be made by the player before or immediately upon entering the court.
- (e) A player shall not state his reason for his request under [Rule 7](#) for a Let or Let Point or for his appeal from any decision of the Referee except if the Referee permits the player to state his reasons.

- (f) If a player uses speech or language unbecoming to the game of squash racquets, the Referee may deduct one point from the offender's side's score for each such utterance or the Referee may default the offender's side.
- (g) If a player's conduct is unbecoming to the game of squash racquets, the Referee may deduct one point from the offender's side's score for each such act or the Referee may default the offender's side.

14. Play Without a Referee

- (a) When there is no Referee and the players are unable to agree with respect to the circumstances described in Rules 6, 7, and 8 the point shall be a Let. No penalties described in Rules 9 and 13 shall apply.

15 : Unsportsmanlike Conduct or Dangerous Play

The Referee, in his/her discretion, shall have the power to warn, penalize or default a play for unsportsmanlike conduct or dangerous play. Instances of unsportsmanlike conduct include, but are not limited to, the following: Swearing; racquet abuse; physical or verbal abuse of an opponent; referee or linesperson intentionally striking (or attempting to strike) your opponent with a ball or racquet; or the like. Instances of dangerous play include, but are not limited to, the following: unnecessarily striking a ball without being aware of where your opponents are positions on the court when a let would otherwise have been granted to the striker had he/she refrained from such striking; playing a ball so near or in such proximity to an opponent so as to create a reasonable likelihood of causing injury to said opponent; or the like.

In cases involving unsportsmanlike conduct or dangerous play, other than the situation where a player intentionally physically abuses an opponent or intentionally strikes an opponent with a ball or racquet, a referee shall first warn the offending player that future episodes of such conduct shall result in the loss of the point, and, subsequently the game and match. In cases involving intentional abuse of an opponent, referee or linesperson or the intentional hitting of an opponent with a ball or racquet, the referee shall have the discretion to penalize or otherwise default the offending player without the necessity of a warning.

RULES INTERPRETATIONS FOR PLAYERS AND REFEREES

Revised January 1, 1999

Right to Play the Ball Rule Rule 5.(3) Interpretation

- a) Clearing behind red service line: All players must clear to allow the opposing players to hit the ball to either side wall in front of the service line. Repeated failures to do so or deliberate actions which deny the opponent the right to play his chosen shot will result in Let points being called against the violators. Remember, if you clear to behind the red service line your opponent cannot eradicate himself from a defensive position by calling a Let on you unless the "boast" is a reasonable shot under the circumstances (See intent and interpretation under [Rule 5\(a\)\(1\)](#)). Referees should warn the player who tries to abuse this rule with calls of repeated Lets, that he/she must play the ball if the opponents have so cleared. However, when a player "comes around" and may not be sure of where the opponents are, he/she may request a Let. The safety factor must predominate, but the Referee must determine whether the striker is being fair in asking for the Let or is merely trying to get out of an unfavourable position.

Let Point Rule - Rule 6 Interpretation

- a) Ball struck back at one's self: When you hit a ball back at yourself and your opponent refrains from striking it and calls Let, he/she should be awarded the point, irrespective of whether or not he/she could have struck the ball for a winner. The intent here is to penalize the person for his/her own bad shot which placed him/her in this poor position. This Let point rule ([Rule 6\(a\)\(4\)](#)) also applies when a player hits a bad "reverse corner" or short "Philly-Boast" since it was his own poor shot which caused the Let situation.
- b) Depriving opponent of winning shot or failure to use reasonable efforts to clear: There appears to be a misconception on behalf of some players who get caught in the front court by their partner's poor shot. They argue that since they did not hit the ball back at themselves, their opponent should not get a Let point - Wrong!!! No matter who hit the poor shot, if your position, either by refusing or being unable to clear, deprives your opponent of a clear opportunity to attempt a winning shot, a Let point should be awarded.
- c) A Let Point shall be awarded on a crosscourt shot only in the following circumstances:
- 1) When the opponent deprives the striker of a clear opportunity to attempt a winning shot (i.e. shot well in front of red service line);
 - 2) Where the opponent fails to make the effort within the scope of his/her ability to clear so as to deprive his opponent of an opportunity to attempt the reasonable shot of striker's choice; or
 - 3) Where the opponent, either due to his/her partner's poor shot selection/placement causes repeated let situations, no one of which individually constitutes a Let point.

The intent of paragraphs 2 and 3 above is to allow a referee to penalize a player who repeatedly refuses to clear adequately when his/her partner has placed him/her in a disadvantageous position, whether or not the striker had a clear opportunity to attempt a

winning shot. Prior to the awarding of a Let Point, the referee should warn the offending player who refuses to clear that further violations will result in the awarding of a Let Point.

Attire and Equipment Rule - Rule 10 Interpretation

A player who loses a piece of his/her equipment (racquet, glasses, headband, vibration dampener with the racquet head etc.) during play shall not lose the point unless:

- a) Said loss of equipment was deliberate or intentional;
- b) Said player lost his/her racquet in the act of striking the ball (See [Rule 4](#) (a)); or where
- c) The player has been warned by the referee that future loss of equipment will result in the loss of a point.

A referee should warn a player who loses his/her equipment that future delays caused by that player's refusal to take those steps necessary to avoid the loss of equipment (i.e. tie on glasses, removal of vibration dampener, etc.) will result in the loss of the point.

Background Many players are under the incorrect impression that loss of a piece of a player's equipment during play automatically constitutes a stoppage in play and subsequent loss of point to the offending player. Nowhere in the doubles rules or singles hard ball rules, however, is this stated. Rather, [Rule 4](#) (a) provides specifically that a player shall lose the point if he/she loses his/her racquet while in the act of striking the ball. By negative implication, a player who loses his/her racquet not while in the act of striking the ball shall not lose the point. Any other interpretation would make [Rule 4](#) (a) superfluous.