

**THE RULES OF SQUASH**



*Official Playing Rules*

*United States  
Squash Racquets Association, Inc.*

*MAY, 1987*

## SINGLES PLAYING RULES

(Effective May 1, 1987)

### 1. GAME

(a) The object of the game is to win by scoring points. Points are earned one at a time either by winning a rally or by being awarded. Each point won by or awarded to a player shall add one to his score. Each point taken away from a player shall subtract one from his score.

(b) The player who first scores fifteen points wins the game excepting that:

(1) At "thirteen all" the player who 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 player who 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 player who first wins three games wins the match, except that a player may be awarded the match at any time upon the retirement, default or disqualification of an opponent.

### 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 server retains the serve until he loses a point, in which event he loses the serve.

(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 16' 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.

(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 there is a new server, the ball shall be served by the winner of the previous point from whichever service box the server elects

and thereafter alternately until the service is lost 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 as if served from 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.

(c) 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).

#### 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. 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 16' 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) If the receiver fails to make a good return of a good service, the server wins the point. If the receiver makes a good return of service, the players shall alternate making returns until one player fails to make a good return. The player failing to make a good return loses the point.

(c) Until the ball has been touched or has hit the floor twice, it may be struck at any number of times.

(d) If at any time after a good service the ball hits outside the playing surfaces of the court (the tell-tale, the ceiling and/or lights, or on or above a line marking the perimeters of the playing surfaces of the court), the player so hitting the ball loses the point except as provided in Rule 7(c)(5).

#### 5. RIGHT TO PLAY THE BALL

(a) Immediately after striking the ball a player must get out of an opponent's way and must:

(1) Give an opponent a fair view of the ball;

(2) Give an opponent a fair opportunity to get to and strike at the ball in and from any position on the court elected by the opponent. A player will be deemed to have failed to give his opponent a fair opportunity to get to and strike the ball when he has used an excessive follow through so that his opponent has to wait for an excessive swing;

(3) Allow an opponent to play the ball to any part of the front wall, either side wall or the back wall; and

(4) Refrain from creating a visual or audible distraction.

#### 6. LET POINT

(a) A Let Point shall be awarded to a player:

(1) When an opponent, in violating Rule 5, deprives the 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 the 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 an opponent deliberately pushes off him.
- (b) If a player refrains from striking at the ball because of a reasonable fear of injuring his opponent and he would have otherwise won the point under Rule 8(c)(2), the Referee shall award him the point.
- (c) 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.

## 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 whose turn it is to strike the ball could otherwise have made a good return:
  - (1) When such player's opponent violates Rule 5 except for those violations described in Rule 6.
  - (2) When owing to the position of such player, his opponent is unable to avoid being touched by the ball.
  - (3) When such player refrains from striking at the ball because of a reasonable fear of injuring his opponent.
  - (4) When such player before or during the act of striking or striking at the ball is touched by his opponent, his racquet or anything he wears or carries,
  - (5) When on the first bounce from the floor the ball hits on or above the six and a half foot line on the back wall; and
  - (6) 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 requests 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 re-requests such before or during the act of striking or striking at the ball.
- (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 either player, or anything he wears or carries (other than the racquet of the player who makes the return) 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 when last returned it or anything he wears or carries before it hits the front wall, 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 the player's opponent or anything the opponent wears or carries before reaching the front wall:

(1) The player who made the return shall lose the point if the return would not have been good.

(2) The player who made the return shall win the point if the ball, except for such interference, would have hit the front wall fairly: except that the point shall be a Let (see Rule 7) if:

(i) The ball would have touched some other wall before so hitting the front wall.

(ii) The ball has hit some other wall before hitting the player's opponent or anything he wears or carries.

(iii) The player who made the return shall have turned following the ball around prior to playing the ball.

(d) If a player strikes at and misses the ball, he may make further attempts to return it. If, after being missed, the ball touches his opponent or anything he wears or carries:

(1) If the player might otherwise have made a good return, the point shall be a Let.

(2) If the player could not have made a good return, he shall lose the point.

(e) If a player after striking at and missing the ball is successful in a further attempt but the ball, before reaching the front wall, touches his opponent or anything he wears or carries and under Rule 8(c)(2) the player could have won the point, the point shall nevertheless be a Let.

## 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 score for each such violation or the Referee may default the offender.

(b) Between any two successive games play may be suspended by either player for a period not to exceed two minutes except that between the third and fourth games play may be suspended by either player for a period not to exceed five 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 score for each 30 seconds or fraction thereof he is late or the Referee may default the offender.

(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 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 such player for a period not to exceed five minutes after which time such player must re-sume play or default the match,

(e) In the event the Referee suspends play other than for injury to a player, play should 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.

(b) A standard singles 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.

#### 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 players 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 players 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 re-placed 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.

#### 12. COURT

(a) The singles 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 decision on all questions of play shall be final except as provided in Rule 3(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 an) "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. 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 score for each utterance or the Referee may default the offender.

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

#### 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.