

Duties and Responsibilities: The referee is designated by the tournament director and is the principal official for the match. The referee's authority and responsibilities begins when the players are called to the court. Approved eye-guards and wrist cords must be used during any on-court warm-up period. The referee should give a technical warning and then a technical foul to any player who fails to comply. [B.3 & 2.5]

Pre-Match Duties: Before the match begins, it is the referee's responsibility to check on the adequacy of the court including such things as cleanliness and lighting. He should also assemble suitable materials for the match including ball(s), towel(s), scorecard, pencil, and timepiece. Also, go onto the court to make introductions. Brief the players on court hinders, identify any out-of-play areas, and explain local rule modifications and often misinterpreted rules. Flip a coin and give the winner the choice to serve or receive for the 1st game. [B.5]

Standardize the Interpretation and Enforcement of Rules: The referee is responsible for enforcing the official rules. He does not have the option of asserting his personal interpretations or modifying the rules. It is important to remember that the rules are the same for every division and skill level. The only exceptions are specifically cited in the rules. An example is the One Serve Rule for the Open Division. [4.0-11.0]

When to Call the Score: One of the referee's duties is time management. Since competitive racquetball is a physical sport requiring endurance and stamina, the rules are written to keep delays and rest periods to a minimum. The referee should control the pace of the game by calling the score as both the server and receiver approach their respective positions. This should be shortly after the end of the previous rally and should not be delayed by players intentionally trying to slow the pace of the game. The referee should allow sufficient time for the server to walk directly to the ball, pick it up and return to the service zone. The receiver should be allowed sufficient time to walk directly to his receiving position. The score should have been called before both players have returned to their positions. If the receiver requires additional time, he can signal not ready. Collectively, both players are allowed up to 10 seconds after the score is called to serve or be ready to receive the serve. [3.4 & 3.5]

Time-outs & Time Between Games: Each player is entitled to three 30-second time-outs in games to 15 and two 30-second time-outs in games to 11. **Equipment time-outs** should only be granted when no regular time-outs remain and the referee determines an equipment time-out is necessary for fair and safe continuation of the match. This time-out should not exceed 2 minutes except in unusual circumstances. An **injury time-out** shall not exceed

a total of 15 minutes during a match and should only be granted for contact injuries, such as with the ball, racquet, wall or floor. Preexisting conditions, muscle cramps and pulls, fatigue, and other ailments are not considered an injury. **Between games**, the rest period is 2 minutes between games 1 and 2. If a tie breaker is necessary, the rest period between games 2 and 3 is 5 minutes. [3.16]

Technical Fouls & Warnings: The referee is empowered to deduct one point from a player's or team's score when the player is being overtly and deliberately abusive. Profanity, excessive arguing, threats of any nature, excessive or hard striking of the ball between rallies, slamming the racquet against the walls or floor or any other action which might result in damage to the court or injury to the other player(s), delay of game, unsportsmanlike behavior, or failure to wear regulation eyewear are examples of actions which can result in a technical foul. If the player's behavior is not so severe to warrant a technical foul, a **technical warning** may be issued without the loss of a point. [3.17]

Foot Faults: This fault is so basic it is often overlooked or ignored. If the server does not begin the service motion with both feet completely in the service zone, it is a foot fault. This means that if any part of either foot is beyond the short line or the service line, as the service motion begins, it is a foot fault. On the other hand, the server may step over

the service line when completing the service motion if part of both feet remain in the service zone (or touching the “red” line). So, at the completion of the service motion, being partially out of the service zone is not a foot fault. [3.9]

Safety Zone & Receiving Line Violations: If the server or doubles partner enters into the safety zone before the ball passes the short line, this results in the loss of serve. If a receiver breaks the plane of the receiving line before the ball bounces or crosses the receiving line, this results in a point for the server. [3.10, 3.11 & B.8]

Hinders - Replay & Penalty: Where **replay hinders** result in a replay of the previous rally without penalty, **penalty hinders** (formerly avoidable hinders) result in the loss of the rally. Certain hinders are obviously replayed. Examples of **replay hinders** are: Court Hinders (when the ball takes an irregular bounce from contacting a rough or wet surface on the court) and when a ball from another court enters the court during a rally. Some hinders can be either a **replay** or a **penalty hinder**. This is where the skill, experience and just plain savvy of the referee truly comes into play. Although specific rules give examples of penalty hinders, **if the ability of the offensive player to take or get to a potentially rally ending shot is taken away by the defensive player’s hinder**, then the hinder is a **penalty hinder**. Also, in certain circumstances, a penalty

hinder can be accessed against an offensive player or team. Examples of **penalty hinders** are: Failure to Move (a player must be given the opportunity to shoot straight to the front wall and cross-court to the far corner); Stroke Interference (a player must be given a chance of a free, unimpeded swing); Blocking (moving into a position that blocks a player from getting to or returning the ball. In doubles, moving in front of your opponent when your partner is returning the ball is a **penalty hinder** against the offensive team); Intentional Distractions (deliberate shouting, stamping of feet, or waving of racquet); View Obstruction (moving across an opponent’s line of vision just before the opponent strikes the ball); Apparel or Equipment Loss (if a player loses any apparel, equipment, or article, play should immediately stop and that player called for an penalty hinder unless the shot just hit was rally ending). [3.14 & 3.15]

Be Prepared to Cite the Applicable Rule: As a referee, always try to keep an open mind. If a player feels the referee has interpreted the rules incorrectly, the player may require the referee or tournament director to cite the applicable rule from the rulebook. This doesn’t mean that the player has a right to argue excessively about your call(s) but he does have the right to insure that you are applying and interpreting the rules correctly. If it is discovered that there has been a misapplication or misinterpretation of the rules - corrective applicable measures must be taken. [B.9]

REFEREE BASICS

Don’t Leave Home Without Them



- Responsibilities & Pre-Match Duties
- Standardize the Interpretation and Enforcement of Rules
- When to Call the Score
- Time-outs & Time Between Games
- Technical Fouls & Warnings
- Foot Faults
- Safety Zone Violations
- Hinders: Replay & Penalty
- Be Prepared to Cite Applicable Rules

Notice: This handout is a teaching aid only. To answer specific questions or to cite applicable rules, refer to the USAR Official Rules of Racquetball.

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