Racquetball Doubles Basics
Intramural Rules and Explanations

⇒ Your team must be serving in order to score a point.

⇒ The first serve of the game begins with one partner on the serving team serving until there is a side out. After the side out the serve is given to the other team. Continuing on, each member of the serving team takes their own turns serving until a side out, after the side out the serve will return to the opposing team.

⇒ The serving team has to be between the serving lines at a time of serve.

⇒ The receiving team must be at least 5 feet behind the serving line and stay there until the ball bounces off the serve.

⇒ The serve must hit the front wall and bounce behind the short serve line (second line from the front wall) in order for it to be a legal serve.

⇒ The return may be taken by hitting the ball into the air off the serve or after the ball has bounced behind the short service line off the serve.

⇒ Either member of a doubles team may hit the ball on each rally, you do NOT have to alternate shots.
History-
Paddleball developed from court handball, and racquetball similarly developed from paddleball. In the late 1940’s and early 1950’s paddleball players decided that the game could be improved by playing with string racquets rather than the standard wooden paddle. The new game was called various things until the first national American tournament was held in the late 1960’s, it was then that the name “racquetball” was coined. The game’s popularity has greatly increased, in the early 1970’s only about half a million people played, by the early 1980’s well over three million people played.

Synopsis-
Racquetball is a court game played with a short-handled racquet and a hollow, pressurized ball. Players score points by hitting shots that their opponents are unable to return. The standard game is played on four-wall courts, however due to the close connection that racquetball has with paddleball and court handball, racquetball rules also allow for play on one-and three-wall courts. Rules for the four-wall game are described and rules for one-wall racquetball differ in some aspects. Three-wall courts are less common and are not standardized; rules are typically adapted for play on each particular court played on.

Court and Equipment-
The ISU racquetball courts are standard four-wall courts; 20ft wide and 40ft long. The front A and side walls B measure 20ft high and the back wall C measures at least 12ft high.

The red and/or white 1 ½” lines on the racquetball court floor indicated:

D-The short line-parallel to and 20ft from the front wall
E-The service line-parallel to and 15ft from the front line
F-The service boxes-marked by lines parallel to and 1ft 6in from each side wall
G-The receiving lines-marked on the side walls 5ft behind the short line, and extending 3-6 in upward from the floor.

Rules of Play-
Service Order: The pair that wins the toss serves first in the first game; the loser of the toss serves first in the second game. The side scoring the highest combined number of points in both games serves first in the tiebreaker. However, if both sides score the same number of points in the first two games another toss is done to determine who gets the serve in the tiebreaker. In doubles, when the starting player loses the serve, it goes to the other team. Both players on each team must serve and lose the serve then gives it to the other team. The service order determined at the beginning of the game must remain throughout the entire game.

The Service: It can only be done when both sides have identified their readiness for play. The serve can be taken anywhere within the service zone, which is the area between the short line and the service line. The server must have both feet on or within the two zone lines. The server should bounce the ball on the floor of the service zone, and hit it once with the head of his racquet.

For a good service:
1. The ball should be served directly onto the front wall. On the rebound it should hit the floor after the short line, with or without touching one of the side walls.
The Service cont...

The server has to stay in the service zone until the ball has crossed the short line on the rebound. In doubles, the server’s partner must stand with both feet in the service box and his/her back to the wall while during the serving process. He/she should remain in the service box until the ball has crossed the short line on the rebound. The receiving side must stand at least 5ft behind the short line until the ball has bounced beyond the short line.

Service Faults: Any player who serves two successive faults loses the serve.

It is a service fault if:

1. The player doesn’t have both feet in the service zone at the beginning of his/her service, or leaves the service zone before the served ball passes the short line on the rebound.
2. In doubles, the server’s partner leaves the service box before the ball crosses the short line.
3. The serve hits the floor before or on the short line, with or without touching one of the side walls.
4. The served ball hits two side walls after hitting the front wall and before touching the floor.
5. The serve hits the ceiling after hitting the front wall, with or without touching one of the side walls.
6. The served ball bounces from the front wall and hits the back wall before touching the floor.
7. The served ball goes out of court on the service
8. In doubles, the served ball rebounds from the front wall, hits the floor, and touches the server’s partner while he/she is in the service box.

Out Services: Certain service errors lead to an immediate loss of service. A server loses the serve when:

1. The server fails to hit the ball on the first bounce, and/or touches it with his/her body or clothes.
2. The served ball touches any other part of the court before hitting off the front wall.
3. In doubles, the served ball touches the server’s partner before striking the front wall.
4. In doubles, the served ball on the bounce from the front wall comes in contact with the server’s teammate while any part of his/her body is out of the service box, or if the server’s partner intentionally catches the ball.
5. In doubles, if the player serves out of order.
6. The served ball hits the front wall where it joins the floor, the ceiling, or a side wall with the exception when a serve is served into the side wall of the back wall.
7. An ace as a three-wall crotch serve-
   He/she hits the ball twice, or hits it with the racquet’s handle. He/she makes a fake or balk serve-makes a non-continuous movement of the racquet toward the ball as he drops the ball for the purpose of serving.
Dead Ball Services: There is no penalty for a dead ball service and those serving reserve. All previous service faults are unaffected.

A dead ball occurs if, on an otherwise legal service:
1. The served ball on the rebound from the front wall touches the server’s partner while he/she is still in the service box, but before it touches the floor.
2. The ball passes so close to the server or his/her partner that the receiver’s view is blocked, or the ball passes between the server’s partner and the side wall.
3. The ball bounces erratically because of an obstruction or wet spot on the court.
4. The ball is broken or defective.

Return of Service: The receiver must stand at least 5ft behind the short line, and cannot enter the safety zone between the short line and the receiving lines until the served ball has crossed the short line. It is a good return if the receiver plays the ball after it has passed the short line but before it has bounced on the floor; if he/she does not cross the short line with his/her body or racquet. He/she can return the ball when it has crossed the short line and bounced once on the floor. The returned ball must strike the front wall either directly or after touching one or both side walls, the back wall, the ceiling, or any combination of these surfaces. The returned ball must not touch the floor before coming in contact with the front wall.

Good rally: A rally is each legal return after the serve; the player can strike the ball with either side, and may hold the racquet in one or both hands. A good rally is when the player volleys the ball, or hits it after it has bounced once off of the floor, so that it is returned to the front wall, either with or without touching any part of the court besides the floor. If a player strikes at a ball and misses, he/she may make further tries to make a good return before it touches the floor for the second time. In doubles, both members of a side are entitled to attempt to return the ball and any may make one or more attempts to hit it before it touches the floor for a second time.

Bad rally: It is a bad rally and results in a point or out against the offender if the player:
1. Strikes the ball with anything other than the head of his/her racquet.
2. Switches his/her racquet from hand to hand during play.
3. Contacts the ball more than once.
4. Fails to return the ball to the front wall but rather strikes it out of court.
5. Purposely wets the ball.
6. Hits his/her partner with an attempted return.

Touching the ball: Except when the player making the return, any player touching the ball before it bounces twice on the floor is penalized with an out or point against him/her, unless the ball touches the offender without first bouncing, when it is a dead ball hinder.
Dead ball hinder: There is no penalty for a dead ball obstruction, the point is just replayed. It is a dead ball when:

1. The ball rebounds from the front wall and goes out of court on the rebound or after the first bounce.
2. When the ball breaks during play.
3. A returned ball, that doesn’t first bounce, touches the striker’s opponent before returning to the front wall, except a ball that obviously could not have reached the front wall.
4. The racquetball ball strikes any part of the court that under intramural rules is deemed a dead ball.
5. The ball rebounds from the front wall so near to the striker or his partner (including passing between his/her legs) that their opponents are unsighted, or do not have a fair chance to return the ball.
6. Body contact or other accidental interference by an opponent unsights a player or interferes with his returning the ball, unless, in the referee’s judgment, the contact was such that it did not severely interrupt the flow of play.