**RACQUETBALL SERVE RULES - Types and Strategies**

The following information is designed to help you understand racquetball serving rules, various serve types, strategies, tips, doubles serve, definitions, and more. First, we’ll begin with the fundamentals covering racquetball serve rules.

**Basic Racquetball Serve Rules**

Here are the serving rules broken down as simple as we can make them:

**Where are the players positioned for the serve?**

1. The serving player has the area known as the serving zone to utilize for their serve
	1. Both feet must be on or in front of the **short line**. If any part of the foot extends beyond the **short line** and into the receiving players area, that is a **foot fault**.
	2. During the serve, both feet must stay on or behind the service line for it to be a valid serve. If the serving player extends behind the **service line** it is a **foot fault**.
2. The player returning the serve must stay behind the receiving line (with their entire body) during the serve until:
	1. The ball hits the floor on a valid serve
	2. The ball crosses the receiving line

**What’s a Valid or Good Racquetball Serve?**

In order for a serve to be a good serve and be eligible to be returned by the opposing team, the following things must occur:

1. The serving player must make one continuous movement once they start their serve
2. The ball must bounce once in the **service zone** before striking it with a racquet
	1. Should the ball bounce more than once before striking it, it is a **side out**
	2. Should the ball bounce outside the **service zone** during the serve is a **fault**
3. The served ball must hit the front wall first
4. The ball must travel beyond the short line before bouncing
5. The ball may hit one side wall before the first bounce
6. The ball must bounce within the short line and back wall

**Doubles Serving Rules**

The rules for doubles serving are more or less the same as singles but there are naturally a few differences:

* Your doubles partner has to stand in either one of the service boxes. Both feet must be within the service box and their back must be to the wall from the start of the serve until the ball passes the short line.
	+ If a player steps out early or begins the serve outside of the service box it is a **foot fault**
* If a served ball hits your partner, it is a **fault**, not a side out
* The team who starts the serve of the first game gets one side out and then the serve goes to the other team
* After the first side out happens, both players on the team will get a chance to serve before the serve goes back to the other team
* Either player on the team can opt to serve first when it is their team’s time to serve
	+ When a side out is called, the other player on the team gets to serve until a side out is called on them

**Determine Who Serves First**

This may be obvious but it’s worth covering. Come up with an agreed upon way to see who the first person is to serve. The most common ways to do this are to flip a coin outside the court, lag to see who serves first, or if you have a ref, they can write down a 1 or 2, A or B, or any other fair method to designate who starts the game as the server.

**What is a Serving Fault?**

Some serves are not valid (or bad serves), and they are considered faults. The result of a faulty serve is the opportunity for the same player to serve a second time. If a player makes two consecutive faults it results in a side out and the other team serves. Serving faults consist of the following:

* **Long Serve** - This occurs when the ball travels off of the front wall and hits the back wall without bouncing between the short line and the back wall (including or not including a side wall)
* **Short Service** or **Short Serve** - This occurs when the ball travels off of the front wall and bounces before travelling beyond the **short line**
* **Three Wall Serve** or **3-Wall Serve** - This occurs when the ball travels off the front wall and hits both side walls before bouncing in play (common with Z serves)
* **Ceiling Serve** - This happens when a ball hits the front wall and then proceeds to hit the ceiling (not to be confused with a **Non-Front Wall Serve**)
* **Screen Serve** - This happens when a player hits a valid serve but passes by the server so closely that the returning player does not have a clear view of the ball. The receiver must be in a returnable position at this time

**Side Out Serves**

Some serves result in a side out, where you immediately lose the serve when one of these things happen:

* Two **serving faults** happen consecutively (back-to-back)
* **Non-Front Wall Serve** - Any serve where the ball does not hit the front wall first. This means the ball strikes a side wall, the ceiling, or the floor first
* **Touched Serve** - Any ball that hits the front wall then proceeds to hit the player serving the ball or any part of their equipment
* **Illegal Hit or Illegal Serve**- Any time the ball is hit with the handle of the racquet, a body part, hits the ball more than once, or is carried by the racquet
* **Fake or Balked Serve** - This occurs when a player begins the motion of the serve and stops the serve or fakes the serve in an attempt to deceive the other player or learn information.

**Types of Serves in Racquetball**

There are a variety of racquetball serve types, however there are a few that every player should be aware of. It’s important to have a variety of serve types in your arsenal in order to take advantage of player weaknesses and opportunities that present themselves in a game or match. The ones we will cover here are the drive serve, the lob serve, and the z serve.

**Drive Serve**

The drive serve is the serve that generates the most power. There are many variations of the drive serve that can be used to keep your opponent guessing. We will cover some of the most common ones here, but first a video on the basics of the drive serve.

**Backhand Drive Serve**

This is a drive serve that is targeting the opponent's backhand. This can be frustrating as most people are weaker on their backhand. The objective would be to hit the drive serve so it bounces low and in the corner of the opposing players backhand.

**Forehand Drive Serve**

This drive serve targets the opponent’s forehand. Some players are weaker on their forehand or it’s good to use to mix it up if you have been serving a majority of serves to their backhand. This keeps them on their toes and makes your backhand serves more effective.

**Wrap Around Drive Serve**

The goal of this drive serve is to try and get the ball to bounce near the opponent's left foot. This can get the opponent spinning in a circle and returning the shot off balance or on the run. Aim to hit the sidewall around the encroachment line (the dotted line).

**Jam Serve**

The goal of this serve is to hit it at the same height as a normal drive serve where the ball barely makes it over the short line. On this serve, you want to aim for the left wall right at the short line so that your opponent thinks you are serving to the left side of the court, so that when they step left, the ball comes right back at their body with the possibility of rolling out.

**Drive Serve Videos**

**Lob Serve**

Lob serves may seem simple to return, however, a well-executed lob serve can be one of the most frustrating serves for a player to return. The reason for this is a great lob serve forces the returning player to hit a defensive shot.

When executing the lob serve, your objective is to have the ball bounce somewhere near the receiving line, so they are forced to either cut it off or retreat to the back wall. If they retreat, back, there will be a good chance the player has to return the ball somewhere shoulder height, making them play a poor offensive shot or a defensive shot, such as a ceiling ball. This is a touch serve, precision and placement are the key to a lob serves success.

**How to Hit a Lob Serve**

Here’s Rocky Carlson going over some of the basics of how to hit a lob serve:

**Advanced Lob Serves**

There are several variations of the lob serve. The following will cover some of the most effective lob serves you should consider adding to your serving arsenal.

**Lob Nick Serve**

The goal is to get the opponent to cut the ball off deep, giving them a difficult opportunity to cut the ball off before the backwall. Your objective should be to have the ball hit the side wall somewhere between 4 to 5 feet of the backwall. This puts them in a very difficult returning position as the ball has the chance of dying along the backwall.

**Lob Z to the Forehand**

This serve floats away from the opponent as they are coming in to cut it off, which gives the serving player better position in the middle of the court. A well-executed Lob Z to the Forehand will bounce before the receiving line making the player cut it off at a higher position or take the return deep in the back corner. Your goal is to get this serve to die deep in the back corner.

**Lob Z to the Backhand**

Very similar to the Lob Z to the Forehand, this serve floats away from the opponent as they are coming in to cut it off, giving the serving player great position in center court. A well-executed Lob Z to the Backhand will bounce before the receiving line making the player cut it off at a higher position or take the return deep in the back corner. Ideally, this serve is served with a backhand for the optimal results. Your goal should be to have this serve die deep in the back corner.

**Half Lob Serve**

The Half Lob is a great serve for a couple reasons. First, it gets the returning player to rush their shot if they decide to cut it off. Second, you can get them to hit it a higher contact point by having the ball bounce just beyond the short line. This will make it harder for your opponent to kill the ball

**Advanced Lob Serve Videos**

Watch Rocky Carlson discuss how to execute these different types of lob serves and what the goal of each one should be.

**Z Serve**

The Z-serve can be an effective serve that you can play relatively safely in most situations. You can hit a hard Z serve, a medium Z serve, a slow Z serve and a lob Z serve. Keeping a variety in your speed will keep your opponent on their toes.

**Racquetball Z Serve Video**

Four-time world champion Rocky Carlson covers the various ways you can hit a Z serve for the maximum impact.

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| ***Addition Racquetball Topics*** |
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