



## Official Irish 1-Wall (Wallball) Playing Rules

*As of January 2019*

**Note:**

- Any changes in these rules will be maintained by GAA Handball, and will be available at [www.gaahandball.ie](http://www.gaahandball.ie).
- These playing rules are consistent with the United States Handball Association's (USHA) version of 1-Wall Handball Rules.

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## Section 1. The Game

### Rule 1.1 Types

There are various codes of Handball played worldwide. In Ireland we play 4 codes of Handball; *4-Wall*, *1-Wall*, *Softball* & *Hardball*. The 4-Wall & 1-Wall codes are played internationally, whilst the Softball & Hardball codes are played only in Ireland.

*(See [www.gaahandball.ie/videos](http://www.gaahandball.ie/videos) for video explaining the different codes of Handball)*

In any code of Handball, the game can be played competitively in both a Singles (2 players) & Doubles (4 players) format.

### Rule 1.2 Description

Handball, as the name implies, is essentially a competitive game in which either hand or fist may be used to strike the ball against the front wall. As mentioned above, there are variations of the game played all over the world, with GAA Handball the governing body for the sport in Ireland.

### Rule 1.3 Objective

The primary objective is to return the ball, using the hand or fist, to the front wall before the ball bounces twice.

### Rule 1.4 Scoring

To earn a point, a player must serve the ball and win the pursuing rally.

A rally is won when one player is unable to return the opponent's shot to the front wall before it touches the floor twice, or when a player returns the ball so that it hits the floor before striking the front wall.

Points can also be scored directly from the serve, if the receiver cannot return the served ball legally. A point scored directly from the serve is called an "Ace".

When the serving side loses one rally in singles (or two consecutive rallies in doubles), it loses the serve. Losing the serve is called a "Hand-Out". In Doubles, two consecutive Hand-Outs is referred to as a "Side-Out".

### **Rule 1.5 The Match**

- a) Matches are played as the best of 3 sets. Adults (Age U16 & above) play sets to 21 points. Juveniles (U15 & below) play sets to 15 points.

*Note exceptions to the above rule for U16 & U17, where sets are played to 21 points, with a tiebreak to 11 points.*

- b) If the first two sets are split between both players/sides, then a “tiebreaker” is played to determine the winner. Side with most points over the first two games serves first in the tiebreaker (See Rule 4.1).
- c) In the case of a match played on a time basis, the player or side with the highest score at the end of the specified time is the winner.
- d) A match can also be won by the first side winning the appropriate number of points, whether it is 15, 21, or 25-point games, as long as it’s specified on the entry.
- e) Substitution is not allowed during a match

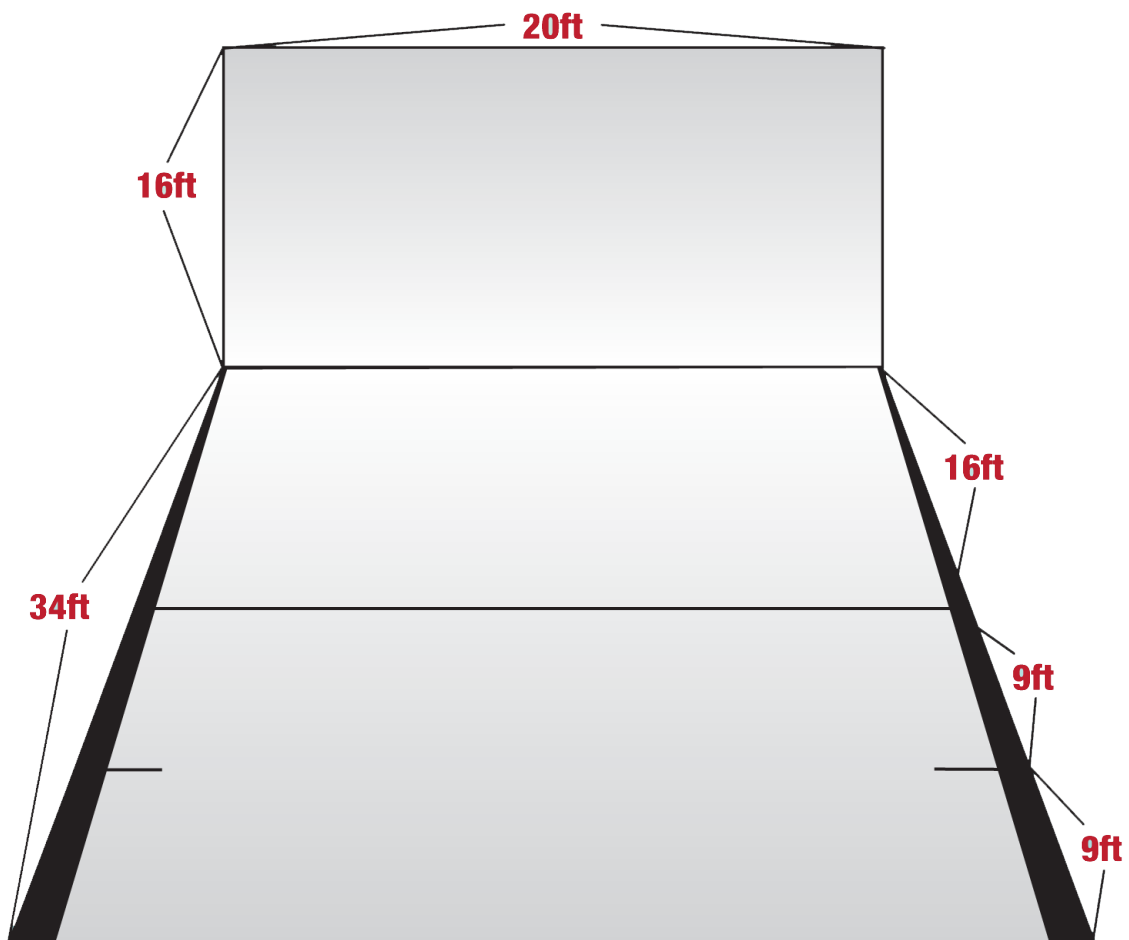
## Part 2. Courts and Equipment

### Rule 2.1 Courts.

The specifications for the standard 1-Wall Handball court are:

#### A. Dimensions.

- 1) **Wall.** 20ft wide (from the outside edge of one side line to the outside edge of the other side line), and 16ft high including any top line. Courts should be numbered.
- 2) **Floor.** The floor shall be 20ft wide from the outside edges of the side lines. It shall be 34ft from the wall to the back edge of the long line. The side lines should extend at least 10ft beyond the long line. There also should be a minimum border of at least 10ft (but ideally 20ft of floor beyond each side line, as well as 16ft beyond the long line) to allow for playing space. In addition, to keep from losing the ball, outdoor courts should be surrounded by a 12-16ft high 1-inch chain link fence.



## **B. Lines and Zones.**

Handball courts shall be divided and marked on the floors with 2-inch wide lines. Recommended colours are white, yellow, or red. The lines shall be marked as follows:

- 1) **Short Line.** The short line runs parallel to the wall, between the sidelines, with its back edge 16ft from the wall.
- 2) **Long Line.** The long line runs parallel to the wall, between the sidelines, with its back edge 34ft from the wall.
- 3) **Top Line.** The top line runs parallel to the floor, between the sidelines, with its top edge 16 feet from the floor (See 2.1B8).
- 4) **Receivers Restraining Lines.** There shall be service markers, lines of at least 6 inches in length extending inward from the side lines, parallel to the short and long lines and located midway between them. The imaginary extension of these lines across the court indicates the service line.
- 5) **Service Zone.** The service zone is the floor inside and including the short, service, and sidelines.
- 6) **Receiving Zone.** The receiving zone is the floor area behind the short line, inside and including the side and long lines.
- 7) **Playing Zone.** The playing zone is the floor area between the wall and the outside edges of the side and long lines.
- 8) **Wall Edge.** The top edge of the wall, if any, is not part of the court. A ball striking the top edge is an out.

## Rule 2.2 Ball.

Only official balls by the sanctioned body shall be used in all GAA Handball events.

### A. Current Specifications.

- 1) **Material.** The material should be rubber or synthetic material.
- 2) **Colour.** Colour is optional.
- 3) **Size.** 1 and 7/8-inch diameter, with a variation of 1/32-inch, +/-
- 4) **Weight.** The ball shall be 61 grams, with a variation of 3 grams, +/-
- 5) **Rebound.** Rebound from free fall, 70-inch drop to a hardwood floor is 48 to 52 inches at a Temperature of 68 degrees F.
- 6) **Other Specifications.** A lighter and/or larger ball may be used for any division provided it is approved and is specified on the entry blank.

### B. Selection

A ball should be approved by the referee for use in each match in all tournaments. During a game the referee has the authority to change balls if he deems it necessary. Though it is the referee's decision, he/she should honour requests when made by both sides or when he/she detects erratic bounces.

## Rule 2.3 Gloves.

- a) **General.** Gloves are optional. However, players must have access to gloves. They will not be required to wear them unless the referee deems it necessary to keep the floor and/or ball from getting wet.
- b) **Style.** The usual hitting surfaces of the glove must be light in colour and made of a soft material or leather. The fingers may not be webbed, connected or removed. Any gloves which provide an unfair advantage are not allowed, and must be replaced at the referee's direction.
- c) **Foreign Substances.** No foreign substance, tape, or rubber bands shall be used on the fingers or on the palms on the outside of the gloves. Metal or hard substances may not be worn under the glove if, in the opinion of the referee, such creates an unfair advantage. On safety grounds, it is recommended to remove rings/wedding bands.
- d) **Wet Gloves.** Gloves must be changed when they become sufficiently wet to moisten the ball. This is the referee's decision. Gloves with holes that expose the skin may not be worn. It is the player's responsibility to have an ample supply of dry gloves.

## Rule 2.4 Playing Attire

- a) **General.** All parts of the uniform, consisting of a t-shirt/jersey, shorts, socks and shoes, must be clean at the beginning of a match. Only customary handball attire, in the referee's judgment, can be worn. Players may not play without shirts. Shirts must be full length, not cut off in the torso.

In all inter-county championship, league and other official matches each player is required continuously to wear a t-shirt/jersey and shorts bearing the colours of the county as registered with the GAA.

In all inter-club championship, league and other official matches each player is required continuously to wear a t-shirt/jersey and shorts bearing the colours of the club as registered with the GAA.

In doubles matches partners must be similarly attired, i.e. both t-shirts/jerseys and shorts should match. Failure to comply with this rule will involve a fine which must be paid before the county may continue to compete in official competitions or championships.

- b) **Colour.** Colour is optional. Unusual patterns that affect the opposing player's view of the ball or cause a distraction may not be worn.
- c) **Wet Shirts.** Referee may demand that a wet shirt be changed. Players must have an ample supply of dry shirts.
- d) **Lettering and Graphics.** Lettering or graphics in poor taste are not allowed.
- e) **Shoes.** Shoes must have soles that do not mark or damage the floor.
- f) **Headband.** Players must have access to a headband. They will not be required to wear it unless the referee deems it necessary to help keep the floor from getting wet.
- g) **Eye-Guards.** Protective eyewear is compulsory on the 1-Wall court to improve player safety and reduce risk of injury. Failure to wear appropriate protective eyewear properly will result in a technical (see Rule 4.10), and the player will be charged a timeout to secure protective eyewear. The second violation in the same match will result in a forfeit.



## Part 3. Officials and Officiating

### Rule 3.1 Tournament Director.

All fixtures/tournaments under the control of GAA Handball shall be managed by an appointed tournament director, who shall designate the officials. Whenever possible, the officials should include a chief of referees, a floor manager, match referees, and line judges.

- A. Responsibilities.** The tournament director is responsible for overseeing the entire tournament. The tournament director, or his/her delegated representative, shall be present at all times.
- B. Rules Briefing.** The current official GAA Handball rules as posted on the [www.gaahandball.ie](http://www.gaahandball.ie) will apply and be made available. Any modifications made by the tournament director must be approved by GAA Handball and stated on the entry form, and/or be available to all players at registration.

### Rule 3.2 Chief of Referees.

The chief of referees is in charge of assigning referees to all tournament matches.

### Rule 3.3 Removal of Officials.

Any official may be removed from a match upon the agreement of both singles players or both doubles teams providing there is agreement by the chief of referees or the tournament director. In the event that an official's removal is requested by one player or team and not agreed to by the other, the chief of referees or the tournament director may accept or reject the request. It is recommended that the match be observed before determining what, if any, action is to be taken. If the request for change is not upheld, the player or team making the request shall be charged with a timeout. If the player or team is out of timeouts, a technical shall be assessed. This is not applicable in the case where both singles players or both doubles teams are in agreement in the request for change.

### **Rule 3.4 Referee.**

#### **A. Pre-Match Duties.**

The referee's authority regarding a match begins once the players are called to the court. Before each match begins, it shall be the duty of the referee to:

- 1) **Playability.** Check on adequacy of preparation of the handball court with respect to playability.
- 2) **Equipment.** Check on availability and suitability of all materials necessary for the match, such as handballs, towels, scorecards, pencils and a timepiece.
- 3) **Assisting Officials.** Check readiness and provide instructions to assisting officials.
- 4) **Court Hinders.** Explain court hinders, if any, to players.
- 5) **Inspect gloves, uniforms and eye protection.** Remind players to have an adequate supply of extra gloves and shirts, and access to headbands. Inspect compliance of gloves and hands with rules. Remind players that failure to wear eye protection properly will result in a technical, and a second violation in a forfeit.
- 6) **Start game.** Introduce players, toss coin to determine order of serve and signal start of game.
- 7) **Time.** The assigned referee should be present 15 minutes before match time.
- 8) **Two-minute warning.** Give a two-minute warning before the match and before each game.
- 9) **Scoring.** Announce the scores before each rally.
- 10) **Blood Injury:** The referee shall instruct a player with a blood injury to leave the court for medical and/or other attention and ensure that any blood stained playing attire is replaced and that any blood stained playing equipment is fully cleaned before play resumes.

## **B. Decisions.**

The referee shall make all decisions with regard to the rules and the referee has the authority to change his/her call. Where line judges are used, the referee shall announce all final judgments. In the absence of line judges, if both players in singles or three out of four in a doubles match disagree with a call made by the referee, the referee should consider reversing his/her call.

- **Spectators.** The referee shall have jurisdiction over the spectators, as well as the players, while the match is in progress. If deemed required by the referee, spectators may be reported and reprimanded by the CCCC.
- **Stoppages:** Should a match be stopped during the course of play because of weather conditions, failing light, or any other unforeseen circumstances, it must be resumed from the point of stoppage with the same players and, if possible, the same officials. A wet or partially wet court shall be considered unplayable.

## **C. Protests.**

Any decision involving a rules interpretation may be protested before the next serve. If required, it will then be resolved by the chief of referees or tournament director. Judgment calls may not be protested.

If the player's protest is upheld, the proper ruling will be made. If the player's protest is not upheld, the player shall be charged with a timeout. If the player is out of timeouts, a technical shall be charged against the player.

A player refusing to accept a referee's ruling shall continue to play "under protest" but may lodge a formal objection in accordance with the rules within seven days. Such "protest" should be noted in the Referee's Report.

## D. Forfeitures.

A match may be forfeited by the referee when:

- 1) **Flagrant Unsportsmanlike Conduct.** Any player refuses to abide by the referee's decision or engages in flagrant unsportsmanlike conduct.
- 2) **Three Technicals.** A player or side receives three technicals in a match, or two technicals for failure to properly wear eye protection.
- 3) **Leaving the Court.** A player leaving the court without the permission of the referee or refusing to continue the match shall automatically be suspended for six months and no Council or Committee of Comhairle Liathróid Láimhe na hÉireann shall have the power to modify this penalty. In the case of doubles matches the referee shall endeavour to find out if the player's partner is willing to continue and report accordingly. The Council or Committee in charge must award the match to the player (in singles) or side (in doubles) willing to continue.
- 4) **Failure to Report.** Players failing to report at the venue at the appointed time shall forfeit the match unless the controlling body considers that extenuating circumstances exist.
- 5) **Player Forfeiture.** A match must be played in its entirety with both players/teams on the court. Partial forfeits, such as any player forfeiting the second game and progressing directly to a tiebreaker, are not allowed. A forfeit of any part of a match shall result in the forfeit of the entire match.

A player or team may be forfeited by the tournament director or official in charge for failure to comply with the tournament or host facility's rules while on the tournament premises, for failure to referee or for any other improper conduct on the tournament premises.

## E. Other Rulings

The referee shall rule on all matters not covered in the GAA Handball Official Rules. However, the referee may be overruled by the chief of referees or tournament director, the latter of whom shall have final authority.

### **3.5 Players Code**

The GAA Handball rules of handball place a presumptive code of integrity and honesty on each player. It is expected that players will always self-enforce violations not detectable by a referee. Such instances would include, but are not limited to, double bounces, wrist balls, and injuries.

### **Rule 3.6 Line Judges.**

#### **A. Line Judges.**

There should be a line judge, positioned at the most advantageous viewpoints, for each of the side lines, the short line and the long line.

#### **B. Duties and Responsibilities.**

Line judge duties shall be to call "out" the balls that hit the floor or the wall off the court and to call faults on their respective lines as they occur. The short line judge may call skip balls, backswing hinders and two bounce returns at the discretion of the referee.

If a line judge is uncertain, he/she should abstain from making a call. The referee may substitute his/her decision on a call.

Line judges also are designated to help decide appealed calls. In the event of an appeal, and after a very brief explanation of the appeal by the referee, the line judges must indicate their opinions of the referee's call. The signal to show agreement with the referee is arm extended with thumb up, disagreement is shown by thumb pointing down. The signal to show no opinion or that the line judge is unsure, or his/her view was blocked, is arm extended with an open hand and palm down. Line judges shall not signal until the referee acknowledges the appeal and asks for a ruling.

#### **C. Result of Response.**

If all four line judges abstain from giving an opinion, the referee's call stands. Otherwise the call shall follow the opinion of the majority of participating officials (four line judges and one referee.) Disregarding those who abstain, if the majority of the officials agree with the call, the call shall stand. If a majority disagree with the call, the call must be reversed. However if only one official indicates disagreement with the referee's call (whereas the other three officials have abstained) then this is a tie, in which case the referee may let the call stand, reverse the call or call for a replay.

### **Rule 3.7 Appeals.**

#### **A. Appealable Calls.**

- i. Any player may appeal a short or other service fault. Any player may also appeal receiving line violations. If the server appeals a short or other service fault, and the appeal is upheld, the server is awarded the serve over. If the server had one short, the call would cancel the previous fault call, and the server would be awarded two serves, because he/she was judged to have made a legal serve. If, in the opinion of the referee, the ball could not have been returned, a point shall be awarded the server. If the appeal is not upheld, the call would be two shorts, a side out.
- ii. If, on the first serve, the server appeals a non-call of a short or other service fault, and the appeal is upheld, the server is awarded a second serve.
- iii. After the rally has ended, either player may appeal on a double-bounce call or non-call, kill shots called good, kill shots called no good and court hinders. The outcome may result in a point being awarded, a side out, or a replay.
- iv. After the rally has ended, either player may also appeal faults, restraining line violations, and skip serves not called. If the appeal is upheld, the player is awarded the appropriate call. At no time may a player appeal a hinder serve, hinder (other than court hinders), technical's or other discretionary calls.

#### **B. How to Appeal.**

A player must make appeals directly to the referee before the referee announces the score. The referee will then request the opinion of the line judges. The referee may also appeal to the line judges if he/she is uncertain of his/her own call, and may then maintain, reverse or nullify the call in question. A replay shall be called if the referee believes it is necessary in the interest of fairness.

### **Rule 3.8 Marker.**

The scorer, when utilized, shall keep a record of the progress of the game in the manner prescribed by the tournament director. As a minimum, the progress record shall include the order of serves, outs, points, and total points scored each inning by each server.

## **Part 4. Play Regulations.**

### **Rule 4.1 Serve.**

#### **A. Order.**

In singles, the player winning the toss of a coin serves first in the first game. The other player serves first in the second game. If a tiebreaker is necessary, the player who scored the higher total of points in the first two games serves first. If both players score an equal number of points in the first two games, another coin toss will be made to determine which player serves first.

In doubles, the side winning the toss of a coin chooses to serve or receive in the first game. The other side shall choose for the second game. If a tiebreaker is necessary, the team scoring the higher total of points in the first two games shall choose. If both teams score an equal number of points in the first two games, another coin toss will be made to determine which team has the choice.

#### **B. Start.**

Games are started by the referee announcing "play ball," and then the score, "0 serves 0."

#### **C. Place.**

The server may serve from any place in the service zone. No part of either foot may touch the floor beyond the outer edge of either line of the service zone. The server must remain in the service zone until the served ball passes the short line from the wall. Violations are called "foot faults." (See Rule 4.3 C.1).

#### **D. Manner (Legal Serve).**

The server must come to a complete stop in the service zone before beginning the serve. The serve is begun by bouncing the ball to the floor in the service zone. The ball must be hit by the server's hand or fist so that it contacts the wall first and on the rebound contacts the floor in the receiving zone, unless played on the fly. Refer to Rule 4.3C and 4.3D.

#### **E. Time.**

A serve may not be made until the referee has announced the score. The referee shall call point or side out as soon as a rally ends. The receiver then has up to 10 seconds to assume a receiving position. When the receiver has assumed a receiving position or 10 seconds have elapsed, whichever occurs first, and the server has had reasonable time to get to his/her serving position, the referee shall announce the score and the server must serve (hit the ball) within 10 seconds.

If the first serve results in a fault or hinder serve, the referee shall give the receiver a reasonable time to take a receiving position and the server reasonable time to get to his/her serving position. The referee shall then announce "second serve" if the serve was a fault, or "first/second serve, one hinder serve" if a hinder serve, after which the server must serve within 10 seconds.

*Part 4, Rule 4.1 E: Interpretation No. 4*

*After the rally is over, the referee should immediately call "point" or "side out." The receiver then has 10 seconds to assume his/her ready position, but the server should only have "reasonable time" to get set. The server should not be allowed to stall by slowly retrieving the ball. As soon as the receiver is "ready" and the server has had reasonable time to retrieve the ball, the referee should call the score, at which time the server has 10 seconds in which to hit the ball. If the receiver is in his/her ready position and the referee believes that the server is taking too much time retrieving the ball and assuming the serving position, the referee should call the score. The server will then have 10 seconds in which to serve. If the receiver is not in his/her ready position after 10 seconds have elapsed from the time the referee calls "point" or "side out," the referee should call the score and the server may serve immediately or may take up to 10 seconds, whether or not the receiver is ready.*

**Rule 4.2 Doubles.**

**A. Server.**

At the beginning of each game in doubles, each side informs the referee of the order of service, which must be followed throughout the game. Only the first server on the first serving team may serve the first time up. This player must continue to serve first throughout the game.

When the game's first server is put out on his/her initial serve, the side is out. Thereafter, both players on each side shall serve until an out for each occurs. It is not necessary for the server to alternate serves to the opponents.

When the first partner loses their serve, a "Hand-Out" is called. When the second partner loses their serve, a "Side-Out" is called.

**B. Partner's Position.**

In doubles, the server's partner must stand outside the side lines, astraddle the indicated service line, and may not enter the playing zone until the served ball passes him. A violation is called a "foot fault."



### Rule 4.3 Defective Serves.

There are three types of defective serves that result in the following:

#### A. Dead-Ball Serves (Replay)

A dead-ball serve results in no penalty and the server is given another serve without cancelling a prior defective serve or hinder fault. This occurs in the following situations:

- 1) **Court Hinders.** If a served ball takes an erratic bounce due to a court obstruction or wetness (before the serve has become a legal serve) a court hinder is called and the serve is replayed.
- 2) **Broken Ball.** If the ball is determined to have broken before the serve has become a legal serve, an approved ball must be put into play and the serve shall be replayed. (See Rule 4.6.J)
- 3) **Straddle balls.** A legally served ball that travels between the legs of the server is an automatic hinder serve.
- 4) **Moving on Service.** The server or his partner moves out of the way of a legally served ball from the wall, hinder may be called not voiding any previous faults. This call, like any other hinder, is based on interference affecting the play. If there is initial interference, but the receiver still has time to get into good position, a hinder should not be called. In such a case the referee should not make the call too quickly. He/she should watch the reaction of the receiver. The receiver should be given the benefit of any doubt, as long as he/she is properly positioned (See Rule 4.3C6).

#### *Part 4, Rule 4.3 B. (1): Interpretation*

*This is a difficult call because there will be instances in which the receiver will be hindered, but the ball has been hit so high that it is going to result in a setup and the receiver will have time to get into a good position to attempt his/her shot. The hinder serve, like any other hinder, is based on interference affecting the play. In the case just mentioned, there is initial interference, but the receiver still has time to get into good position so that the momentary hinder will not affect the play. In such a case, the referee should not make the call too quickly, but should watch the reaction of the receiver. If the referee feels that the receiver hesitates getting into position, a hinder should be called. If, however, the receiver moves quickly and obviously is going to have time to get into good position for a shot, the hinder should not be called.*

The receiver should be given the benefit of any doubt so long as his/her receiving position is in the centre of the court. However, if the receiver

positions himself/herself to one side of centre or anticipates the serve is going to be hit to one side and moves in that direction too quickly, and the serve is hit to the opposite side, a hinder should not be called. It is also important that the referee attempt to position himself/herself so that he/she will have the same angle of view as the receiver. The best answer to this dilemma is: When in doubt, call a hinder serve.

## **B. Fault Serves.**

The following serves are fault serves, and any two that are hit consecutively before a legal serve is executed results in an out:

### **1) Foot Fault.**

- a) The server begins the service motion with one or both feet touching the floor outside the service zone
  - b) The server's foot touches the floor outside the service zone before the served ball passes through the plane of the back edge of the short line from the wall.
  - c) In doubles, when the server's partner is not outside the side lines, astraddle the indicated service line, or enters the playing zone before the served ball passes him/her
- 2) **Short Serve.** Any serve that first hits the wall and on the rebound hits the floor in front of, or on, the short line, on or between the side lines.
  - 3) **Long Serve.** Any serve that first hits the wall and on the rebound hits the floor in back of the long line and on or between the side lines. During tournament play, receiver(s) must not catch a serve that is assumed will be long. The referee shall award a point for failure to return.
  - 4) **Bouncing ball outside service zone.** Any serve that is struck on a bounce that was made outside the service zone.
  - 5) **Not hitting ball on first bounce** from a single drop.
  - 6) **Two consecutive hinder serves.** This is the only fault call that cannot be appealed.

**C. Hand-Out Serves.** Any of the following results in an out.

**1) Missed serve.**

Any attempt to hit the ball that results in a total miss, or in the ball touching any part of the server's body other than the hitting hand.

**2) Non-front serve.** Any served ball that does not strike the wall first.

**3) Touched serve.** Any served ball on the rebound from the wall that touches the server, or touches the server's partner. This includes a serve that is intentionally caught. When the partner is hit by the serve, the "out serve" penalty supersedes the partner's foot fault.

*Part 4, Rule 4.3 D (3): Interpretation No. 6*

*Even though the foot fault occurs before the out serve, the out serve penalty takes precedence and shall be enforced. Another example: A server foot faults when contacting the ball and the ball does not hit the wall first. Again, the out serve penalty should be enforced. For this reason, a referee should wait until after the ball is served to call a foot fault.*

**4) Two Consecutive Fault Serves.**

**4) Crotch Serve.** Any serve that hits the crotch of the wall and the floor shall be considered to have hit the floor first.

**5) Out-of-Order Serve.** (i) In doubles, when either partner serves out of order or one player serves both serves. (ii) If the number two player in order of service serves first he automatically disqualifies his partner.

**6) Service Delay.** The server fails to hit the ball within 10 seconds after the referee has announced the score.

**7) Wall Edge.** The top edge of the wall, if any, is not part of the court. A ball striking the top edge is an out.

**8) Outside Serve.** Any serve that, on the rebound from the wall, hits the floor outside of the sidelines is an out against the serving side. During tournament play, receivers must not catch serves that they assume to be out. Referee will award point for failure to return.

## **Rule 4.4 Return of Serve.**

### **A. Receiving Position.**

The receiver or receivers must stand behind the receivers restraining lines (service line) until the ball from the wall passes the short line. Any violation of this rule results in a point for the server.

### **B. Fly Return.**

In making a fly return, the receiver may hit the ball anytime after it passes completely through the plane of the back edge of the short line and no part of his/her body may extend on or over the plane of the back edge of the short line until after contacting the ball. A violation results in a point for the server. After contacting the ball, the receiver and his/her partner may step on or over the short line without penalty.

### **C. Legal Return.**

After the ball is legally served, one of the players on the receiving side must strike the ball either on the fly or after the first bounce, and before the ball touches the floor a second time, to return the ball to the wall on or between the lines first and make it rebound into the playing zone. A returned ball may not touch the floor before touching the wall. Failure to make a legal return results in a point for the server.

## **Rule 4.5. Changes of Serve.**

A server continues serving until he/she or his/her side makes an out. When the server or the side loses the serve, they become the receiver or receiving side, and the receiving side becomes the serving side; and so alternately in all subsequent services of the game.

*Hand-Outs are made by:*

- a) **Out Serve.** The server makes an out serve under Rule 4.3 D .
- b) **Fault Serves.** The server makes two fault serves before executing a legal serve.
- c) **Hits Partner.** The server hits his/her partner with an attempted return.
- d) **Return Failure.** The server or his/her partner fails to keep the ball in play by returning it as required by Rule 4.4 C.
- e) **Avoidable Hinder.** The server or his/her partner commits an avoidable hinder (See Rule 4.9).

In doubles, the side is retired when both partners have been put out, except on the first serve of the game as provided in Rule 4.2 A.

### **Rule 4.6 Rally.**

A rally is defined as when the ball is legally returned and kept in play after a legal serve is executed. Play during rallies must be in accord with the following rules:

**A. One Hand.** Only the front or back of one hand may be used at any one time to return the ball. Using two hands together or any portion of the body other than the hand to hit a ball is an out.

**B. Wrist Ball.** The use of any other part of the body to return the ball, including the wrist or arm above the player's hand, is a violation, even though the wrist or arm may be covered by a glove.

**C. One Touch.** In attempting returns, the ball may be touched only once by one player. In doubles, both partners may swing at the ball, but only one may actually hit it.

**D. Failure to Return.** Any of the following constitutes a failure to make a legal return during the rally:

- 1) The ball bounces on the floor twice before being hit.
- 2) After contact, the ball fails to reach the wall and rebound into the playing zone .
- 3) The ball goes off a player's hand or fist into the gallery.
- 4) A ball that obviously did not have the velocity or direction to be returned legally (See Rule 4.4 C) strikes another player on the court.
- 5) In doubles, a ball struck by one player hits that player's partner.
- 6) Committing an avoidable hinder ( See Rule 4.9 ).

**E. Effect of Failure to Return.** Each violation results in an out or point. Any violation not detected by the referee must be called by the offending player (See Rule 3.5.A).

### **F. Return Attempts.**

**1) Singles.** If a player swings at but misses the ball in play, the player may repeat attempts to return the ball until it touches the floor the second time.

**2) Doubles.** Both players on a side are entitled to attempt to return the ball. If one player swings at but misses the ball, both he/she and his/her partner may

make further attempts to return the ball until it touches the floor the second time.

**3) Hinders.** In singles or doubles, if a player swings at but misses the ball in play, and, in his/her or his/her partner's continuing attempt to play the ball before it touches the floor a second time, an opponent commits unavoidable interference, a hinder is called (See Rule 4.7 ).

**G. Touching the Ball.** Except as provided in Rule 4.7 A.2, any touching of a ball before it touches the floor the second time by a player other than the one making a return is a point or out against the offending player.

**H. Out Ball.** Any ball in play, after the service, striking outside the side-lines or past the long line, is an out or point. During tournament play, the players must not catch balls that they assume to be out. Referee will award an out or point.

**I. Dry Ball and Gloves.** Every effort must be made to keep the ball dry. Deliberately wetting the ball results in an out or point. The ball may be inspected by the referee at any time. If a player's gloves are wet to the extent that they leave wet marks on the ball, the player must change to dry gloves on a referee's timeout. This is strictly a referee's judgment. If a player wishes to change to dry gloves, he/she must hold his/her gloves up to the referee and obtain the referee's permission to change. He/she may not leave the court without the referee's permission. Two minutes are allowed for glove changes. The referee should give a one-minute warning, but the player is still responsible to be back in the court and ready to play within two minutes.

**J. Broken Ball.** If there is any suspicion that a ball has broken on the serve or during a rally, play continues until the end of the rally. An official or any player may request that the ball be examined by the referee. If the referee decides the ball is broken, an approved ball must be put into play and the point replayed. Once a succeeding serve is attempted, the previous rally stands.

The ball does not have to be completely broken to warrant a replay. The referee should call for a replay only if he/she determines that a ball has cracked sufficiently to cause an erratic bounce. If the ball is not evidently broken, but all players are in agreement to switch the ball, then the referee may, at his/her discretion, allow a change of ball. No player shall make any physical effort to determine if the ball is cracked or otherwise unplayable without the express consent of the referee.

**K. Play Stoppage.** If a foreign object enters the court or any other outside interference occurs, or if a player loses a shoe or other properly worn equipment, the referee shall stop the game if it interferes with the continuance of play or poses an immediate danger. However, safety permitting, one rally-ending attempt should be allowed.

*Part 4, Rule 4.6 K: Interpretation*

*In most cases, if a foreign object (such as a ball from an adjacent court) enters the court, the referee should immediately stop play and call a hinder because of the distraction and for safety reasons.*

*However, it might happen that a player would lose a shoe, headband or even a glove. In these cases, the referee should allow the opposing player one opportunity to hit a rally-ending shot if all of the following conditions are met:*

- 1. The referee believes the opposing player is in no danger of stepping on the lost object;*
- 2. The opposing player does not appear to be distracted by the lost object;*
- 3. And the opposing player apparently has an opportunity to hit an offensive, rally-ending shot.*

*If the player is allowed the one offensive shot, one of the following calls should be made immediately afterward: If the player skips the ball in, that player loses the rally. If the player hits a kill shot or pass shot that cannot be retrieved, that player should be awarded the rally. If the player who lost the equipment is able to retrieve the shot, a hinder should be called.*

**L. Replays.** Whenever a rally is replayed for any reason, the server is awarded two serves. All previous defective serves are voided.

## Rule 4.7 Dead-ball Hinders.

### A. Dead Ball Hinders

Dead ball hinders as described in this rule result in the point being replayed. When called by the referee, the following are dead ball hinders.

- 1) **Court Hinders.** If, after the ball has been legally served, in the referee's opinion, an erratic bounce is caused by a court obstruction or irregularity, a court hinder should be called. The player should not stop play at any time in anticipation of a call. Included in court hinders is the ball that hits a wet spot on the floor, causing it to skid. This is the referee's call, not the player's.

*Part 4, Rule 4.7 A.(1): Interpretation*

*Balls that skid on wet floors are court hinders, assuming that the player was in position to make a return had the ball bounced truly.*

- 2) **Ball hits Opponent.** When a returned ball touches an opponent on the fly before hitting the wall.

*Note if the shot obviously would not have reached the front wall on the fly, in the referee's opinion, the player who is hit by the shot will be awarded the rally.*

- 3) **Body Contact.** If body contact occurs and the referee believes it was sufficient to stop the rally, either to prevent injury or because the contact distracted or prevented a player from being able to make a reasonable return, a hinder will be called.

Except for the offensive player stopping play during his/her back-swing, physical contact is not an automatic hinder. Any other time an offensive player may immediately stop play and call contact, however, this is not an automatic hinder and the player stops play at his/her own risk. It is the judgment of the referee as to whether the contact impeded the play.

- 4) **Moving on Service.** If the server or his/her partner moves out of the way of a legally served ball. (See Rule 4.3B1)

- 5) **Back-swing Hinder.** A player may not stop play, except on physical contact during his/her backswing. He/she may immediately say "Contact" if he/she wants a contact hinder. If he/she elects to hit the ball, no contact call will be



permitted. The defensive player may not stop play if contact occurs during his/her opponent's back-swing.

- 6) Safety Holdup.** Any player about to execute a return who believes he/she will strike his/her opponent with his/her hand, arm, or ball may immediately stop play and request a dead-ball hinder. This call must be made immediately and is subject to approval by the referee. The referee must grant the hinder if he/she believes the holdup was reasonable and the player otherwise might have been able to return the shot. The referee might also call an avoidable hinder if warranted. (See Rule 4.9 G) This does not affect the rules on legal hinders. (See Rule 4.7 B.1)

*Part 4, Rule 4.7 A.7: Interpretation*

*This situation comes about when the offensive player finds himself/herself unable to execute a swing without **immediately** hitting the opponent with his/her hand, arm or the ball. This rule is designed to increase the safety of all players and is not meant to create additional opportunities for players to stop play. Players who call for a safety hold-up and stop play may find the referee in disagreement, in which case the referee's call prevails.*

- 7) Other Interference.** Any other unavoidable interference that prevents a player from having a fair chance to see or return the ball.

## **B. Yielding Fair Access.**

### **1) Standing Still.**

If a player attempting to play a ball is interfered with by an opponent, who, after his side has played the ball, was perfectly still in front of or aside the player, it is NOT a hinder.

This "legal" hinder is the essence of the 1-Wall game. However, if a player of the side that has just hit the ball stands perfectly still, but his opponent moves back into him in trying to play the ball, not necessarily making contact, and is thus kept from having a fair chance to play the ball, it is a hinder. It is the duty of the player farther from the wall to get out of the way.

### **2) Being moved into the ball.**

If a player on the side that has just hit the ball is moved or pushed unintentionally into the ball, or prevented from getting out of the way of a ball, by an opponent trying to play the ball, it is a dead ball hinder (replay).

*Part 4, Rule 4.7 B.1&2: Interpretation*

*The referee must remember that if the ball is judged to be un-retrievable, a hinder should not be called no matter what kind of interference takes place. However, if the referee is in doubt, the benefit of that doubt should go to the player attempting to retrieve the ball and the hinder should be called.*

## **C. Doubles.**

Both players on a side are entitled to a fair and unobstructed chance at the ball. Either one could have been entitled to a hinder even though it naturally would be his/her partner's ball and even though the partner may have attempted to play the ball and has already missed (not touched) it.

## **D. Effect.**

A hinder call stops the play and usually voids any situation that follows, such as the ball hitting a player who stopped playing because of the call. However, if, in the opinion of the referee, his/her call was not responsible for the player being hit by the ball, the referee may overrule the hinder call and declare either a point or out. The only hinders a player may call are specified in Rules 4.7 A. 5., and 4.7 A.6., and are subject to approval by the referee. Whenever a dead-ball hinder is called, the rally is replayed and any previous fault on the server is voided.

### **Rule 4.75 Hinder Fault.**

During a rally, if a player on the serving side creates a hinder called by the referee, the serving side starts the ensuing service with a fault, except as stated in Rule 4.3 B.

### **Rule 4.8 Avoidable Hinders.**

An avoidable hinder results in an out or a point (See Rule 4.5.E), depending on whether the offender was serving or receiving. Player intent has no bearing on an avoidable call. An avoidable hinder should be called only when a hinder could have been avoided with reasonable effort. A player moving as late as possible to avoid being hit by the ball is not creating an avoidable hinder. (See Rule 4.7 B.1)

Avoidable hinders, which should not be confused with “legal” hinders (See Rule 4.7 B.1), are called when:

- a) Failure to Move.** A player does not move sufficiently to allow his/her opponent his/her shot.

#### *Part 4, Rule 4.8 A: Interpretation*

*The player standing further from the wall must move out of the way of his opponent even though it may mean moving to an undesirable court position. If a player assumes such a position and there is a collision, or there is interference with the stroke of the player trying to strike the ball, the hinder is avoidable.*

- b) Blocking.** A player moves into a position that effects a block or crowds his/her opponent about to return the ball; or, in doubles, one partner creates a hinder by moving in front of an opponent as his/her partner is returning the ball.

#### *Part 4, Rule 4.8 B: Interpretation*

*This call is just the opposite of the "failure to move" avoidable hinder. When a player "creates" a hinder by his/her movement, it is also avoidable. Sometimes a player, in the effort to get into a better court position, will cause contact with an opponent who is about to hit the ball, or a player will move in so close to an opponent who is hitting the ball as to cause a possibility of body contact. In either case, an avoidable hinder should be called. It is also an avoidable hinder if one player, just as his/her partner is hitting the ball, moves directly in front of an opponent creating a hinder, not to be confused with a "legal " hinder.*

- c) Moving into Ball.** A player moves into the path of and is struck by the ball just played by his/her opponent.

*Part 4, Rule 4.8 C: Interpretation*

*This avoidable hinder may occur almost anywhere on the court. A player has an offensive setup; in his/her effort to get into a more favourable position, the defensive player moves into the path of the ball and is hit. This is avoidable. In this case, the referee must use judgment and not call an avoidable if he/she feels the ball was "mis-hit" and that the defensive player was moving into a non-hindering position in which he/she would not have been hit if the ball had been hit truly.*

- d) Pushing.** A player forcibly pushes an opponent during a rally.

*Part 4, Rule 4.8 D: Interpretation*

*This avoidable hinder may occur when a player pushes a player, no matter how slightly, who is about to hit the ball, or when a player forcefully pushes a player in the attempt to get into position for his/her shot. An accidental push of a slight nature by an offensive player should not be called avoidable.*

- e) View Obstruction.** Moving across an opponent's line of vision just before he/she strikes the ball.

*Part 4, Rule 4.8 E: Interpretation*

*Generally, this type of avoidable hinder occurs after a player has hit the ball and finds himself/herself out of position. In the effort to move into a better court position, he/she crosses the eventual path of the ball just before the ball reaches the opponent, thereby obstructing the opponent's view of the ball.*

- f) Distraction.** Any avoidable distraction or intimidation that would interfere with the offensive player or team.

*Part 4, Rule 4.8 F: Interpretation*

*This avoidable hinder should be called against a player who attempts to move in very close to an opponent in an attempt to cause a distraction.*

- g) Talking During the Rally.** Aside from appeals and rally ending calls, there is no need for talking during a rally except in doubles, when the team on the offense is allowed to briefly communicate which partner is to hit, or not to hit, the ball. Under no circumstances may a player say anything while an opponent is playing the ball.
- h) Stroke Interference.** Any positioning that would not allow the opponent to use a normal stroke. This especially applies to a player moving in too close and being hit by, or restricting the follow-through of, the player hitting the ball.

*Part 4, Rule 4.8 G: Interpretation*

*The stroke includes the back-swing as well as the follow-through of the arm. If a player is contacted during any part of the stroke by the player hitting the ball, an avoidable hinder should be called, assuming the player who was hit could have avoided the interference with reasonable effort. This interference might not have affected the shot, but it doesn't matter if the ball reaches the wall or not. This avoidable hinder must be called for safety reasons.*

- i) Improper Equipment.** The loss of any improperly worn equipment, or equipment not required on court, that interferes with the play or the safety of the players constitutes an avoidable hinder.

*Part 4, Rule 4.8 H: Interpretation*

*Improperly worn equipment includes eye protection that requires some type of strap in order to stay on the head. Failure to wear such a strap could be considered improperly worn equipment. Gloves that are not snugly attached might also be improperly worn equipment. Equipment not required could be items such as a baseball cap or jewellery.*

## **Rule 4.9 Technical's.**

A technical is assessed for unsportsmanlike-like conduct or for improperly wearing eye protection. If a referee issues a technical, one point shall be deducted from the offender's score. The technical has no effect on service changes or side outs. If the technical occurs between games or when the offender has no points, the result will be that the offender's score will be a negative one. Three technical's in a match, or two for eye protection infractions, on a singles player or a doubles team will result in a forfeiture.

### **A. Types.**

Some examples of actions that may result in technical's are:

- 1) Too frequent complaints made against the referee's judgment.
- 2) Abuse of appeal privileges.
- 3) Profanity.
- 4) Excessive arguing.
- 5) Threat of any nature to opponent or referee.
- 6) Excessive or hard striking, throwing or kicking of ball between rallies.

#### *Part 4, Rule 4.9 A (6): Interpretation*

*If the opponent is hit or narrowly missed by the ball, a technical should be called. On the other hand, if it is the first offense, and the opponent was in no danger of being hit, a technical warning should be issued.*

- 7) Failure to wear eye protection properly.
- 8) Protests lost after all timeouts have been used.
- 9) Anything considered unsportsmanlike behaviour.

### **B. Warnings.**

If a player's behaviour is not so severe as to warrant a technical, a technical warning may be issued without a point deduction and should be accompanied by a brief explanation of the reason for a warning. A technical warning may precede the penalty of a technical but is not necessary.

## Rule 4.10 Timeouts

### A. Timeouts.

Any player may request a timeout, but not after the referee has announced the score, called “second serve” after a fault serve, or called “first/second serve, one hinder serve” after a hinder serve.

- Timeouts must not exceed one minute.
- Three timeouts are allowed each side per 21-point game.
- Two timeouts are allowed during an 11-point game.
- Timeouts may be called consecutively.
- Players may leave the court during a timeout.

### B. Equipment Timeout.

At the discretion of the referee, equipment timeouts may be granted for shoes that come off during play, broken shoelaces, torn equipment, wet gloves, wet shirts, wet floor, or other reasons. Players are not charged for such timeouts.

- Two minutes is the maximum time allowed.

### C. Injury.

No timeout shall be charged to a player who is injured during the match. An injured player shall not be allowed more than a cumulative total of 15 minutes of injury timeout during a match. If the injured player is unable to resume play after a period totalling 15 minutes, the match may be awarded to the opponent. Pre-existing conditions (including but not limited to injury and illness), fatigue or cramps do not warrant injury timeouts. For any injury, if the referee or tournament director determines the player cannot continue play the match may be terminated at that time, regardless of cumulative injury time out minutes still available. (See Rule 3.5).

**1) Blood Borne Pathogen.** When a player is bleeding, or when blood is detected on the court or on a player, play must be stopped, the player must be removed from the court, and play cannot resume until:

- a) The bleeding is stopped;
- b) The open wound is covered with a dressing strong enough to withstand the demands of continued play;
- c) Any player whose uniform is soiled with blood changes the part of the uniform affected;
- d) Any surface contaminated with blood is cleaned. Cleaning, including disposal, shall be performed by the host facility. The occurrence of bleeding, by itself, shall not constitute an injury for the purpose of application of the injury timeout provisions of this rule.

**D. Between Games.**

Five-minute rest periods are allowed between games. Players may leave the court.

**E. Postponed by Referee.**

Any games postponed by the referee (due to weather) shall be resumed with the same score.