

INSTRUCTIONS

This Learning Packet has two parts: (1) text to read and (2) questions to answer.

The text describes a particular sport or physical activity, and relates its history, rules, playing techniques, scoring, notes and news.

The Response Forms (questions and puzzles) check your understanding and appreciation of the sport or physical activity.

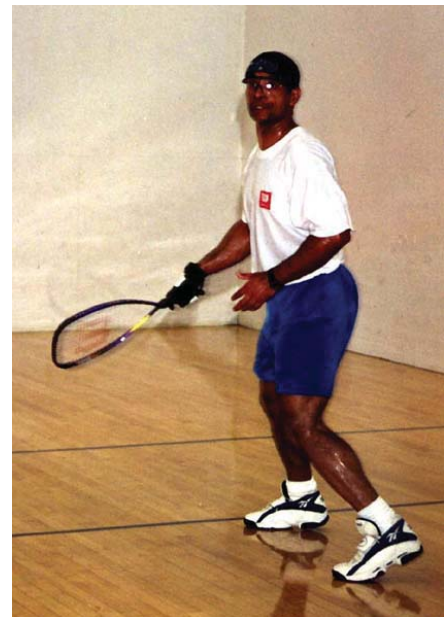
INTRODUCTION

Racquetball is a relatively new game which continues to grow in popularity. It can be played competitively or simply for fun and relaxation.

HISTORY OF THE GAME

Racquetball is an offshoot of the game of tennis. It's tempting to make comparisons between the two sports but we have to be careful not to be misleading! According to many pros, excelling in one of the racquet sports does not necessarily guarantee top performance in another.

Compared to other sports, racquetball is a young sport, having originated in the United States in the 1950s. Although it is strenuous and physically challenging, it does not entail chasing balls all over a court. But like tennis, it does require both superior physical dexterity as well as the ability to strategize quickly and effectively.



HOW RACQUETBALL IS PLAYED

BASIC RULES

Racquetball can be played alone, against one opponent as a singles game, or with four

players as a doubles game.

In racquetball, the first team or player to score 21 points (or to score 11 points if the opposing players remain scoreless) wins. A match is won by the first side to win two games.

The server or serving side tries to win each volley by serving or returning the ball so that the opposition is not able to keep the ball in play. Points can be scored only by the side that is serving when it makes an unreturnable serve or wins a volley. When the serving side loses the volley, it automatically loses the serve (called “a handout”).

THE COURT

Competitive racquetball is played on a four-walled room with a ceiling. The typical court is 20 feet wide, 40 feet long and 20 feet high, with six playing surfaces: the front wall, back wall, two side walls, the ceiling and the floor.

Lines divide the court into sections:

The **short line** runs parallel to the front wall and divides the court into front and back courts.

The **service line** runs five feet in front of the short line and parallel to it.

The **service zone** is the area between the short line and the service line.

The **service boxes** are formed by lines that run 18 inches away from and parallel to the two side walls. During a doubles game, the server’s partner stands in one of the boxes during the serve.



PLAYING TECHNIQUES

STROKES

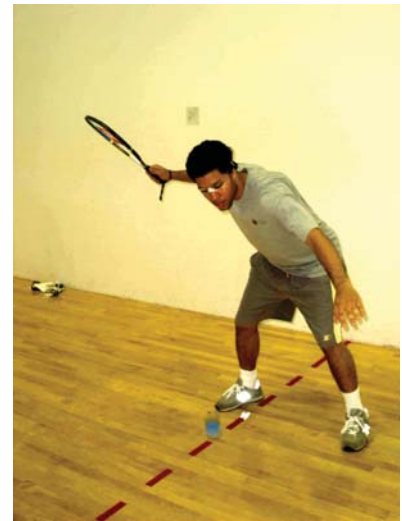
Racquetball is played with three basic strokes: backhand, forehand and overhand.

In the **backhand** stroke, the key point to remember is that the face of the racquet must hit the ball perpendicular to the floor just past the right leg. Your body is bent slightly facing the left wall (right wall for left-handed players). The right arm is raised so that the racquet head is above your left ear. The weight is on your left leg until the racquet is swung; then the weight shifts to your right leg as your arm swings across the front of your body.

As you swing the racquet, keep your eyes on the ball. After you hit the ball, let your arm follow through the arc of the swing until it straightens out again.

The **forehand** stroke is easier to perform than the backhand stroke. However, the body motions used in this stroke are almost identical with those used in the backhand stroke. The racquet is held perpendicular to the floor. The racquet contacts the ball just past the left leg.

The key to the forehand stroke is to bring the racquet arm back behind your head as fast as possible before starting the downswing. Also, keep your wrist cocked back so that it snaps as the racquet meets the ball.



The **overhand** stroke is the least-used stroke in racquetball. It is often used for ceiling shots. It's also widely used by beginning players who are not yet sure of the other moves.

In this stroke, move your racquet arm back and hold it at a 90-degree angle. The overhead motion is similar to tossing a ball in the air. Extend your racquet arm forward as if you were trying to smash the ball.

THE SERVE

As with tennis, the serve is where the game of racquetball begins. The player who serves is the only one who can earn points. As in tennis, the exchange of the ball between players after the serve is called the “volley.”

The proper way to serve is to bounce the ball and hit it with the racquet against the front

wall of the court. As mentioned above, a handout (losing the serve) can occur if there is a foot fault or a bad serve. Three kinds of errors can result in losing the serve:

A **foot fault** occurs when the server's foot extends over the foot boundaries. Two successive foot faults result in a handout.

A **bad serve** occurs when the ball hits the ceiling, floor or any of the other walls of the court before it hits the front wall.



A **handout** occurs when two successive faults are committed. This can occur when the ball hits the short line on a serve (this is called "a short"), or when the ball hits the rear wall on a serve before it bounces (this is called "a long").

TYPES OF SERVES

The three most important serves in racquetball are the Power Serve, the Lob and the Zee.

The **power serve** (or "Power Drive") is the most common serve used by skilled players. When done correctly, this serve is difficult for the player's opponent to return. A serve which is impossible to return is called an "Ace." On a low bounce, the ball is hit with full strength to a point on the front wall so that the ball rebounds only a few inches high off either side wall.



The **lob** is a much softer serve than the Power Serve. The ball is hit to the top of the front wall so that it rebounds to either side wall and hits the floor near the rear wall. The closer the ball to the rear wall, the more difficult it is for the receiver to return it.

The **zee** is a specialized serve. In this serve, the ball follows a twisted path that resembles the letter "Z." Ideally, the ball will strike the front wall 8 to 16 feet above the floor. It rebounds onto the side wall and travels across

the court, bounces on the floor, and hits the opposite side wall. The ball cannot hit the first side wall before it hits the front wall.

The Zee is a complicated and tricky serve. Considerable practice is required before a player can use it effectively.



SERVE RETURNS

Two rules of thumb when returning balls are:

1. If a ball is below the knee, the player should run toward it and return it.
2. If the ball is above the knee, the player should wait for the ball to rebound off a wall and then return it.

Five other basic rules also should be kept in mind during a game:

1. When the ball is being served, stand at least five feet behind the short line.
2. A ball cannot be returned until it has passed the short line.
3. The ball must be returned before it hits the floor twice. The ball can also be returned on the fly or before it touches the floor.
4. A ball should hit the front wall first. However, it can hit the ceiling or side walls before it reaches the front wall. It must not touch the floor before it touches the front wall.



5. If you swing at the serve and miss, you can recover and make a legal return.

EQUIPMENT AND CLOTHING

Any type of loose, non-binding garments can be worn to play racquetball. Many players wear shorts or lightweight sweat-pants and a T-shirt.

The best shoes to wear are those with gummed soles. These shoes provide the best traction on racquetball court surfaces and will not leave marks on the floor. Serious eye injuries can occur in racquetball because of the enormous force of the ball. Protective eye gear for all racquetball players (beginner or experienced) must be worn according to racquetball official rules.



Racquets for racquetball can be purchased for as little as \$20 or as much as many hundreds of dollars. It is recommended one start with less expensive gear and move up to pricier options as skills improve. Rules state that the racquet must be secured to the player's wrist by a cord or strap. This keeps the racquet from accidentally flying out of the hand and possibly injuring the other player.

RACQUETBALL NOTES AND NEWS (Information taken from a variety of sources including ESPN, NCAA, Wikipedia and newspapers)

The United States has two national racquetball organizations: the American Amateur Racquetball Association (AARA) and the United States Professional Racquetball Association (USPRA). The AARA publishes the official racquetball tournament rules and sanctions racquetball events. The USPRA exists primarily to promote the sport of racquetball and the racquetball teaching profession.

Some of the top racquetball magazines are *Killshot*, P. O. Box 8036, Paducah, KY 42002-8036; *Racquetball*, published by the AARA; and *Racquetball Today*, published by the West Publishing Company.

In addition to print media sources, the Internet has many sources. You might look at

The United States Racquetball Association's website at:
<http://www.usra.org>

At this site you can see the very latest information about the sport at both the amateur and the professional level. The USRA is active in sponsoring programs that involve young players interested in competing at various events.



2011 USRA men's top five national players:

- First Kane Waselenchuk, Texas
- Second Rocky Carson, California
- Third Jack Huezek, Texas
- Fourth Shane Vanderson, Florida
- Fifth Chris Crowther, California

2011 USRA women's top five national players:

- First Paola Longoria, Mexico
- Second Rhonda Rajsich, Ohio
- Third Samantha Solis, Mexico
- Fourth Christie Huczek, Texas
- Fifth Cheryl Gudinas, Illinois



Kane Waselenchuk

Recent International Racquetball Federation World Champions

Men

2011	Jack Huezek (USA)
2010	Kane Waselenchuk (USA)
2008	Rock Carson (USA)
2006	Jack Huezek (USA)
2004	Jack Huezek (USA)

Women

2011	Christie Van Hees (Canada)
2010	Paola Longoria (Mexico)
2008	Rhonda Rajsich (USA)
2006	Christie Van Hees (Canada)
2004	Cheryl Gudinas (USA)

The USRA Intercollegiate program is designed to aid in the development of intercollegiate and intramural programs. Recent USRA Intercollegiate champions are:

Men's Collegiate Singles

Year ***Champion & University***

2011	Taylor Knoth, Oregon State University
2010	Devan Van Valkenburg, Utah Valley University
2009	Blasé Zera, Missouri State University
2008	Tony Carson, Colorado State University
2007	Marc Manley, Nichols College

Women's Collegiate Singles

Year ***Champion & University***

2011	Michelle Key, Arizona State University
2010	Kelly Gremley, Prudue University
2009	Jennifer Stove, University of Wisconsin
2008	Kara Mazur, University of Alabama
2007	Anna Petrick, State College, PA



5. What are “service zones?” “service boxes?”

6. Describe three basic types of strokes in racquetball.

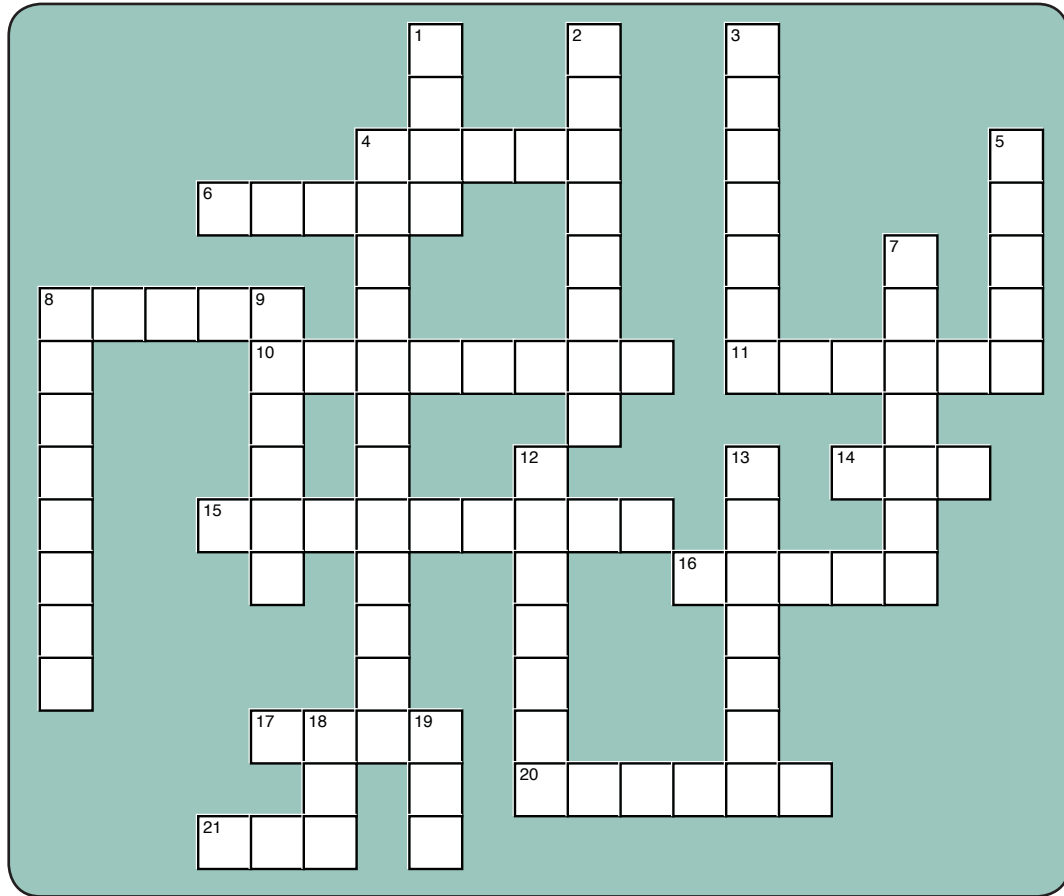
7. It’s often said that “the serve is where the game of racquetball begins.” Why is this true?

8. What three kinds of errors can result in losing a serve?

9. What are the three basic types of serves in racquetball?

10. If a ball is below the knee, what should the player do? What should he/she do for a ball above the knee?

Name: _____ Date: _____



Across:

4. One important type of serve
6. The line that runs parallel to the front wall
8. Service areas formed by lines 18” away from side walls
10. Stroke often used for ceiling shots
11. The cost in dollars of an inexpensive racquet
14. Type of bounce where the ball is hit with full strength
15. ____ and experienced players must wear protective eye gear
16. A ball should hit this wall first
17. Sometimes the ceiling is considered the fifth one
20. Points can only be earned by this player
21. A specialized serve

Down:

1. This fault is a serving error
2. Stroke with the palm of the hand facing the ball and is easier than the backhand stroke
3. The primary tool of the racquetball player
4. The “P” in USPR
5. Length of the court in feet
7. Error when two successive faults are committed
8. Stroke with the top of the hand facing the ball
9. The lob is a ____ serve than the power serve
12. Decade of the 20th century when racquetball originated
13. The line that runs five feet in front of the short line
18. A serve which is impossible to return
19. Type of serve that is hit to the top of the front wall

Name: _____ Date: _____

Physical Education 18 Word Search



Find these words in the above puzzle. Circle the words.

Racquetball

Ace

Zee

Strokes

Handout

Overhand

Forehand

Lob

Rules

Court

Killshot

Tennis

Serve

Garments

Points

Volley

Player

Zone

Ball