

Badminton Rules & Regulations

The Badminton World Federation (BWF) is the official governing body of badminton. This organization is responsible for maintaining the rules pertaining to game play, court and equipment specifications, and the certification of badminton judges and officials. Rules and regulations set forth by the BWF have been adopted by organizations worldwide and are universally accepted as the standard rules. While reading the following, you may come across some strange terms like "rally" and "service," but don't fret. Rally simply refers to the series of shots between opposing sides. Service, on the other hand, is just a fancy term for the act of serving the shuttlecock. For easy reference, here is a simplified version of the rather long and complex BWF Statutes.

Scoring System

A match is in a best-of-three-games format with each game played to 21 points.

A point is awarded for each time a rally ends.

Service is awarded to the side that won the last rally.

At 20-all, the side which gains a 2-point advantage first, wins that game.

At 29-all, the side which reaches 30 first, wins that game.

The side winning a game serves first for the next game.

Interval and Change of Sides

When the side of the leading score reaches 11 points, players may choose to have a 60-second interval.

When a game ends, players are allowed a 120-second interval.

After each game, players change sides.

In the third game, players change sides when the leading score reaches 11 points.

Singles

At the start of each game, service will begin from the right service court.

Service will be taken from the right service court when the server's score is even, and from the left service court when the server's score is odd.

The receiver must be inside the correct service box before service is taken.

Doubles

At the start of each game, service will begin from the right service court.

Service will be taken from the right service court when the server's score is even, and from the left service court when the server's score is odd.

The receiver must be inside the correct service box before service is taken. The receiver's partner may stand anywhere in the court.

If the server's side wins the rally, that team is awarded a point and service continues to be taken by the server.

If the receiver's side wins the rally, that team is awarded a point and service.

Players on each side only change service courts when a rally is won while their side is serving.

Game Play

During play, a fault occurs if:

A player touches the net or poles with the racket, person, or dress.

A player invades the opponent's side by making contact with the shuttlecock past the plane of the net.

A player invades an opponent's court under the net in such a way that an opponent is obstructed or distracted.

During play, a let occurs if:

The server serves before the receiver is ready.

The shuttlecock's base separates from the skirt.

A rally ends if the shuttlecock:

Hits the net or post and begins to fall toward the striker's side of the net.

Hits the surface of the court; or

A 'fault' or a 'let' has occurred.

Playing Area

A singles court is 44 feet long and 17 feet wide. For doubles, alleys 1 foot 6 inches wide along the two longer sides of the court come into play, making the court 20 feet wide. Because many shots fly high into the air, there must be clearance of at least 30 feet above the court. A net stretched across the middle of the court has a top edge set to a height of 5 feet at the center and 5 feet 1 inch at the posts.

Equipment

Badminton rackets weigh between 3.5 and 5 oz. and consist of a leather or terrycloth handle; a long, thin shaft; and a stringed area called the head. Official rules limit the total length of a racket to 26.75 inches. The head of a racket measures 11 inches in length and 8.6 inches in width and is strung with synthetic nylon or gut at between 25 and 35 lb. of tension. Early rackets were made of wood, but badminton rackets are now commonly made of aluminum, graphite, and titanium. Tournament quality shuttlecocks, also called shuttles or birdies, weigh 0.2oz. and consist of 16 goose feathers that protrude from one side a ball shaped cork base. Most shuttles used by casual players are plastic and have synthetic feathers. Both types of shuttles are 2.5 inches long. When the shuttlecock is in the air, its aerodynamics cause it to spin so that when players hit it, they almost always strike the cork, not the feathers.

Skills and Strokes

Drives are low flying shots hit straight across the net. *Net Shots* are aimed at the front area of the opponent's court and can be hard-hit or delicate. The *lift or lob* is an offensive stroke made from the middle or front of the court. This shot sends the shuttle in a high arc above the opponent's reach. The *clear* is a similar stroke, but it is used for defensive purposes when players find themselves out of position. The high arc gives players time to return to the center of the court. The *smash* is hit to the floor so forcefully that the opponent has no chance to return the shuttle before it hits the ground. This is the deadliest attacking stroke in badminton and the hardest recorded was more than 160 mph.

History

The game of badminton has no specific origin. It is believed that a game using a shuttle or birdie was played in China about 2,000 years ago. The game badminton came from the town of Badminton in England where the game was played in the middle 1800's. Badminton became a medal sport in the 1992 Summer Olympic Games.