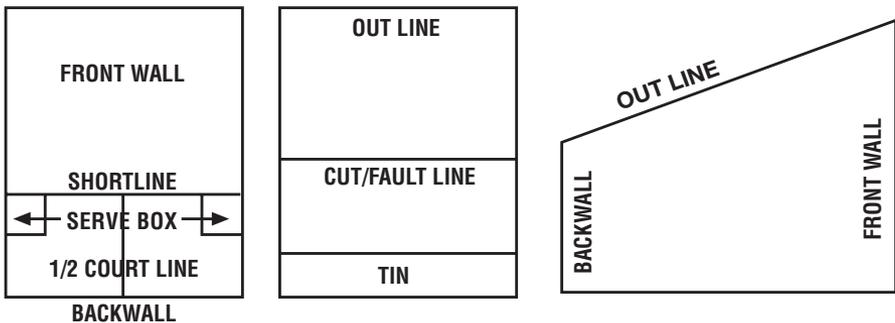


# AN INTRODUCTION TO SQUASH

This introduction is meant to teach a person with no knowledge of squash, enough about technique and the rules of the game, to be able to go onto the court and play a game. Squash is a game for all ages and levels of ability. Even if you have not seriously played a “racket sport” before you will find it reasonably easy to master the basics and have an enjoyable work out with an opponent.

## THE COURT:



The back of the court is divided into two areas called “half courts”, with a serve box in each half. The front wall has a board or tin and a cut or fault line. The top of the court is defined as a red line.

# THE RULES:

## Object of the game:

In squash two people with rackets strike the ball so that it goes over the “tin” with the aim of hitting the ball so that their opponent cannot return it before it bounces twice. The limit outside which they may not touch is defined by the red line around the top of the court. For a shot to be good, it must hit the front wall above the tin but it doesn’t matter if it hits the other walls either before or after the front wall. The receiver may hit the ball on the volley or after the bounce.

## Scoring:

When the server wins the rally, he scores a point, when the non-server wins a rally he gains the right to serve. A game is played to 9 points except at 8 – all for the first time, the non-server may choose to play to either 9 or 10. A match consists of the best of 5 games.

## Service:

The right to serve at the start of the match is determined by spinning the racket. The server retains the right to serve as long as he/she wins points, serving from alternative sides for each point. The server stands with one foot inside the “service box” and hits the ball directly onto the front wall above the “cut” line. The server can have only one attempt to serve and loses the stroke (serve) if:

- The ball touches any wall other than the front wall first.
- The ball (unless volleyed) does not land in the back quarter of the court opposite to the one served from.
- The ball does not land between the cut line and the out line (on the line is out or fault).
- The server does not have at least part of one foot in contact with the floor within the service box, without touching the service box line.
- The server makes an attempt to serve but fails to strike the ball.
- The serve touches the ceiling or lights.

## Obstruction:

You now know enough of the rules to be able to start to play the

game. However, you won't play long before noticing that the presence of two players in a confined area wielding rackets can lead to problems of interference. The rule on interference can be stated simply as follows:

Players must avoid causing interference to their opponents. If they do not try to avoid this, they lose the point. If they try to avoid interference but cannot, then the point is played again (called a let). If however, interference is accidental, but the striker is prevented from hitting a winning shot, then the striker wins the point. Interference includes not allowing the opponent to hit the ball directly to the front wall.

### **Competitive Squash:**

Two officials, namely a referee and a marker, control a competitive squash match. The referee is in charge and the marker assists him. The marker's responsibilities are few but he is constantly involved in the game. He keeps the score and calls the play, deciding if the server serves a fault or if the striker does not make a good return of the ball. The players may appeal against any decision of the marker. It is the referee who decides these appeals, awarding the stroke as called if he agrees with the marker, and a let if he is not sure. If a good shot is called wrongly and he upholds the player's appeal then a let is played. In this last case, if the shot called wrongly was an undisputed winner then the striker shall win the stroke.

It is the referee who decides appeals by the player's that they have been obstructed in attempting to play the ball. He will award strokes if the obstruction is deliberate or if accidental obstruction prevents a winning shot being played. He will award a let should obstruction occur even though the players have attempted to avoid it.

The referee also has the powers of disqualification and is empowered to award a game or a match against players who contravene certain rules.



## Tips on the game:

- 1) Before going on court, warm up and gently stretch your muscles. This will help prevent injuries from sudden exertion at the beginning of the game.
- 2) Hit the ball to a good length hard or soft, this means to the back of the court. The ball should land deep in the court so your opponent can't return it easily from the back corner, if the ball lands short of a good length, aim higher on the front wall.
- 3) Aim into the back corners and the front corners.
- 4) Keep the ball close to the sidewalls, it's more difficult to hit.
- 5) When you have played your shot go back to the "T"- from this position (centre of court) you are in a position to cover wherever in the court your opponent returns the ball.
- 6) Don't hit the ball down the middle of the court.
- 7) Watch the ball at all times, you must watch it leave your racket and follow it to your opponents racket and so back to your own racket even if it means turning your head around to see the ball.
- 8) Serve to a good length, which is deep into the opposite corner. Hit the ball high onto the front wall.
- 9) After serving move to the "T" watching the ball.
- 10) Return a service to a good length, preferably straight down the side wall and then go back to the "T".
- 11) Make your opponent run. Place the ball as far away from him as possible. If he is in the centre of the court move him out to the back. The centre of the court is your position!
- 12) Volley the ball wherever possible. This gives your opponent less time to get set.
- 13) Know when to delay or hold your shot. Usually this is when you have time to spare. This may wrong foot your opponent. If however your opponent has struggled to return the ball then taking the ball as early as possible will put more pressure on your opponent.
- 14) Vary the pace. Don't hit the ball hard all the time; lob it occasionally to test your opponents in the air.
- 15) Look for short shots. Get good length shots and then make your opponent chase your short shots to the front court. This can be a soft drop shot or a hard hit kill shot. Play a short shot when your opponent is behind you.
- 16) Don't get in your opponents way, move quickly away after you've played your shot.
- 17) Keep your racket up. It's a shorter distance to the beginning of your swing so you will be ready to hit the ball quicker.
- 18) Play, as much as you can, you will improve quicker.
- 19) Remember it's only a game. HAVE FUN.