RESOURCES

This section lists additional resources you can use to find out more about badminton. Organizations such as the BWF and USA Badminton list tournament locations, state organizations, and local badminton clubs that have leagues and weekly recreational play. Both the BWF and USA Badminton have Web sites, e-mail addresses, and telephone numbers where they can be contacted:

USA Badminton
One Olympic Plaza
Colorado Springs, CO 80909
719-866-4808
usabf@usabadminton.org
www.usabadminton.org

Badminton World Federation
Batu 3 1/2 Jalan Cheras
56000 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Tel: +6-03-9283 7155
FAX: +6-03-9284 7155
bwf@internationalbadminton.org
www.internationalbadminton.org

GAME RULES AND SCORE KEEPING

Decide who will serve first with a coin toss, a spin of the racket, or a toss and hit of the bird into the air to see toward who it points to when it lands. If you win the toss, you may choose to serve or receive or you can choose the side of the court you wish to start on. Whichever choice you make, your opponent gets to choose from the remaining options.

Both opponents begin the game by serving from the right court with zero or love-all. Anytime you are serving from the court in which you started, your score should be even. An illegal serve results in loss of serve and a point for your opponent.

Hit the serve diagonally across to your opponent. The feet of the server must be in the proper court and in contact with the floor until the serve is made. When the receiver is ready, the server has only one attempt to put the shuttle into play with an underhand (below the waist) serve. The receiver can stand anywhere in the proper court but must keep both feet in contact with the floor until the serve is delivered. The receiver is considered to have been ready if an attempt is made to hit the serve. After each rally or exchange, the server initiates the serve from the appropriate side depending on whether his or her score is odd or even. The score should always be announced before each service with the server’s score given first. If a serve hits the top of the net and continues into the proper court, it is legal and play continues.

In both singles and doubles, the first serve is always made from the right side. This is because the server’s score or serving team’s score is zero, which is an even number. Anytime after the beginning of the game that the server’s score or serving team’s score is even (2, 4, 6, 8, and so on), the service is delivered from the right side. If a point is made and the score is odd (1, 3, 5, 7, and so on), the server serves from the left side. The server’s score dictates which side he or she serves from.

In doubles, one partner starts on the right side and one partner starts on the left side. Where you start is your even court. If the score is odd, partners should be opposite of where they started. If a point is made, the server changes courts and serves diagonally across to the other side. Your score dictates which side you serve from after your opponents have lost their serve. If one partner loses her serve, it is called service
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over or side out. Your opponents now have the chance to serve. Just as in singles, all doubles games are played to 21 points.

In singles play, the service court is long and narrow. The side alley is out of bounds; the back alley is in bounds or good. The serve must carry past the short service line, which is 6.5 feet (about 2 m) from the net, and must not carry beyond the back boundary line. The lines are considered part of the court and in bounds. A bird that lands on a line is considered to be good. Read step 9 to learn the strategy involved in returning the singles serve and winning the singles rally.

The service court in doubles play is short and fat. The side alley is in bounds and the back alley is out of bounds on the serve. However, once the bird is in play, the back alley is good. The serve must carry past the short service line and must not carry beyond the doubles long service line. Step 10 explains strategies involved in returning the doubles serve and winning the doubles rally. Games normally are played to 21 points in all events.

During the early 1990s, the IBF experimented with a new scoring system for singles, doubles, and mixed doubles, in which games were played to nine points and the winner of the match was the player who won three out of five games. There was no setting or extension of a tied game as defined in the original rules. Also there was no requirement of winning by a minimum of two points. That attempt at changing the scoring system was temporary and only slightly successful so the older method of keeping score was retained for the next decade. The WBF now supports the elimination of the older scoring method that included games to both 15 and 11 points along with the unique concept of setting. At its annual general membership meeting, the former IBF voted to adopt the rally point system for all IBF sanctioned events. The USAB Board of Directors voted to adopt this policy for all USAB national ranking tournaments. Nonranking tournaments that wish to be sanctioned by USAB would not be required to use rally scoring at this time. The rationale for this suggested change was to make the sport more marketable to spectators and television, as well as to improve the sport’s acceptance and understanding by the general population. Preliminary observations indicate match time may be reduced by as much as 25 percent. The rally scoring system requires players to be more alert and to score quickly in these abbreviated games. Athletes will be required to adapt to a new strategy for winning matches, but they will also benefit from this exciting and potentially pressure-packed format.

The simplified new rally points scoring system as amended and adopted by the BWF and USAB effective August 2006 is summarized in the sidebar “Simplified New Rally Points Scoring System.”

In summary, you win the rally and a point if your opponent

- fails to deliver a legal serve;
- fails in attempting to return a legal serve;
- hits the shuttle outside the proper boundary lines;
- hits the shuttle into the net;
- hits the shuttle two or more times on a return;
- touches the net with his or her body or racket while the shuttle is in play;
- lets the shuttle hit the floor inside the court;
- deliberately carries or catches the bird on the racket;
- does anything to hinder or interfere with your return;
- encroaches under the net with his or her feet, body, or racket;
- reaches over the net to hit a return;
- touches the bird with anything other than his or her racket; or
- fails to keep both feet in contact with the floor while serving or receiving.

Any point that has to be replayed is called a let. These should occur very rarely and are usually the result of some outside interference.