

**ABBREVIATED RULES OF SQUASH**  
**(based on the 2001 rules, effective 30-Apr 2001)**

**This abbreviated version of the World Singles Squash Rules is to help players to understand the basics. All players should read the complete Rules. The Rule numbers in brackets in each heading refer to the full Rules.**

**THE SCORING (Rule 2)**

A match is the best of 3 or 5 games.

Each game is played to 11 points. The player who scores 11 points first wins the game except that if the score reaches 10-all, the game continues until one player leads by two points.

Either player may score points (PAR – point–a–rally). The server, on winning a rally, scores a point and retains the service; the receiver, on winning a rally, scores a point and becomes the server.

*(the old scoring method, to 9 points with only the server able to score points, is still available as an option)*

**THE WARM-UP (Rule 3)**

Before the start of a match, the two players are allowed up to 5 minutes (**2½ minutes on each side**) to "warm-up" themselves and the ball on the match court.

When a ball has been changed during a match, or if the match has been resumed after some delay, the players warm-up the ball to playing condition.

The ball may be warmed up by either player during any interval in the match.

**THE SERVICE (Rule 4)**

Play commences with a service. The player to serve first is decided by the spin of a racket. Thereafter, the server continues serving until losing a rally, when the opponent becomes the server and the server becomes "hand out".

The player who wins the preceding game serves first in the next game.

At the beginning of each game and when the service changes from one player to the other, the server can serve from either service box. After winning a rally the server then continues serving from the alternate box.

To serve a player stands with at least part of one foot on the floor within the service box. For a service to be good, it is served directly onto the front wall above the service line and below the out line so that on its return, unless volleyed, it reaches the floor within the back quarter of the court opposite to the server's box.

### **GOOD RETURN (Rule 6)**

A return is good if the ball, before it has bounced twice on the floor, is returned correctly by the striker onto the front wall above the tin and below the out line, without first touching the floor. The ball may hit the side walls and/or the back wall before reaching the front wall.

A return is not good if it is "NOT UP" (ball struck after bouncing more than once on the floor, or not struck correctly, or a double hit); "DOWN" (the ball after being struck, hits the floor before the front wall or hits the tin) or "OUT" (the ball hits a wall on or above the out line).

### **RALLIES (Rule 8)**

After a good service has been delivered the players hit the ball in turn until one fails to make a good return.

A rally consists of a service and a number of good returns. A player wins a rally if the opponent fails to make a good service or return of the ball or if, before the player has attempted to hit the ball, it touches the opponent (including racket or clothing) when the opponent is the non-striker.

**NOTE:** AT ANY TIME DURING A RALLY A PLAYER SHOULD NOT STRIKE THE BALL IF THERE IS A DANGER OF HITTING THE OPPONENT WITH THE BALL OR RACKET. IN SUCH CASES PLAY STOPS AND THE RALLY IS EITHER PLAYED AGAIN ("A LET") OR THE OPPONENT IS PENALISED.

### **HITTING AN OPPONENT WITH THE BALL (Rule 9)**

If a player strikes the ball, which, before reaching the front wall, hits the opponent, or the opponent's racket or clothing, play stops.

If the return would have been good and the ball would have struck the front wall without first touching any other wall, the striker wins the rally, provided the striker did not "turn".

If the ball either had struck, or would have struck, any other wall and the return would have been good, a let is played.

If the return would not have been good, the striker loses the rally.

### **TURNING (Rule 9)**

If the striker has either followed the ball round, or allowed it to pass around him or her - in either case striking the ball to the right of the body after the ball had passed to the left (or vice-versa) - then the striker has "TURNED".

If the opponent is struck by the ball after the striker has turned, the rally is awarded to the opponent.

If the striker, while turning, stops play for fear of striking the opponent, then a let is played. This is the recommended course of action in situations where a player wants to turn but is unsure of the opponent's position.

### **FURTHER ATTEMPTS (Rule 10)**

A player, after attempting to strike the ball and missing, may make a further attempt to return the ball.

If a further attempt would have resulted in a good return, but the ball hits the opponent, a let is played.

If the return would not have been good, the striker loses the rally.

### **INTERFERENCE (Rule 12)**

When it is his or her turn to play the ball, a player is entitled to freedom from interference by the opponent.

To avoid interference, the opponent must try to provide the player with unobstructed direct access to the ball, a fair view of the ball, space to complete a swing at the ball and freedom to play the ball directly to any part of the front wall.

A player, finding the opponent interfering with the play, can accept the interference and play on, or stop play. It is preferable to stop play if there is a possibility of colliding with the opponent, or of hitting him or her with racket or ball.

When play has stopped as a result of interference the general guidelines are:

The player is entitled to a **let** if he or she could have returned the ball and the opponent has made every effort to avoid the interference.

The player is **not** entitled to a **let** (i.e. loses the rally) if he or she could not have returned the ball, or accepts the interference and plays on, or the interference was so minimal that the player's access to and strike at the ball was not affected.

The player is entitled to a **stroke** (i.e. wins the rally) if the opponent did not make every effort to avoid the interference, or if the player would have hit a winning return, or if the player would have struck the opponent with the ball going directly to the front wall.

### **LETS (Rule 13)**

A let is an undecided rally. The rally does not count and the server serves again from the same box.

In addition to lets allowed as indicated in the paragraphs above, lets can be allowed in other circumstances. For example, a let may be allowed if the ball in play touches any article lying

on the floor, or if the striker refrains from hitting the ball owing to a reasonable fear of injuring the opponent.

A let must be allowed if the receiver is not ready and does not attempt to return the service, or if the ball breaks during play.

### **CONTINUITY OF PLAY (Rule 7)**

Play is expected to be continuous in each game once a player has started serving. There should be no delay between the end of one rally and the start of the next one.

In between all games an interval of 90 seconds is permitted.

Players are permitted to change items of clothing or equipment if necessary.

### **BLEEDING, INJURY AND ILLNESS (Rule 16)**

If an injury occurs which involves bleeding, the bleeding must be stopped before the player can continue. A player is allowed a reasonable time to attend to a bleeding wound.

If the bleeding was caused solely by the opponent's action, the injured player wins the match.

If the bleeding recurs no further delay is allowed, except that the player can concede a game, using the 90 second period between games to attend to the wound and stop the bleeding. If unable to stop it, the player must concede the match.

For an injury not involving bleeding, it must be decided whether the injury was either caused by the opponent or self inflicted or contributed to by both players.

If caused by the opponent, the injured player wins the match if any recovery time is needed.

If self-inflicted, the injured player is allowed 3 minutes to recover and must then play on, or concede a game using the 90 second rest period between games to recover.

If contributed by both players, the injured player is allowed an hour to recover.

A player who is ill must play on or can take a rest period by conceding a game and using the 90 second interval to recover. Cramps, feeling sick and breathlessness (including asthma) are considered illnesses. If a player vomits on court, the opponent wins the match.

### **DUTIES OF PLAYERS (Rule 15)**

Rule 15 provides guidelines for players. For example 15.6 states that deliberate distraction is not allowed. Players should read this rule in full.

Some of the 8 sub-sections deal with situations related to matches under the control of officials (Referee/Marker). The use of officials is not covered in this abbreviated version.

## **CONDUCT ON COURT (Rule 17)**

Offensive, disruptive or intimidating behaviour in squash is not acceptable.

Included in this category are: audible and visible obscenities, verbal and physical abuse, dissent, abuse of racket, court or ball, unnecessary physical contact, excessive racket swing, unfair warm-up, time-wasting, late back on court, deliberate or dangerous play or action and coaching (except between games).

### **The Most Common Questions and Some Basics**

- The lines, and anything else around the court such as roof, lights etc are OUT.
- You can do a 'tennis' or overarm serve
- The service must hit the front wall first, but can hit any other walls as long as it lands in the opposite back corner. You may volley the serve.
- If your swing is impeded, it is a LET
- If your swing is prevented, it is a STROKE
- It is up to you to get out of the way, if you do not, it is a STROKE.

## Let Please!

Refereeing is a difficult task. It helps to know the rules and make the correct calls. The honours course is what to do when a player appeals for a LET.

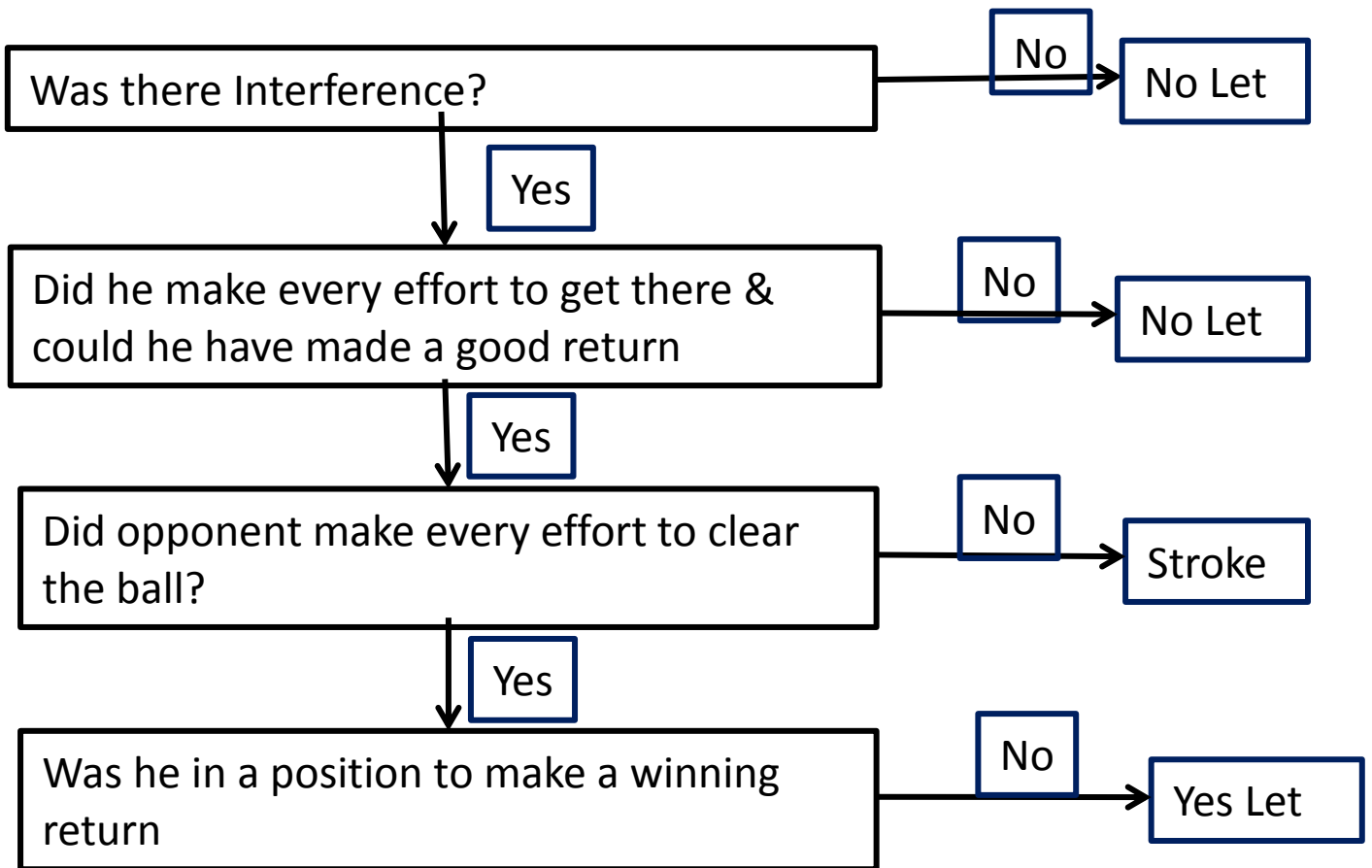
Below is a summary of the thought process a referee should go through when asked 'Let Please'

No	Issue	Answer
1	<b>Did interference occur?</b>	The striker has four basic rights and interference has occurred if the opponent fails to provide him with any one of these, <b>even if he/she has made every effort to do so.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unobstructed direct access to the ball</li><li>• A fair view of the ball</li><li>• Freedom to hit the ball</li><li>• Freedom to play the ball directly to the front wall</li></ul> If no interference has occurred, then it is <b>NO LET</b> , otherwise move on to 2.
2	<b>Could the obstructed player have reached the ball and made a good return? Was he/she making every effort to do so?</b>	If either answer is <b>NO</b> , then it is a <b>NO LET</b> , otherwise move on to 3
3	<b>Did the obstructing player make every effort to avoid the interference?</b>	If he/she did not, then it is a <b>STROKE</b> , otherwise move on to 4.
4	<b>Was the obstructed player in a position to play a winning return?</b>	If so, then it is a <b>STROKE</b> , otherwise it is just a let.

The above is a gross simplification.

The over-riding principle is to ensure a fair result for both players.

## Was it a Let?<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> See [www.squashsite.co.uk](http://www.squashsite.co.uk) for the complete rules.