

Laws of Badminton



The LAWS of Badminton

As amended and adopted by the BWF 26APR2025. [Historical Versions](#) are also available. The Laws are a subset of the full [BWF Handbook](#) (rendered as [PDF Booklet](#) for convenience), which also covers all aspects of competition. The laws are also available rendered as a [PDF Booklet](#).

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DEFINITIONS

- **Player:** Any person playing Badminton.
- **Match:** The basic contest in Badminton between opposing sides each of one or two players.
- **Singles:** A match where there is one player on each of the opposing sides.
- **Doubles:** A match where there are two players on each of the opposing sides.
- **Serving side:** The side having the right to serve.
- **Receiving side:** The side opposing the serving side.
- **Rally:** A sequence of one or more strokes starting with the service, until the shuttle ceases to be in play.
- **Stroke:** A movement of the player's racket with an intention to hit the shuttle.

The Laws of Badminton

1. COURT AND COURT EQUIPMENT

1.1. The court shall be a rectangle marked out with lines 40 mm wide as shown in Diagram A.

1.2. The lines marking out the court shall be easily distinguishable and preferably be coloured white or yellow.

1.3. All the lines shall form part of the area which they define.

- 1.4. The posts shall be 1.55 metres in height from the surface of the court and shall remain vertical when the net is strained as provided in Law [1.10](#).
- 1.5. The posts shall be placed on the doubles side lines as in Diagram A irrespective of whether singles or doubles is being played. The posts or its supports shall not extend into the court beyond the side lines.
- 1.6. The net shall be made of fine cord of dark colour and even thickness with a mesh of not less than 15 mm and not more than 20 mm.
- 1.7. The net shall be 760 mm in depth and at least 6.1 metres wide.
- 1.8. The top of the net shall be edged with a 75 mm white tape doubled over a cord or cable running through the tape. This tape shall rest upon the cord or cable.
- 1.9. The cord or cable shall be stretched firmly, flush with the top of the posts.
- 1.10. The top of the net from the surface of the court shall be 1.524 metres at the centre of the court and 1.55 metres over the side lines for doubles.
- 1.11 There shall be no gaps between the ends of the net and the posts. If necessary, the full depth of the net at the ends shall be tied to the posts.



*Note: (1) Diagonal length of full court = 14.723m
(2) Court as shown above can be used for both singles and doubles play
(3) ** Optional testing marks as shown in Diagram B.*

2.1 The shuttle shall be made of natural and / or synthetic materials. From whatever material the shuttle is made, the flight characteristics generally shall be similar to those produced by a natural feathered shuttle with a cork base covered by a thin layer of leather.

2.2.1 The shuttle shall have 16 feathers fixed in the base.

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2.2.3 The tips of the feathers shall lie on a circle with a diameter from 58 mm to 68 mm.

2.2.4 The feathers shall be fastened firmly with thread or other suitable material.

2.2.5 The base shall be 25 mm to 28 mm in diameter and rounded on the bottom.

2.2.6 The shuttle shall weigh from 4.74 to 5.50 grams.

2.3 Non-Feathered Shuttle

2.3.1 The skirt, or simulation of feathers in synthetic materials, shall replace natural feathers.

2.3.2 The base shall be as described in Law [2.2.5](#).

2.3.3 Measurements and weight shall be as in Laws [2.2.2](#), [2.2.3](#) and [2.2.6](#). However, because of the difference in the specific gravity and other properties of synthetic materials in comparison with feathers, a variation of up to 10 per cent shall be acceptable.

2.4 Subject to there being no variation in the general design, speed and flight of the shuttle, modifications in the above specifications may be made with the approval of the Member Association concerned, in places where atmospheric conditions due to either altitude or climate make the standard shuttle unsuitable.

3. TESTING A SHUTTLE FOR SPEED

3.1 To test a shuttle, a player shall use a full underhand stroke which makes contact with the shuttle over the back boundary line. The shuttle shall be hit at an upward angle and in a direction parallel to the side lines.

3.2 A shuttle of correct speed will land not less than 530 mm and not more than 990 mm short of the other back boundary line as in Diagram B.

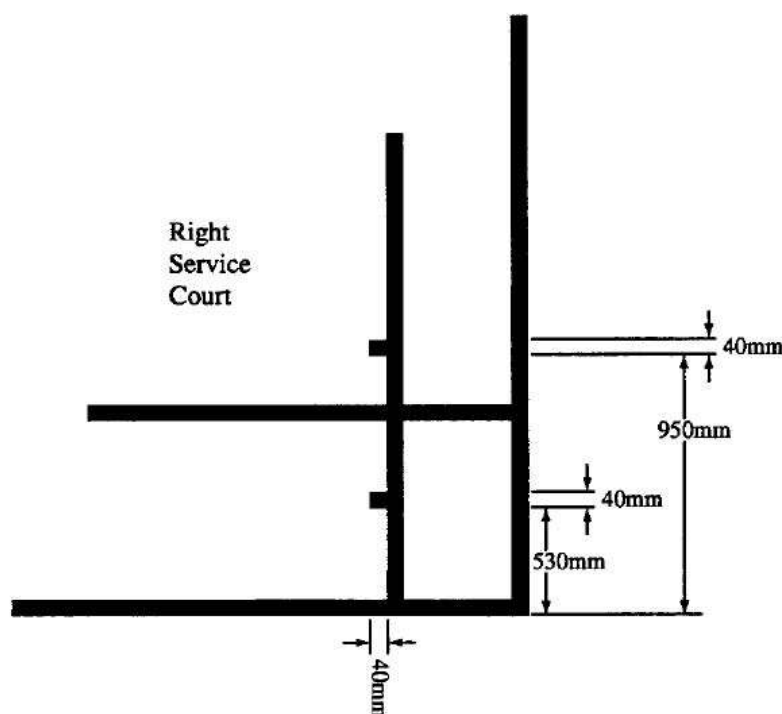


DIAGRAM B

4. RACKET

4.1 The racket shall be a frame not exceeding 680 mm in overall length and 230 mm in overall width consisting of the main parts described in Laws 4.1.1 to 4.1.5 as illustrated in Diagram C.

4.1.1 The handle is the part of the racket intended to be gripped by a player.

4.1.2 The stringed area is the part of the racket with which it is intended that a player hits the shuttle.

4.1.3 The head bounds the stringed area.

4.1.4 The shaft connects the handle to the head (subject to Law 4.1.5).

4.1.5 The throat (if present) connects the shaft to the head.

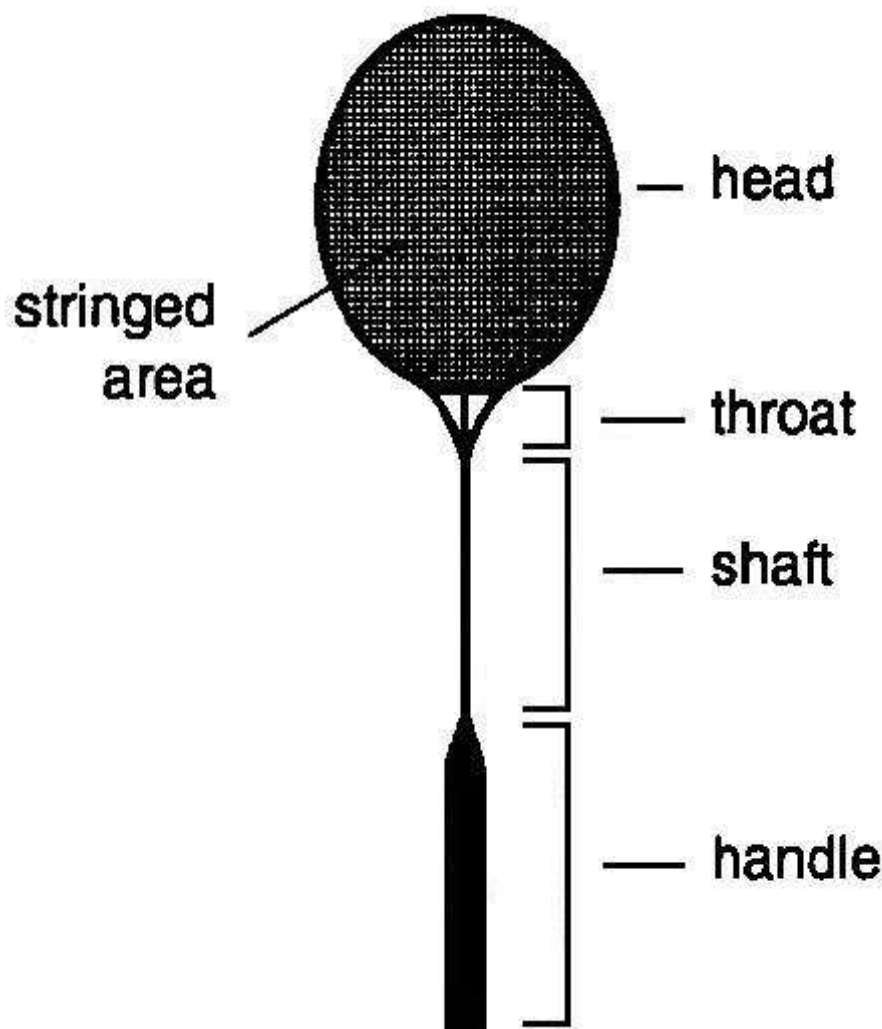


DIAGRAM C

4.2 The stringed area:

4.2.1 shall be flat and consist of a pattern of crossed strings either alternately interlaced or bonded where they cross; and

4.2.2 shall not exceed 280 mm in overall length and 220 mm in overall width. However, the strings may extend into an area which otherwise would be the throat, provided that:

4.2.2.1 the width of the extended stringed area does not exceed 35 mm; and

4.2.2.2 the overall length of the stringed area does not then exceed 330 mm.

4.3 The racket:

4.3.1 shall be free of attached objects and protrusions, other than those used solely and specifically to limit or prevent wear and tear, or vibration, or to distribute weight, or to secure the handle by cord to the player's hand, and which are reasonable in size and placement for such purposes; and

4.3.2 shall be free of any device that makes it possible for a player to change materially the shape of the racket.

5. EQUIPMENT COMPLIANCE

The International Badminton Federation shall rule on any question of whether any racket, shuttle or equipment or any prototype used in the playing of Badminton complies with the specifications. Such ruling may be undertaken on the Federation's initiative or on application by any party with a bona fide interest, including any player, technical official, equipment manufacturer or Member Association or member thereof.

6. TOSS

6.1 Before play commences, a toss shall be conducted and the side winning the toss shall exercise the choice in either Law 6.1.1 or 6.1.2:

6.1.1 to serve or receive first;

6.1.2 to start play at one end of the court or the other.

6.2 The side losing the toss shall then exercise the remaining choice.

7. SCORING SYSTEM

7.1 A match shall consist of the best of three games, unless otherwise arranged (Part II, Section 1B [Appendix 2](#) and 3).

7.2 A game shall be won by the side which first scores 21 points, except as provided in Law [7.4](#) and [7.5](#).

7.3 The side winning a rally shall add a point to its score. A side shall win a rally, if the opposing side commits a "fault" or the shuttle ceases to be in play because it touches the surface of the court inside the opponent's court.

7.4 If the score becomes 20-all, the side which gains a two point lead first, shall win that game.

7.5 If the score becomes 29-all, the side scoring the 30th point shall win that game.

7.6 The side winning a game shall serve first in the next game.

8. CHANGE OF ENDS

8.1 Players shall change ends:

8.1.1 at the end of the first game;

8.1.2 at the end of the second game, if there is to be a third game; and

8.1.3 in the third game when a side first scores 11 points, except in Handicap Matches(BWF Statute Section 4.1.3).

8.2 If the ends are not changed as indicated in Law [8.1](#), it shall be done so as soon as the mistake is discovered and when the shuttle is not in play. The existing score shall stand.

9. SERVICE

Note: As of December 2018 the fixed-height service has been [mandatory for all high-level tournaments](#). For other play it has not been specified but is assumed since the old service height rules have been removed.

9.1 In a correct service, the flight of the shuttle shall be upwards from the server's racket to pass over the net so that, if not intercepted, it shall land in the receiver's service court (i.e. on or within the

boundary lines); and

- 9.1.1 neither side shall cause undue delay to the delivery of the service once the server and the receiver are ready for the service;
- 9.1.2 on completion of the backward movement of the server's racket head, any delay in the start of the service (Law [9.2](#)), shall be considered to be an undue delay;
- 9.1.3 the server and the receiver shall stand within diagonally opposite service courts ([Diagram A](#)) without touching the boundary lines of these service courts;
- 9.1.4 some part of both feet of the server and the receiver shall remain in contact with the surface of the court in a stationary position from the start of the service (Law [9.2](#)) until the service is delivered (Law [9.3](#));
- 9.1.5 the server shall release the shuttle without adding spin, and the server's racket shall initially hit the base of the shuttle;
- 9.1.6 the whole shuttle shall be below 1.15 metres from the surface of the court at the instant of being hit by the server's racket;
- 9.1.7 the movement of the server's racket shall continue forwards from the start of the service (Law [9.2](#)) until the service is delivered (Law [9.3](#));
- 9.1.8 in attempting to serve, the server shall not miss the shuttle.

9.2 Once the players are ready for the service, the first forward movement of the server's racket head shall be the start of the service.

9.3 Once started (Law [9.2](#)), the service is delivered when the shuttle is hit by the server's racket or, in attempting to serve, the server misses the shuttle.

9.4 The server shall not serve before the receiver is ready. However, the receiver shall be considered to have been ready if a return of the service is attempted.

9.5 In doubles, during the delivery of service (Law [9.2](#), [9.3](#)), the partners may take up any positions within their respective courts, which do not unsight the opposing server or receiver.

10. SINGLES

10.1 Serving and receiving courts

- 10.1.1 The players shall serve from, and receive in, their respective right service courts when the server has not scored or has scored an even number of points in that game.
- 10.1.2 The players shall serve from, and receive in, their respective left service courts when the server has scored an odd number of points in that game.

10.2 Order of play and position on court.

In a rally, the shuttle may be hit by the server and the receiver alternately, from any position on that player's side of the net, until the shuttle ceases to be in play (Law [15](#)).

10.3 Scoring and serving

- 10.3.1 If the server wins a rally (Law [7.3](#)), the server shall score a point. The server shall then serve again from the alternate service court.
- 10.3.2 If the receiver wins a rally (Law [7.3](#)), the receiver shall score a point. The receiver shall then become the new server.

11. DOUBLES

11.1 Serving and receiving courts

- 11.1.1 A player of the serving side shall serve from the right service court when the serving side has not scored or has scored an even number of points in that game.
- 11.1.2 A player of the serving side shall serve from the left service court when the serving side has scored an odd number of points in that game.
- 11.1.3 The player of the receiving side who served last shall stay in the same service court from where he served last. The reverse pattern shall apply to the receiver's partner.
- 11.1.4 The player of the receiving side standing in the diagonally opposite service court to the server shall be the receiver.
- 11.1.5 The players shall not change their respective service courts until they win a point when their side is serving.
- 11.1.6 Service in any turn of serving shall be delivered from the service court corresponding to the serving side's score, except as provided in Law [12](#).

11.2 Order of play and position on court

After the service is returned, in a rally, the shuttle may be hit by either player of the serving side and either player of the receiving side alternately, from any position on that player's side of the net, until the shuttle ceases to be in play (Law [15](#)).

11.3 Scoring and serving

- 11.3.1 If the serving side wins a rally (Law [7.3](#)), the serving side shall score a point. The server shall then serve again from the alternate service court.
- 11.3.2 If the receiving side wins a rally (Law [7.3](#)), the receiving side shall score a point. The receiving side shall then become the new serving side.

11.4 Sequence of serving

In any game, the right to serve shall pass consecutively:

- 11.4.1 from the initial server who started the game from the right service court
- 11.4.2 to the partner of the initial receiver.
- 11.4.3 to the partner of the initial server
- 11.4.4 to the initial receiver,
- 11.4.5 to the initial server and so on.

11.5 No player shall serve or receive out of turn, or receive two consecutive services in the same game, except as provided in Law [12](#) or when a fault for misconduct is called.

11.6 Either player of the winning side may serve first in the next game, and either player of the losing side may receive first in the next game.

12. SERVICE COURT ERRORS

12.1 A service court error has been made when a player:

12.1.1 has served or received out of turn; or

12.1.2 has served or received from the wrong service court;

12.2 If a service court error is discovered, the error shall be corrected when the shuttle is not in play and the existing score shall stand.

13. FAULTS

It shall be a "fault":

13.1 if a service is not correct (Law [9.1](#));

13.2 if, in service, the shuttle:

13.2.1 is caught on the net and remains suspended on its top;

13.2.2 after passing over the net, is caught in the net; or

13.2.3 is hit by the receiver's partner;

13.3 if in play, the shuttle:

13.3.1 lands outside the boundaries of the court (i.e. not on or within the boundary lines);

13.3.2 fails to pass over the net;

13.3.3 touches the ceiling or side walls;

13.3.4 touches the person or dress of a player;

13.3.5 touches any other object or person outside the court;

(Where necessary on account of the structure of the building, the local badminton authority may, subject to the right of veto of its Member Association, make bye-laws dealing with cases in which a shuttle touches an obstruction).

13.3.6 is caught and held on the racket and then slung during the execution of a stroke;

13.3.7 is hit twice in succession by the same player. However, a shuttle hitting the head and the stringed area of the racket in one stroke shall not be a "fault";

13.3.8 is hit by a player and the player's partner successively; or

13.3.9 touches a player's racket and does not travel towards the opponent's court;

13.3.10 *in wheelchair badminton if the shuttle is:*

13.3.10.1 *caught on the net and remains suspended on top; or;*

13.3.10.2 *after passing over the net is caught in the net.*

13.4 if, in play, a player:

13.4.1 touches the net or its supports with racket, person or dress;

13.4.2 invades an opponent's court over the net with racket or person except that the striker may follow the shuttle over the net with the racket in the course of a stroke after the initial point of contact with the shuttle is on the striker's side of the net;

13.4.3 invades an opponent's court under the net with racket or person such that an opponent is obstructed or distracted; or

13.4.4 obstructs an opponent, i.e. prevents an opponent from making a legal stroke where the shuttle is followed over the net;

13.4.5 deliberately distracts an opponent by any action such as shouting or making gestures;

13.5 if a player is guilty of flagrant, repeated or persistent offences under Law [16](#);

14. LETS

14.1 "Let" shall be called by the umpire, or by a player (if there is no umpire), to halt play.

14.2 It shall be a "let", if:

14.2.1 the server serves before the receiver is ready (Law [9.4](#));

14.2.2 during service, the receiver and the server are both faulted;

14.2.3 after the service is returned, the shuttle is:

14.2.3.1 caught on the net and remains suspended on its top, or

14.2.3.1.1 *except in wheelchair badminton when it is a fault.*

or

14.2.3.2 after passing over the net is caught in the net;

14.2.3.2.1 *except in wheelchair badminton when it is a fault.*

14.2.4 during play, the shuttle disintegrates and the base completely separates from the rest of the shuttle;

14.2.5 in the opinion of the umpire, play is disrupted or a player of the opposing side is distracted by a coach;

14.2.6 a line judge is unsighted and the umpire or Instant Review System is unable to make a decision; or

14.2.7 any unforeseen or accidental situation has occurred.

14.3 When a "let" occurs, play since the last service shall not count and the player who served last shall serve again,.

15. SHUTTLE NOT IN PLAY

A shuttle is not in play when:

15.1 it strikes the net or post and starts to fall towards the surface of the court on the striker's side of the net;

15.2 it hits the surface of the court; or

15.3 a "fault" or a "let" has occurred.

16. CONTINUOUS PLAY, MISCONDUCT & PENALTIES

16.1 Play shall be continuous from the first service until the match is concluded, except as allowed in Laws [16.2](#) and [16.3](#).

16.2 Intervals:

16.2.1 not exceeding 60 seconds during each game when the leading score reaches 11 points, except Handicap matches (BWF Statutes, Section 4.1.3); and

16.2.2 not exceeding 120 seconds between the first and second game, and between the second and third game shall be allowed in all matches.

(For a televised match, the Referee may decide before the match that intervals as in Law [16.2](#) are mandatory and of fixed duration).

16.3 Suspension of play

16.3.1 When necessitated by circumstances not within the control of the players, the umpire may suspend play for such a period as the umpire may consider necessary.

16.3.2 Under special circumstances the Referee may instruct the umpire to suspend play.

16.3.3 If play is suspended, the existing score shall stand and play shall be resumed from that point.

16.4 Delay in play

16.4.1 Under no circumstances shall play be delayed to enable a player to recover strength or wind or to receive advice.

16.4.2 The umpire shall be the sole judge of any delay in play.

16.5 Advice and leaving the court

16.5.1 Only when the shuttle is not in play (Law [15](#)) and until the players have taken up position to serve and receive shall a player be permitted to receive advice during a match.

16.5.2 No player shall leave the court during a match without the umpire's permission, causing delay to play, except during the intervals as described in Law [16.2](#).

16.6 A player shall not:

16.6.1 deliberately cause delay in, or suspension of, play;

16.6.2 deliberately modify or damage the shuttle in order to change its speed or its flight;

16.6.3 behave in an offensive or inappropriate manner; or

16.6.4 be guilty of misconduct not otherwise covered by the Laws of Badminton.

16.7 Administration of breach

16.7.1 The umpire shall administer any breach of Law [16.2](#) [16.4.1](#), [16.5.2](#) or [16.6](#) by:

16.7.1.1 issuing a warning to the offending side; or

16.7.1.2 faulting the offending side, if previously warned. or

16.7.1.3 faulting the offending side in cases of flagrant offence.

16.7.2 On faulting a side (Law [16.7.1.2](#) or [16.7.1.3](#)), the umpire shall report the offending side immediately to the Referee, who shall have the power to disqualify the offending side from the match.

17. OFFICIALS AND APPEALS

17.1 The Referee shall be in overall charge of the tournament or event of which a match forms part.

17.2 The umpire, where appointed, shall be in charge of the match, the court and its immediate surrounds. The umpire shall report to the Referee.

17.3 The service judge shall call service faults made by the server should they occur (Law [9.1.2 to 9.1.8](#)).

17.4 A line judge shall indicate whether a shuttle landed "in" or "out" on the line(s) assigned.

17.5 An official's decision shall be final on all points of fact for which that official is responsible except that if,

17.5.1 in the opinion of the umpire, it is beyond reasonable doubt that a line judge has clearly made a wrong call, the umpire shall overrule the decision of the line judge.

17.5.2 an Instant Review System is in operation, the system in operation shall decide on any line call challenge (Appendix 7).

17.6 An umpire shall:

17.6.1 uphold and enforce the Laws of Badminton and, especially, call a "fault" or a "let" should either occur;

17.6.2 give a decision on any appeal regarding a point of dispute, if made before the next service is delivered;

17.6.3 ensure players and spectators are kept informed of the progress of the match;

17.6.4 appoint or replace line judges or a service judge in consultation with the Referee;

17.6.5 where another court official is not appointed, arrange for that official's duties to be carried out;

17.6.6 where an appointed official is unsighted, carry out that official's duties or play a "let";

17.6.7 record and report to the Referee all matters relating to Law [16](#); and

17.6.8 refer to the Referee all unsatisfied appeals on questions of law only. (Such appeals must be made before the next service is delivered or, if at the end of the match, before the side that appeals has left the court).

The information here is presented as-is. My intention is for this to be as accurate as possible, but I can assume no responsibility for errors or omissions. This is the official publication of the BWF rendered as HTML. Please contact me with any corrections or updates and I will incorporate them into this presentation. Last revised: 03 September 2025 11:22.

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