

Boxball

A crash course for the sidewalk game

About Boxball

Boxball transforms two sidewalk squares into an outdoor version of ping-pong or, perhaps more accurately, a postage-stamp-sized game of tennis. The action is fast with pinpoint shots to the corners, soft spinning returns, and tough slams. Quick reflexes are the key to this simple and intense game.

To learn more about boxball, visit
<http://www.streetplay.com/thegames/boxball.htm>

Game Essentials

Players: 2

Materials needed:

- Bouncing rubber ball (spaldeen is ideal)
- A sidewalk (with boxes; can be drawn if needed)

Time to play: About 10-15 minutes, depends on skill level and total points

The Boxball field



The Boxball field

Of all the different ball games played in the urban environment, boxball requires the smallest field. Only two sidewalk squares (boxes) are required. The lines, or "cracks," around the concrete define the court; the seam between the two squares is the imaginary net.

How to play

Players choose or volley for first serve. Depending on the players' preferences, serve is maintained by the winner of the volley or rotated every five points. In some games, only the server wins a point; others play so that either player can win any point. Eleven or twenty-one are usually the winning scores, with the requirement of winning by two points.

The ball is slapped back and forth between boxes

with an open palm. Slap the ball into your opponent's box; he or she returns it back to your box after one bounce or on the fly. If you step into the playing court, fail to return a shot, or if your return shot's first bounce lands out of your opponents box, you lose the volley.

You can choose whether you can use both hands, or one hand only (where you can use the back of the palm for a "reverse shot"). Reverse shots aren't easy to control, since the back of the palm is not as flat or flexible as the front, but they're sometimes necessary in order to protect the full box.

Players can try to hit the ball with force—or with a cutting motion to give the ball more spin, or "English," and make it more difficult to return. Spins add the subtlety that makes boxball a compelling game.

The last word

Boxball can bring out the beast in you. It is a close, intimate and intense game. Determine slamming rules in advance and get ready to rumble!

This Streetplay Rule Sheet is available at: <http://www.streetplay.com/rulesheets/boxball/>