

# LiteBall®

## Rules of LiteBall

The purpose of these rules is to provide LiteBall players with the necessary regulations for recreational play, organized league, competition, and tournaments.

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## 1 - THE GAME

LiteBall is a racquet sport played with an ITF-approved low-pressure tennis ball, typically "Stage 2", on a court measuring 6.10 meters wide and 13.41 meters long with a tennis-type net. The court is divided into right/even and left/odd service courts as well as non-volley zones. The ball is served diagonally over the net to the opponent's receiving court using an approved motion. The ball is hit from one side of the net to the other until a player fails to return it according to the rules. Points are scored exactly like in tennis. LiteBall can be played in singles or doubles.

### Unique Features:

- **Two-bounce rule.** After serving the ball, each side must allow it to bounce once before volleying.
- **Non-volley zone (NVZ).** An area extending 2.13 meters from the net on each side, within which a player is not allowed to hit the ball without it bouncing first. A player in a wheelchair may allow the ball to bounce twice before returning it. The second bounce can occur anywhere on the playing surface.
- **Unique service rule.** Only one serve per point is the rule. The server drops the ball from hip height and strikes it before it touches the ground.

## 2 - COURT AND EQUIPMENT

**2.A. Court Specifications.** The dimensions and measurements of the standard LiteBall court are those used for Pickleball.

**2.A.1.** The court is a rectangle measuring 6.10 meters wide and 13.41 meters long for both singles and doubles matches.

**2.A.2.** Measurements of the court are taken to the outside of the perimeter lines and the non-volley zone. All lines must be 5.08 cm wide and of the same color, clearly contrasting with the color of the playing surface.

**2.A.3.** The minimum playing surface is 9.14 meters wide by 18.29 meters long. The perimeter margin of 3.05 meters measures 12.19 meters by 19.51 meters.

**2.A.4. (Wheelchair)** The recommended playing surface for wheelchair play is 13.41 meters wide by 22.55 meters long. The size for wheelchair play on a stadium court is 15.24 meters wide by 24.38 meters long.

**2.B. Lines and Zones.** The lines and zones of the standard LiteBall court are explained below.

**2.B.1. Baseline.** The lines parallel to the net at each end of the court.

**2.B.2. Sidelines.** The lines perpendicular to the net on each side of the court.

**2.B.3. Non-volley zone (NVZ).** The team-specific area of the court on each side of the net, delineated by a line between the two sidelines (non-volley line), parallel to the net and 2.13 meters from it. All NVZ lines are part of the NVZ.

**2.B.4. Service area.** The area beyond the NVZ on both sides of the centerline, including the centerline, sideline, and baseline.

**2.B.5. Centerline.** The line running through the center of the court on each side of the net and extending from the NVZ to the baseline, separating the even and odd courts.

**2.B.6. Right/Even Court.** The service area on the right side of the court when facing the net.

**2.B.7. Left/Odd Court.** The service area on the left side of the court when facing the net.

**2.C. Net Specifications.**

**2.C.1. Material.** The net may be made of any mesh material that does not allow a ball to pass through.

**2.C.2. Posts.** The net posts must measure 6.71 meters from the inside of one post to the inside of the other post. The maximum diameter of the post shall be 7.62 cm.

**2.C.3. Length.** The length of the net must be at least 6.63 meters from one post to the other. The net height shall be 86 cm in the middle of the court and 91 cm facing each sideline.

**2.C.4. Top.** The top of the net must be bordered by a 5.08 cm wide ribbon on a cord or cable passing through the ribbon. The cord passing through the border must rest on the cord or cable.

**2.C.5. Center Strap and Height.** A center strap is recommended for the permanent net and should be placed in the center of the net to allow for easy adjustment to the 86 cm requirement at the center. The top should have a height of 91 cm at the sidelines.



**3.A.10. Left/Odd Court.** The service area on the left side of the court when facing the net. The initial server in doubles or the server in singles must stand on the left/odd side of the court when their score is odd.

**3.A.11. Line Call.** Loud word(s) uttered by a player or line judges to indicate to the referee and/or players that an in-play ball did not touch the required area of the court. The preferred word for indicating a line call is "OUT." Distinctive hand signals may be used in conjunction with a line call. Words like "wide," "long," "no," "deep" are also acceptable.

**3.A.12. Non-Volley Zone (NVZ).** The 2.13 meters by 6.10 meters area adjacent to the net and specific to each team's end of the court concerning NVZ faults. All lines delineating the NVZ. The NVZ is two-dimensional and does not rise above the playing surface.

**3.A.13. Racquet Face.** The racquet, excluding the handle.

**3.A.14. Permanent Object.** Any object on or near the court, including anything hanging above the court, that may interfere with play. Permanent fixtures include the ceiling, walls, fences, lights, net posts, net post feet, bleachers and seating for spectators, referee, line judges, spectators when in their designated positions, and any other object around and above the court.

**3.A.15. Net Plane.** The imaginary vertical planes of all sides that extend beyond the net system.

**3.A.16. Playing Surface.** The court and the surrounding area designated for play.

**3.A.17. Receiver.** The player who stands diagonally across from the server to return the serve. Depending on the team's score.

**3.A.18. Replay.** Any action that is retaken for any reason without a point or serve change being awarded.

**3.A.19. Right/Even Court.** The service area on the right side of the court when facing the net. The initial server in doubles or the server in singles must stand on the right/even side when their score is even.

**3.A.20. Server.** The player who initiates a rally by making a single service for each point on each side of the court.

**3.A.21. Service Court.** The area on each side of the centerline, including the centerline, sideline, and baseline, excluding the NVZ.

**3.A.22. Service Zone.** The area behind the baseline and above and between the imaginary extensions of the centerline of the court and each sideline.

**3.A.23. Volley.** A stroke on the ball while it is in the air before it bounces.

## **4 - THE BALL**

The official ball for LiteBall competitions and tournaments is the Prodigie Liteball Pro1 ball approved by the World LiteBall Federation (WLBF)

## **5 - THE RACQUET**

The official racquets for LiteBall competitions and tournaments are the Prodigie racquets approved by the World LiteBall Federation (WLBF). The rackets must meet all of the following criteria:

**5.A.1.** The hitting surface, defined as the flat area of the racquet head bounded by the inner edge of the frame or by holes from 9mm to 13 mm in diameter, must not exceed 26 cm in length and 24 cm in width.

**5.A.2.** The racquet must not exceed 45 cm in length from the end of the handle to the tip of the racquet head. The racquet head must not exceed 24 cm in width. Its recommended optimal weight is 350 grams +/- 10 grams.

**5.A.3.** The thickness (profile) distance between the two hitting surfaces must be consistent at 32 mm.

## **6 - NON-VOLLEY ZONE (NVZ) RULES**

### **Definition**

The Non-Volley Zone (NVZ) is the designated area on both sides of the net where it is prohibited to execute a volley.

### **Prohibition of entering the NVZ after a volley**

A player who executes a volley shall not, at any time before the rally has ended, touch the NVZ with any part of the body, the paddle, clothing, or any object connected to the player.

### **End of the rally**

A rally is considered ended only in the following cases:

- a) The ball has completely crossed outside the boundaries of the court.
- b) The ball has bounced twice consecutively on the same side of the court.
- c) A fault is committed by a player (ball into the net, ball out of bounds, improper execution, foot fault, etc.).

**6. A.** All volleys must be initiated outside of the non-volley zone (NVZ). For a wheelchair player, the front wheels (the smallest ones) may touch the NVZ during a volley.

**6.B.** It is a fault if the player volleying or anything in contact with the player volleying touches the NVZ during the volley motion. For a wheelchair player, the front wheels (the smallest ones) may touch the NVZ.

**6.B.1.** The volley motion includes the preparation, follow-through, and propulsion of the action.

**6.B.2.** If the racquet contacts the NVZ during the volley motion, before or after contact with the ball, it is a fault.

**6.C.** During the volley motion, it is a fault if the propulsion of the player volleying causes the player in contact with anything touching the NVZ, including the partner. For a wheelchair player, the front wheels (the smallest ones) may touch the NVZ.

**6.D.** If a player has touched the NVZ for any reason, that player cannot make a return volley until both feet have made contact with the playing surface entirely outside of the NVZ. A maneuver such as standing in the NVZ, jumping to hit a volley, and then landing outside of the NVZ is a fault. If the rear wheels of a wheelchair have touched the NVZ for any reason, the wheelchair player cannot make a return volley until both rear wheels have made contact with the playing surface outside of the NVZ.

**6.E.** A player may enter the NVZ at any time except when said player is volleying.

**6.F.** A player may enter the NVZ before or after returning any ball that has bounced.

**6.G.** A player may remain in the NVZ to return a ball that has bounced. There is no infraction if a player does not exit the NVZ after hitting a ball that has bounced.

**6.H.** There is no infraction if a player returns the ball while their partner is standing in the NVZ.

## **7 - THE SERVICE**

**7.A.1.** The score must be announced before the ball is served.

**7.A.2.** At the moment the ball is served:

**7.A.2.a.** Neither of the server's feet may touch the court on or inside the baseline.

**7.A.2.b.** Neither of the server's feet may touch outside the imaginary extensions of the sideline or centerline.

**7.A.2.c.** (In a wheelchair) Both rear wheels must be on the playing surface behind the baseline and may not touch the court on or inside the baseline or outside the imaginary extensions of the sideline or centerline.

**7.A.3.** The serve may be performed with a forehand or backhand motion.

**7.A.4.** When the ball is struck, the server may apply a slice or topspin effect.

**7.A.5.** Contact with the ball must not be made above the waist.

**7.A.6.** Placement. The server must serve into the correct service court (the diagonally opposite court from the server). The serve must pass over the NVZ and its lines. The serve may land on any other line of the service court.

**7.A.7.** If the serve passes the net then touches the receiver or the receiver's partner, it is a point for the serving team.

**7.A.8.** The serve must be performed with a falling ball; the ball must be struck before it bounces using a forehand or backhand motion, without any other restrictions, that is, without the placement restrictions of the ball and racquet stated in the rules. The ball is released without any tossing motion toward the ground and is struck before it bounces, below waist level.

### **7.B. Player Positions**

**7.B.1.** Server and Receiver. The correct server and receiver and their positions are determined by the score and the initial positions of players in the game.

**7.B.2.** At the beginning of each game, the initial server starts the service from the side of the court dictated by the score.

**7.B.3.** After each point, the server alternates the service from the right/even side and the left/odd side of the court.

**7.B.4.** Team Positions. In doubles, there are no restrictions on the position of server-receiver pairs as long as they are on their team's side of the net. They can position themselves inside or outside the court.

## **8 - NO LET ON THE SERVICE**

A served ball that touches the net or band and continues over the net is in play. The serve must pass over the NVZ and its lines. If the served ball touches the net or band and bounces into the limits of the NVZ the point is lost.

## **9 - CHOICE OF SIDES AND SERVICE**

The choice of sides and the right to be the server or receiver in the first game will be decided by a coin toss before the start of the warm-up. The player or team winning the coin toss may choose:  
A - to be the server or receiver in the first game of the match, in which case the opponent will choose the side of the court for the first game of the match; or

B - the side of the court for the first game of the match, in which case the opponent will choose whether to be the server or receiver for the first game of the match; or

C - for the opponent to make one of the previous choices.

### **10 - SERVICE ORDER**

At the end of each game, the receiver(s) become(s) the server(s), and the server(s) become(s) the receiver(s) for the next game.

In doubles, the team to serve in the first game of each set will decide which member of that team will do so in that game.

Similarly, before the second game begins, their opponents will decide which player will serve in that game. The partner of the player who served in the first game will serve in the third game, and the partner of the player who served in the second game will serve in the fourth. This rotation will continue until the end of the set.

### **11 - SERVER AND RECEIVER**

The server will not serve until the receiver(s) is (are) ready.

However, the receiver(s) must play at the reasonable pace of the server and be ready to receive the service when the server is ready to execute it.

A receiver will be considered ready for play if attempting to return the serve. If it is proven that the receiver is not ready, then the service cannot be called as a fault.

### **12 - CHANGE OF SIDES**

The player/team will change sides at the end of the first, third, and subsequent odd-numbered games of each set.

### **13 - THE BALL IN PLAY**

Unless a fault or let is called, the ball is in play from the moment the server makes the single service and remains in play until the point is decided.

### **14 - POINTS IN A MATCH**

A match can be played either as the best of three sets (a player or team must win two sets to win the match) or the best of five sets (a player or team must win three sets to win the match). The choice of format will depend on the agreement between the players, the time available, or the tournament rules.

## **15 - POINTS IN A SET**

The score in a set will be achieved using the "Tie Break" method. The first player or team to win six games will win the set, provided they have a margin of two games over the opponent. If the score reaches six games each for both, a tie-break will be played.

In case of a tie in sets, a tie-break game will be played to decide the match. This tie-break game replaces the final decisive set. The player or team who wins the first ten points will win the tie-break and the match, provided they have a two-point lead over the opponent(s).

## **16 - POINTS IN A GAME**

In the absence of a referee, the match score must be announced by the server before the start of each point.

**16.A.1. Regular game with 1 Unique Advantage and Decisive Point.** In a regular game, points are scored as follows, and the point is always announced by the server making the first service:

No points: 0 or "love"

First point: "15"

Second point: "30"

Third point: "40"

Fourth point: "game"

- If each player or team wins three points, the score is "Deuce".
- After "Deuce", the next point is noted "Advantage" for the player or team who wins it.
- If the same player or team wins the next point then he wins the "Game".
- Otherwise both players or teams return to "Deuce"
- In this case the "LitePoint", a decisive point is played.
- The player or team chooses the side to perform the single service of the "LitePoint".
- The player or team who wins the "LitePoint" then wins the Game.

**16.A.2. Tie-break game.** During the tie-break game, points are announced "zero", "1", "2", "3", etc. The first player or team to reach seven points wins the game and the set, provided they have a two-point margin over the opponent. If necessary, the tie-break game will continue until this margin is achieved. The player who is to serve will be the server for the first point of the tie-break game. The next two points will be served by the opponent or the player of the opposing team who is next in line to serve. Then, each player or team will serve alternatively two consecutive points until the end

of the tie-break game (in doubles, the service rotation within each team will continue in the same order maintained during the set). The player or team that is to serve first in the tie-break game will be the receiver in the first game of the following set.

## **17 - LINE CALL RULES**

**17.A.** A served ball that lands outside the non-volley zone and within the correct service court or on a line of that court is considered in.

**17.B.** Except for the serve, any ball in play that lands within the court or touches a line of the court is considered in.

**17.C.** A ball that contacts the playing surface entirely outside the court is "out".

**17.D.** Code of ethics for line calls. LiteBall is played according to specific rules. It also requires an ethical code for line calling responsibilities when performed by players.

## **18 - FAULT RULES**

A fault will be called for the following reasons:

**18.A.** If the serve or service return does not bounce before being struck.

**18.B.** Striking the ball on the server's side of the net without the ball crossing over to the opponent's side.

**18.C.** Hitting the ball below the net or between the net and the net post.

**18.D.** A player failing to hit the ball before it bounces twice in the receiver's court.

**18.E.** A player, a player's clothing, or a player's racket making contact with the net system, net posts, or the opponent's court while the ball is in play.

**18.F.** An in-play ball contacting a permanent object before bouncing on the court.

**18.G.** Violation of non-volley zone rules.

## **19 - CONTINUOUS PLAY**

As a principle, play should be continuous, from the beginning of the match (when the first service is made) until the end.

**19.A.1.** Between each point, a maximum pause of twenty (20) seconds is allowed.

**19.A.2.** When the player/team changes sides at the end of a game, a maximum pause of ninety (90) seconds is allowed. However, after the first game of each set and during a tie-break game, play

will be continuous, and doubles teams will change sides without any pause.

**19.A.3.** At the end of each set, there will be a maximum pause of one hundred twenty (120) seconds. The maximum time starts at the end of a point and ends at the start of the service for the next point.

**19.A.4.** Warm-up time will be a maximum of five (5) minutes, unless otherwise decided by the match organizers.

## **20 - OTHER RULES**

**20.A.** Hand change. A racquet can be changed from hand to hand at any time.

**20.B.** Two-handed shots. Two-handed shots are allowed.

**20.C.** Broken ball. In the presence of a referee, players may call upon the referee before the service is made to determine if a ball is broken.

**20.D.** Objects on the court. If an object a player is wearing or had with them falls into their side of the court, unless the object falls into the non-volley zone as a result of a volley, the ball remains in play even if it hits the object.

**20.E.** Net plan. Crossing the net plan before hitting the ball is a fault. After hitting the ball, a player or anything they carry may cross the net plan. The player may not touch any part of the net system, the opponent's court, or the opponent while the ball is in play.

**20.F.** Exception. If the ball bounces in the receiver's court with enough backward spin or assistance from the wind to return over the net, the receiver may cross the net plan (above, below, or around the net post) to hit the ball. It is a fault if the receiver (or anything the receiver) crosses the net plan before the ball has again crossed the net plan to the opponent's side. It is a fault if the player touches the net system, the opponent's court, or the opponent while the ball is still in play.

**20.F.** Exception. If the ball bounces in the receiver's court with enough backspin or wind assistance to return over the net, the receiver may cross the net plan (above, below, or around the net post) to hit the ball. It is a fault if the receiver (or anything the receiver) crosses the net plan before the ball has again crossed the net plan to the opponent's side. It is a fault if the player touches the net system, the opponent's court, or the opponent while the ball is still in play.

**20.G.** Distractions. Players may not distract an opponent when they are about to play the ball. If, in the referee's judgment, a

distraction has occurred, the referee will immediately call a fault against the offending team.

**20.H.** A ball that contacts the net, net cable, or rope between the net posts remains in play. The net and the cables or ropes supporting it are placed (largely) on the court. Therefore, if the ball hits the top of the net or touches the upper cable or rope of the net and falls within the bounds, it remains in play.

**20.I.** A player is allowed to go around the net post and cross the imaginary extension line of the net after hitting the ball, provided that the player or any item they are wearing or carrying does not touch the opponent's court. If the player goes around the net post and crosses the imaginary extension line of the net but does not touch the ball, a fault will be called.

**20.J.** If a player hits the ball over the net to the opponent's court, and then the ball bounces over the net and bounces a second time without being touched by the opponent, the player who hit the ball wins the point.

**20.K.** Shots around the net post. A player may return the ball around the net post.

**20.L.** Racket possession. A player must have possession of the racket when making contact with the ball. Violation of this rule is a fault.

Document prepared by Charles Rey –  
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World LiteBall Federation (WLBF).

**Registered in INPI N° DSO2024007780**

**Official Website:** [liteball.club](http://liteball.club)

**Official Languages:** English - French - Spanish

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