

OFFICIAL U. S. HANDBALL ASSOCIATION FOUR-WALL HANDBALL RULES

THE UNITED STATES
HANDBALL ASSOCIATION

In 1950 a group of the leading handball players and administrators got together to form a Players' Fraternity. Pioneering the movement was Bob Kendler, Chicagoland home builder, who was determined to give the game an individual identity, improve tournament conditions, and standardize court sizes and rules.

Kendler has headed up the Association through an amazing period of progress. USHA now has close to 10,000 members throughout the nation, Canada, Mexico, Ireland and in many other foreign countries . . . wherever there are handball courts, The Skokie, Illinois, headquarters office is a general clearing house for the game — providing court specifications, instructional and championship play films, publishing a bi-monthly ACE magazine devoted completely to handball, and blueprinting plans for State, regional and national tournaments.

USHA's President Bob Kendler invented the glass court at his Chicago Town Club in 1945, demonstrating that handball "need not be sold, merely seen." Today, there are courts with glass back and side walls in many cities, providing the needed viewing galleries and bringing the game out of the dark, dank recesses of the locker room.

Through your support of our officially-endorsed products — SARANAC Ace Gloves and SPALDING Ace Balls — the USHA maintains a self-sustaining position. We appreciate this patronage and want you to know that every penny that comes into the Association goes back into the game for its further progress and promotion.

Handball will give you the physical well-being you seek. To enjoy it more fully play it according to our official rules and study carefully the instructional material in this bonus booklet given you for purchasing a pair of the Best Gloves There Are. And, please use the convenient membership-subscription form on the back page to join the game's Fraternity.

PART I. THE GAME

Rule 1. 1-Types of Games. Four-wall handball may be played by two or four players. When played by two it is called "singles"; and when played by four, "doubles".

Rule 1. 2-Description. Handball, as the name implies, is a competitive game in which either hand or fist may be used to serve and return the ball.

Rule 1. 3-Objective. The objective is to win each volley by serving or returning the ball so the opponent is unable to keep the ball in play. A serve or volley is won when a side is unable to return the ball before it touches the floor twice.

Rule 1. 4-Points and Outs. Points are scored only by the serving side when it serves an ace or wins a volley. When the serving side loses a volley it loses the serve which is called an "out" in singles, and a "hand-out" in doubles.

Rule 1. 5-Game. A game is won by the side first scoring 21 points.

Rule 1. 6-Match. A match is won by the side first winning two games.

PART II. COURT AND EQUIPMENT

Rule 2. 1-Court. The specifications for the standard four-wall handball court are:

(a) **Dimensions.** The dimensions shall be 20 feet wide, 20 feet high, and 40 feet long, with back wall at least 12 feet high.

(b) **Lines and Zones.** Handball courts shall be divided and marked on the floors with 1/2 inch wide red or white lines as follows:

(1) **Short Line.** The short line is midway between and is parallel with the front and back walls dividing the court into equal front and back courts.

(2) **Service Line.** The service line is parallel with and located 5 feet in front of the short line.

(3) **Service Zone.** The service zone is the space between the outer edges of the short and service lines.

(4) **Service Boxes.** A service box is located at each end of the service zone by lines 18 inches from and parallel with each side wall.

(5) **Receiving Lines.** Five feet back of the short line, vertical lines shall be marked on each side wall extending 3 inches from the floor. See rule 4.7 (a).

Rule 2. 2-Ball Specifications. The specifications for the standard handball are:

Material Rubber
Color Black
Size: 1 7/8 in. diameter, with 1/32 in. variation.
Weight: (2.3) ounces, with a variation of 2-10 ounce.
Rebound from 70 inch drop — 42 to 48 inches at a temperature of 68 degrees.

Rule 2. 3-Ball Selection. A new ball shall be selected by the referee for use in each match in all tournaments. During a game the referee may, at his discretion or at the request

of both players or teams, select another ball. Balls that are not round or which bounce erratically shall not be used. The Spalding ACE handball is official for all U. S. Handball Association sanctioned tournaments.

Rule 2. 4-Gloves. Handball may not be played barehanded. Gloves must be worn. Gloves shall be light in color and made of a soft material or leather, and form fitting. The fingers of the gloves may not be webbed or connected, nor removed. No foreign substance, tape or rubber bands shall be used on the fingers or on the palms of the gloves. No metal or hard substance may be worn on the hand under the glove. For sensitive, bruised or sore hands etc., surgical gauze or tape may be wrapped around palm of hand with or without thin foam rubber for protective purposes. The gloves must be changed when they become sufficiently wet to moisten the ball. Players should have an ample supply of dry gloves for each match.

Rule 2. 5-Uniform. All parts of the uniform, consisting of a shirt, shorts, socks and shoes, shall be clean and white. Warm-up shirts and pants, if worn in actual match play, shall also be white. Only club insignia and/or name of club or handball organization may be on the uniform. Players may not play without shirts.

Part III. OFFICIATING

Rule 3. 1-Tournaments. All tournaments shall be managed by a committee or chairman, who shall designate the officials.

Rule 3. 2-Officials. The officials shall include a referee and a scorer. Additional assistants and record keepers may be designated as desired.

Rule 3. 3-Qualifications. Since the quality of the officiating often determines the success of each tournament, all officials shall be experienced or trained, and shall be thoroughly familiar with these rules and with the local playing conditions.

Rule 3. 4-Rule Briefing. Before all tournaments, all officials and players shall be briefed on rules and on local court hindrances or other regulations.

Rule 3. 5-Referees. (a) Pre-Match Duties. Before each match commences, it shall be the duty of the referee to:

(1) Check on adequacy of preparation of the handball court with respect to cleanliness, lighting and temperature, and upon location of locker rooms, drinking fountains, etc.

(2) Check on availability and suitability of all materials necessary for the match such as handballs, towels, score cards and pencils.

(3) Check readiness and qualifications of assisting officials.

(4) Explain court regulations to players and inspect the compliance of gloves and hands with rules.

(5) Remind players to have an adequate supply of extra gloves and shirts.

(6) Introduce players, toss coin, and signal start of first game.

(b) **Decisions.** During games the referee shall decide all questions that may arise in accordance with these rules. If there is body contact on the back swing, the player should call it quickly. This is the only call a player may make. See Rule 4.10 (b). On all questions involving judgment and on all questions not covered by these rules, the decision of the referee is final.

Signature (in ink)

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(c) **Protests.** Any decision not involving the judgment of the referee may on protest be decided by the Chairman, if present, or his delegated representative.

(d) **Forfeitures.** A match may be forfeited by the referee when:

(1) Any player refuses to abide by the referee's decision, or engages in unsportsmanlike conduct.

(2) After warning any player leaves the court without permission of the referee either during a game or between the first and second games.

(3) Any player for a singles match, or any team for a doubles match fails to report to play. Normally, 20 minutes from the scheduled game time will be allowed before forfeiture. The tournament chairman may permit a longer delay if circumstances warrant such a decision.

(4) If both players for a singles, or both teams for doubles fail to appear to play for consolation matches or other play-offs, they shall forfeit their ratings for future tournaments, and forfeit any trophies, medals, or awards. See Rule 5.4.

Rule 3. 6-Scorers. The scorer shall keep a record of the progress of the game in the manner prescribed by the committee or chairman. As a minimum the progress record shall include the order of serves, outs, and points. The referee or scorer shall announce the score before each serve.

Rule 3. 7-Record Keepers. In addition to the scorer, the committee may designate additional persons to keep more detailed records for statistical purposes of the progress of the game.

PART IV. PLAY REGULATIONS

Rule 4. 1-Serve-Generally. (a) Order. The player or side winning the toss becomes the first server and starts the first game, and the third game, if any.

(b) **Start.** Games are started by the referee calling "play ball."

(c) **Place.** The server may serve from any place in the service zone. No part of either foot may extend beyond either line of the service zone. Stepping on the line (but not beyond it) is permitted. Server must remain in the service zone until the served ball passes short line. Violations are called "foot faults" See Rule 4.5(a)(1).

(d) **Manner.** A serve is commenced by bouncing the ball to the floor in the service zone, and on the first bounce the ball is struck by the server's hand or fist so that it hits the front wall and on the rebound hits the floor back of the short line, either with or without touching one of the side walls.

(e) **Readiness.** Serves shall not be made until the receiving side is ready, or the referee has called play ball.

Rule 4. 2-Serve-In Doubles. (a) **Server.** At the beginning of each game in doubles, each side shall inform the referee of the order of service, which order shall be followed throughout the game. Only the first server serves the first time up and continues to serve first throughout the game. When the first server is out — the side is out. Thereafter both players on each side shall serve until a hand-out occurs. It is not necessary for the server to alternate serves to their opponents.

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(b) **Partner's Position.** On each serve, the server's partner shall stand erect with his back to the side wall and with both feet on the floor within the service box until the served ball passes the short line. Violations are called "foot faults." (See Rule 4. 5(a) (2).

Rule 4. 3-Defective Serves. Defective serves are of three types resulting in penalties as follows:

(a) **Dead Ball Serve.** A dead ball serve results in no penalty and the server is given another serve without cancelling a prior illegal serve. For details see Rule 4. 4.

(b) **Fault Serve.** Two fault serves results in a hand-out. For details see Rule 4. 5.

(c) **Out Serves.** An out serve results in a hand-out. For details see Rules 4. 6.

Rule 4. 4-Dead ball Serves. Dead ball serves do not cancel any previous illegal serve. They occur when an otherwise legal serve:

(a) **Hits Partner.** Hits the server's partner on the fly on the rebound from the front wall while the server's partner is in the service box. Any serve that touches the floor before hitting the partner in the box is a short. See Rule 4. 6(c).

(b) **Screen Balls.** Passes too close to the server or the server's partner to obstruct the view of the returning side. Any serve passing behind the server's partner and the side wall is an automatic screen. See Rule 4. 10(a)(4).

(c) **Court Hinders.** Hits any part of the court that under local rules is a dead ball. See Rule 4. 10(a)(1).

Rule 4. 5-Fault Serves. The following serves are faults and any two in succession results in a handout:

(a) **Foot Faults.** A foot faults results:

(1) When the server leaves the service zone before the served ball passes the short line. See Rule 4. 1(c).

(2) When the server's partner leaves the service box before the served ball passes the short line. See rule 4. 1(c).

(b) **Short Serve.** A short serve is any served ball that first hits the front wall and on the rebound hits the floor in front of the back edge of the short line either with or without touching one side wall; or

(c) **Two-Side Serve.** A two-side serve is any ball served that first hits the front wall and on the rebound hits two side walls on the fly.

(d) **Ceiling Serve.** A ceiling serve is any served ball that touches the ceiling after hitting the front wall either with or without touching one side wall.

(e) **Long Serve.** A long serve is any served ball that first hits the front wall and rebounds to the back wall before touching the floor.

(f) **Out of Court Serve.** Any ball going out of the court on the serve. See also Rule 4. 9(f).

(g) **Crotch Serve.** If the served ball hits the crotch in the front wall it is considered the same as hitting the floor and is an out. To be consistent a crotch serve into the back wall is good and in play.

Rule 4. 6-Out Serves. Any one of the following serves results in a handout:

(a) **Bounces.** Bouncing the ball more than three times while in the service zone before striking the ball. A bounce is a drop or throw to the floor, followed by a catch. The ball may

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not be bounced anywhere but on the floor within the service zone. Accidental dropping of the ball counts as one bounce.

(b) **Missed Ball.** Any attempt to strike the ball on the first bounce that results either in a total miss or in touching any part of the server's body other than his serving hand or fist.

(c) **Non-front Serve.** Any served ball that strikes the server's partner, or the ceiling, floor or side wall, before striking the front wall.

(d) **Touched Serve.** Any served ball that on the rebound from the front wall touches the server, or touches the server's partner while any part of his body is out of the service box, (See Rule 4. 4(a), or the server's partner intentionally catches the served ball on the fly.

(e) **Out-of-Order Serve.** In doubles, when either partner serves out of order, or serves both hands.

Rule 4. 7-Return of Serve. (a) **Receiving Position.** The receiver or receivers must stand at least 5 feet back of the short line, as indicated by the 3 inch verticle line on each side wall, until the ball is struck by the server. (See Rule 2, 1(b)(5). After a warning, any infraction of this rule by a receiver results in a point for the server.

(b) **Defective Serve.** To eliminate any misunderstanding, the receiving side should not catch or touch a defectively served ball until called by the referee or it has touched the floor the second time.

(c) **Fly Return.** In making a fly return the receiver must end up with both feet back of the service zone. A violation by a receiver results in a point for the server.

(d) **Legal Return.** After the ball is legally served, one of the players on the receiving side must strike the ball either on the fly or after the first bounce and before the ball touches the floor the second time to return the ball to the front wall either directly or after touching one or both side walls, the back wall or the ceiling, or any combination of those surfaces. A returned ball may not touch the floor before touching the front wall.

(e) **Failure to Return.** The failure to return a serve results in a point for the server.

(f) **Touching Receiver.** See Rule 4. 9(e).

Rule 4. 8-Changes of Serve. (a) **Hand-out.** A server is entitled to continue serving until:

(1) **Out Serve.** He makes an out serve under Rule 4. 6 or

(2) **Fault Serves.** He makes two fault serves in succession under Rule 4. 5, or

(3) **Hits Partner.** He hits his partner with an attempted return before the ball touches the floor the second time.

(4) **Return Failure.** He or his partner fails to keep the ball in play by returning it as required by Rule 4. 7(d).

(5) **Avoidable Hinder.** He or his partner commits an avoidable hinder under Rule 4. 11.

(b) **Side-out** (1) **In Singles.** In singles, retiring the server retires the side.

(2) **In Doubles.** In doubles, the side is retired when both partners have been put out, except on the first serve as provided in Rule 4. 2(a).

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(c) **Effect.** When the server or the side loses the serve, the server or serving side shall become the receiver; and the receiving side, the server; and so alternately in all subsequent services of the game.

Rule 4. 9-Volleys. Each legal return after the serve is called a volley. Play during volleys shall be according to the following rules:

(a) **One Hand.** Only front or back of one hand or fist may be used at any one time to return the ball. Using two hands to hit a ball is out. The use of the foot or any portion of the body, other than the hand or fist is an out.

(b) **Wrist Ball.** The use of any other part of the body including the wrist or arm above the player's hand to return the ball is prohibited.

(c) **One Touch.** In attempting returns, the ball may be touched only once by one player on returning side. In doubles both partners may swing at, but only one, may hit the ball. Each violation of (a), (b), or (c) results in a handout or point.

(d) **Return Attempts.** (1) **In Singles.** In singles if a player swings at but misses the ball in play, the player may repeat his attempts to return the ball until it touches the floor the second time.

(2) **In Doubles.** In doubles if one player swings at but misses the ball, both he and his partner may make further attempts to return the ball until it touches the floor the second time. Both partners on a side are entitled to an attempt to return the ball.

(3) **Hinders.** In singles or doubles, if a player swings at but misses the ball in play, and in his, or his partner's attempt again to play the ball there is an unintentional interference by an opponent it shall be a hinder. (See Rule 4. 10).

(e) **Touching Ball.** Except as provided in Rule 4. 10(a)(2), any touching of a ball before it touches the floor the second time by a player other than the one making a return is a point or out against the offending player.

(f) **Out of Court Ball.** (1) **After Return.** Any ball returned to the front wall which on the rebound or on the first bounce goes into the gallery or through any opening in a side wall shall be declared dead and the serve replayed.

(2) **No Return.** Any ball not returned to the front wall, but which caroms off a player's hand or fist into the gallery or into any opening in a side wall either with or without touching the ceiling, side or back wall, shall be an out or point against the player failing to make the return. See also Rule 4. 5(f).

(g) **Dry Ball and Gloves.** During the game and particularly on service every effort should be made to keep the ball dry. Deliberately wetting shall result in an out. The ball may be inspected by the referee at any time during a game. If a player's gloves are wet to the extent that they leave wet marks on the ball, the player shall change to dry gloves on a referee's time out. If a player wishes to change to dry gloves, he shall hold the palms up to the referee and get the referee's permission to change. He may not leave the court without the referee's permission.

(h) **Broken Ball.** If there is any suspicion that a ball has broken on the serve or during a volley, play shall continue until the end of the volley. The referee or any player may re-

quest the ball be examined. If the referee decides the ball is broken or otherwise defective, a new ball shall be put into play and the point replayed.

(i) **Play Stoppage.** If a player loses a shoe or other equipment, or foreign objects enter the court, or any other outside interference occurs, the referee shall stop the play.

Rule 4. 10-Dead Ball Hinders. Hinders are of two types—"dead ball" and "avoidable." Dead ball hinders as described in this rule results in the point being replayed. Avoidable hinders are described in Rule 4. 11.

(a) **Situations.** When called by the referee, the following are dead ball hinders:

(1) **Court Hinders.** Hits any part of the court which under local rules is a dead ball.

(2) **Hitting Opponent.** Any returned ball that touches an opponent on the fly before it returns to the front wall.

(3) **Body Contact.** Any body contact with an opponent that interferes with seeing or returning the ball.

(4) **Screen Ball.** Any ball rebounding from the front wall close to the body of a player on the side which just returned the ball, to interfere with or prevent the returning side from seeing the ball. See Rule 4. 4(b).

(5) **Straddle Ball.** A ball passing between the legs of a player on the side which just returned the ball, if there is no fair chance to see or return the ball.

(6) **Other Interference.** Any other unintentional interference which prevents an opponent from having a fair chance to see or return the ball.

(b) **Effect.** A call by the referee of a "hinder" stops the play and voids any situation following, such as the ball hitting a player. No player is authorized to call a hinder, except on the back swing and such a call must be made immediately as provided in Rule 3. 5(b).

(c) **Avoidance.** While making an attempt to return the ball, a player is entitled to a fair chance to see and return the ball. It is the duty of the side that has just served or returned the ball to move so that the receiving side may go straight to the ball and not be required to go around an opponent. The referee should be liberal in calling hinders to discourage any practice of playing the ball where an adversary cannot see it until too late. It is no excuse that the ball is "killed," unless in the opinion of the referee he couldn't return the ball. Hinders should be called without a claim by a player, especially in close plays and on game points. It is not a hinder when one player hinders his partner.

(d) **In Doubles.** In doubles, both players on a side are entitled to a fair and unobstructed chance at the ball and either one is entitled to a hinder even though it naturally would be his partner's ball and even though his partner may have attempted to play the ball or that he may already have missed it.

Rule 4. 11-Avoidable Hinders. An avoidable hinder results in an "out" or a "point" depending upon whether the offender was serving or receiving.

(a) **Failure to Move.** Does not move sufficiently to allow opponent his shot.

(b) **Blocking.** Moves into a position effecting a block, on the opponent about to return the ball, or, in doubles, one partner moves in front of an opponent as his partner is returning the ball, or

(c) **Moving into Ball.** Moves in the way and is struck by the ball just played by his opponent.

(d) **Pushing.** Deliberately pushing or shoving an opponent during a volley.

Rule 4. 12-Rest Periods (a) Delays. Deliberate delay exceeding ten seconds by server, or receiver shall result in an out or point against the offender.

(b) **During Game.** During a game each player in singles, or each side in doubles, either while serving or receiving may request a "time out" for a towel, wiping glasses, change or adjust equipment. Each "time out" shall not exceed 30 seconds. No more than three "time outs" in a game shall be granted each singles player or to each team in doubles.

(c) **Injury.** No time out shall be charged to a player who is injured during play. An injured player shall not be allowed more than a total of fifteen minutes of rest. If the injured player is not able to resume play after total rests of 15 minutes the match shall be awarded to the opponent or opponents. On any further injury to same player, the Commissioner, if present, or committee, after considering any available medical opinion shall determine whether the injured player will be allowed to continue.

(d) **Between Games.** A two minute rest period is allowed between the first and second games, at which times the players should NOT leave the court, without approval of the referee. A ten minute rest period is allowed between the second and third games, at which time players may leave the court.

(e) **Postponed Games.** Any games postponed by referee due to weather elements shall be resumed with the same score as when postponed.

PART V. TOURNAMENTS

Rule 5.1—Draws. If possible, the singles draw shall be made at least two days before the tournament commences. The seeding method of drawing shall be approved by the committee or chairman.

Rule 5.2—Scheduling (a) Preliminary Matches. If one or more contestants are entered in both singles and doubles, they may be required to play both singles and doubles on the same day or night with little rest between matches. This is a risk assumed on entering both singles and doubles. If possible the schedule should provide at least a one hour rest period between all matches.

(b) **Final Matches.** Where one or more players have reached the finals in both singles and doubles, it is recommended that the doubles match be played on the day preceding the singles. This would assure more rest between the final matches. If both final matches must be played on the same day or night, the following procedure is recommended.

(1) The singles match be played first.

(2) A rest period of not less than ONE HOUR be allowed between the finals in singles and doubles.

Rule 5.3—Notice of Matches. After the first round of matches, it is the responsibility of each player to check the posted schedules to determine the time and place of each subsequent match. If any change is made in the schedule after posting, it shall be the duty of the committee or chairman to notify the players of the change.

Rule 5.4—Third Place. In championship tournaments: national, state, district, etc., the loser in the semi-finals must play for third place or lose his ranking for the next year unless he is unable to compete because of injury or illness. See Rule 3.5 (d) (4).

Rule 5.5—USHA Regional Tournaments. Starting in 1967-68 the United States, Canada and Mexico will be divided into eight regions. A map defining the boundary lines of each region will be defined and made available to USHA "Regional Directors".

(a) Only players residing in the area defined can participate in a region tournament.

(b) Players can participate in only one event in a region tournament.

(c) Winners of singles and doubles (not Masters singles or doubles) of regional tournaments will receive round trip air coach tickets to the USHA nationals. Remuneration will be made after arrival at the nationals. Regional doubles winners must play together as a team to be eligible for such transportation allowances.

(d) An USHA national officer will be in attendance at each regional tournament and will coordinate with the host chairman.

Awards: No individual award in USHA-sanctioned tournaments should exceed a value of more than \$25.

Tournament Management: In all USHA-sanctioned tournaments the tournament chairman and/or the national USHA official in attendance may decide on a change of courts after the completion of any tournament game if such a change will accommodate better spectator conditions.

Tournament Conduct: In all USHA-sanctioned tournaments the referee is empowered to default a match if an individual player or team conducts itself to the detriment of the tournament and the game.

Amateur Definition: We hold as eligible for handball tournaments anyone except those who engage in, or promote handball for a profit.

Pick-A-Partner: The essence of the "Players' Fraternity" has been to allow players to come to tournaments and select a partner, if necessary, regardless what organization or city he might represent.

Referees' Association: A blue print plan for a National USHA Referees' Association will soon become a reality, classifying referees and providing instructional and training materials.

Juniors: The purpose of the USHA Junior program is to promote a worthwhile competition, both on the local and national levels and to stimulate an ideal introduction to the game.

Intercollegiates: The purpose of the USHA-sponsored intercollegiate competition is to give the more advanced college players a chance to showcase their talents under ideal conditions, and to assist in the promotion of college handball.

Ken Schneider's Views On Singles Play

Position Paramount . . . Control Down the Walls Serving is Like Pitching in Baseball . . . Shoot Side Armed

"Position is the most important thing in singles."

Ken Schneider, in expounding on singles play, emphasizes two basic fundamentals in the four-wall singles game.

"When your opponent is in front of you try and control the wall to either left or right corner. Keep that ball along the side wall."

Some years ago an instructional film was made, emphasizing, "Hit the side wall first." With this Ken disagrees. *"Of course, if you are commanding front court position you can win the volley with sharp corner kills—side wall, front wall. But, if you play the side walls behind your foe you will bring that ball to the center too often and that spells disaster."*

The ceiling shot from behind your opponent going to either corner is a most effective shot. It brings him back, and often gains either a weak return or an inability to play the ball at all.

Basic Shots

Dick Roberson in his fine booklet, "Beginning Handball", speaks of the three basic shots—(1) the passing shot, (2) the kill shot, and (3) the ceiling shot. Dick mentions a possible fourth in the lob return. *"The lob rebound off the front wall should go over the head of the opponent, and should make him move quickly out of position to try for a return. In the one- and three-wall games, the lob would replace the ceiling ball as a basic shot."*

When we speak of keeping the ball along the side walls we would put this in the passing category. Often, the more advanced players will power the ball past their opponent, caroming off a side wall so there is no chance to play it off the back wall. If the opponent is in mid-court you have better success with a shot that will bank off that side at least shoulder high. In doubles this shot is one that the player will let go so that his opposite court partner can handle it easier. But, in singles, he must move quickly to make the return and most often he loses the offensive.

In all cases you are attempting to keep that ball to your opponents' off hand as much as possible. But, don't sacrifice set up shots that can be powered more efficiently to left or right side.

In using the ceiling shot from deep court don't stay back to wait and see what your opponent is going to do. Move forward in a position to command front court and put away the many low but weak returns. If it is a ceiling shot that does not go to the corners or off the back wall low you are in jeopardy of being passed so you must anticipate this possibility and position yourself accordingly.

Get Low For Kills

We noted in the Sloan-Obert championship finale at Seattle that several times Johnny would shoot a ceiling shot and then stay back and watch as Obert would send a straight kill into the front wall. Had Sloan

moved forward he would have been given a chance to dig it up.

GET DOWN LOW in shooting kills. Sometimes you score with the so-called "hammer kill", a shot that is executed from an almost straight up position overhand. This is a possible effective shot if the opponent is in deep court and you shoot the ball low into the left or right corner but too often the ball comes up and gives your opponent a chance for a return. Always remember the lower you get the lower that ball will go into the front wall. Sam Haber had a tremendous left hand kill off the back wall with his hand literally scraping the floor. Many neophyte players play that ball off the back wall high and too close to their body with the result that the return is weak.

We can bring in Jim Jacobs' "Play the Percentages" on shooting kills. Often you see good players, who have worked to develop a fine off hand, shoot from center court with that off hand when they could easily pivot and get the real "bomb" shot with their natural hand. If you are playing for keeps go with your best . . . if you are practicing that's another story. We even see tournament players serving with their off hand. Why?

Practice hitting that ball into the right and left corners. Schneider says, "This puts your opponent right where you want him plus the all-important possibility of a weak return." Don't stroke the ball overhand when you can shoot side armed. The lazy player will think he is conserving energy by shooting overhand without moving or pivoting when there is time to do so. But, what he doesn't realize is that he is prolonging the rally and in the final analysis may lose the volley.

Effective Serves

Serve in handball is like the pitched ball in baseball. It can be upwards of 40% of your offensive strength. Only a small percentage of players have the Hersh-kowitz, Decatur, Obert, Jacobs or Collins "Big Serve." What, then is the next alternative? We have witnessed real good success with a hard overhand angle serve—either from left side to right corner, right side to left corner — or the "Scotch Toss", standing at the left, serving the ball hard to front wall, right wall or vice versa. You want your opponent to take these serves at least shoulder high so he cannot come back with a strong return that will gain the offensive for him. Control in serving is again akin to baseball pitching. There is no excuse for two short serves or hitting the ball into the floor. Take your time, have an idea where you are going to serve the ball.

There are many factors in the basic fundamentals of handball. We wanted to refresh our readers with some of the more important ones. There may be variances of opinion. Some players can develop seemingly unorthodox shots that are very effective for them but would not work for you. Don't be afraid to experiment . . . keep learning and you'll continue to develop your game despite the toll of years.

Serve—Most Important Shot In Handball

By VIC HERSHKOWITZ

The serve is the most important shot in handball because it puts one on the offensive immediately.

More than that, it may give you an immediate point on an ace. If it doesn't and if it is a good serve, it will bring a weak return, possibly setting up a point on a kill, passing shot or some other unreturnable shot.

For this reason, it is vital to develop a strong serve. By this I do not mean an extremely fast or vicious shot. There are many effective methods of getting the ball into play, and each player must "sort" them out until he finds the one best adapted to his physique, and style of game. Walter Plekan was the master of the placement and hook service, Angelo Trullio did his best work with an overhand high serve, Ken Schneider and Gus Lewis serve underhand with plenty of "cut" on the ball.

It is important, I believe, to vary the speed of service, as well as the general type. Plekan always kept his opponent off balance, for example, by mixing them up, much as a baseball pitcher mixes his delivery. Some of his most decisive points were slow serves that hugged the wall or—after he had served consistently to the left court—a slow ball that got lost in the right corner.

If you can get a player all tensed up, ready for a hard serve down the left side and then give him a soft one down the right, you've thrown him off balance.

If you've fed him a steady diet of high Scotch twists and then throw in a sudden fast, low ball, he can't possibly be ready unless he's psychic.

I don't mean by this that you must try to master ALL the serves, but after settling on the basic service best suited to your game, work to develop subtle variations within that general framework.

In my case, the serve is a hard one, usually quite low and short. To execute this serve with the right hand, I face the right wall with my feet parallel to the wall and my shoulder in alignment with my feet. I stand about midway between walls and thus do not disclose which side I am going to serve, to, while at the same time I am in position for the return.

Placement of the ball is controlled by the hips, shoulder, and arms — not by the alignment of the feet. To align the feet differently for serves to the left or right is to tip off in advance where the serve is going,

and no unnecessary help should be given the opponent!

Whether the ball is to go shallow or deep depends not on the height from which the ball is dropped but on the follow-through. I usually drop the ball from a height of about 18 inches. This is quite low and many fine players drop it from greater heights. Trullio, for example, with his overhand service, bounces the ball above his head and hits it when it is about level with the top of his head. A Scotch twist is hit at about shoulder height.

For the underhand serve, the backswing should be similar to a golf backswing in that the muscles of the back "wind up" and the hips pivot. The arm is extended at about a 45-degree angle. Also, as in golf, the head is the pivotal point, and you keep your eye on the ball until after you have hit it.

Now, it is possible to keep your eye on a spot and still move your head, so my advice is to point your chin at the spot where you're going to drop the ball, and keep it pointed at that spot until you are well into your follow-through. Remember that important tip — point your chin!

Paranetically, let me say that the top players all watch the ball at all times — never taking anything for granted. If you follow the flight of the ball until your opponent has hit it, you will know whether it's being angled and at what height it's being hit — and thus you get the jump on the ball. Then you can usually be in position to return it.

To apply hop to the ball, one must either cut under the ball, twisting the wrist in a clockwise direction (for righthanded players) to apply spin so the ball "takes off" to the left or have your hand roll over the ball to apply reverse spin and make the ball bounce to the right. The opposite "English" results for lefthanded players.

Many players have asked me where the ball meets my hand and just how twist or hop is applied.

To put natural hop on a serve, the ball meets my hand on the heel or on the thumb and first finger, the hand being cupped to the same degree for all shots. To cut the ball to the right, I hit the ball in the meaty part between the first and second fingers and roll my wrist over so that it covers the ball. For a left hop, I hit the ball in the same spot and roll my wrist under it, in a clockwise direction. (All of this again is for righthanded serves, and opposite hop results when you shift to the left

hand).

The hop and twist are applied solely through wrist action. The follow-through of hips, shoulder, and arm control the speed of the ball.

The question has come up whether the ball should always be made to hop toward the wall, depending on whether one is serving to the left or right court. My answer is that it should be made to hop both ways to both courts because the main objective is to confuse your opponent to your own advantage. Keep him guessing by varying the direction of the serve, the direction of the hop, and the speed of the serve. Keep him off balance at all times.

Some strong servers will try for a "crotch shot" almost every time, i.e. a shot that hits the crotch where wall meets floor and comes out as a kill. This, I believe, is poor policy because there is a certain element of luck to this shot and when it is not properly controlled, it may come off the wall as a setup.

It is more desirable to try to hit a twist shot that will break into the receiver, "handcuffing" him . . . but you have to study him closely to decide where he is going to be at a given time, and even so he may anticipate your shot or be agile enough to get into position for a fair return.

In any case, when trying to handcuff your opponent, be sure the ball is low enough so that it doesn't come off the back wall as a setup shot.

In mixing up your serves as to general direction and direction of hop, don't become so engrossed in the game or so tense that you are trying to murder every serve. A major league pitcher who concentrates on sheer speed is soon in the showers—unless he is Sandy Koufax or Bob Feller in his prime.

And remember, there are times when there is much more spin on a let-up service than a fast one, and the hop will break very sharply, again keeping the opponent off balance.

Age has nothing in particular to do with the type of serve you choose. Some of the older players still have very powerful serves. If you're the slender type and don't exercise much it would probably be better to concentrate on a high lob serve against the wall or the Scotch twist—something that will not cause you to throw your arm out. Each individual must find the type of serve that he can perfect to the greatest extent, the type that gives him the best results within the limits of his ability, age and stamina.

Basics For Better Handball

By BOB DAVIDSON

1. Concentrate on serve. Your best serve may not always work to your satisfaction and often a change will cross up opponent. After serving, stay within limits of short line if possible — **POSITION UP FRONT IS IMPORTANT.**
2. If you "short" or "long" the ball on first serve, **DON'T GAMBLE.** Suggest you use a cross court, or three wall serve, as it is called for second serve as you can't get hurt on this if done properly.
3. When receiving, try to move the server away from short line.
4. Ceiling shots should be aimed at a spot about a foot or foot and one half away from front wall and played to carry close to side wall without hitting it.
5. When retrieving a ceiling ball, get back quickly into position and try to meet the ball on its way down.
6. When retrieving a ball hit along the side wall that reaches the back wall and rebounds, allow ball to get slightly in front of you and then step into it.
7. When retrieving a passing ball hit along side wall, run toward back wall until you can see the ball coming toward you — then step into it.
8. Avoid shooting for "broke" on tough "gets". Best to hit ball up and around and play it cagey until you can get back to your short line position.
9. Favorite shots are: "left wall-front", "front wall-left", "right wall-front", "front wall-right". "Pass shots", low and hard, along either left or right side wall aimed at a point where opponent is positioned and about hip high away from opponent. Use the "around the wall" shot when you are in trouble. Pass shots low and hard along side walls without touching walls.
10. Stress should be given to that phase of the game that I call "point of contact" as, in my opinion, this is the factor that separates the great player from the good player. The "point of contact" is around the center of the body. Many missed "kills" are made or "setups" given by lack of knowledge as to just where "point of contact" is. Players with exceptional athletic ability find this "point of contact" unknowingly. Others require study and practice. All can accomplish it.

Footwork All Important

By GUS LEWIS

Footwork is the most important element in almost any sport you can name. Because handball is mainly a running game, the importance of good footwork, proper conditioning of the feet and legs, and of getting into the right court position are of self-evident importance and these factors are all intertwined.

FACE THE BALL WHEN YOU HIT IT.

If the ball is coming down the right wall, face the right wall. If it's coming down the left side, face left. If you're taking it off the back wall, face the back wall, pivoting as you swing.

Now, if it's coming straight at you from the front wall, shift your feet so you'll be facing right or left as you start your swing.

KEEP MOVING . . . Don't ever stop. In other words, don't ever come to a dead stop and plant yourself. And particularly, don't ever let your weight get on your heels—keep it on the balls of your feet. By this, I do not mean on your toes, or you'll over-balance.

Special Exercise

Try this exercise . . . with your weight on the balls of your feet, move to your left with short steps, moving slowly. Then make a sudden take-off to your right. You will plant your left foot hard and drive off it to change direction. But because you had some motion the change of direction is easier.

You can change direction faster than you can start from a dead stop.

By getting into position you can stroke the ball rather than bat at it or stab at it.

ANTICIPATION . . . does not mean guessing.

If you hit a ceiling shot deep in the back court, you can be reasonably certain that your opponent (if he hasn't moved up to take it on the fly) will hit a high return. But you don't know for sure. And you don't know whether he'll hit it down the left or right, or whether he'll give you a twist shot out of the corner. He might even drive it low along either wall.

There's only one way you can anticipate where you should be for his return, and that is to watch the ball until he has hit it.

Then you may have to turn your back on the ball to get into position—but never take your eyes off the ball or your opponent until he has swung.

Too many players make their break before the other player has hit, which

brings me to another point: Never commit yourself in any direction at full speed.

Drift, Don't Run

If you've had to move close to the back wall for a shot, for example, you naturally want to get back to center, front court to be ready for anything. But drift back for, as soon as you break fast, your opponent will cross you up, catch you "on the wrong foot" as they say in tennis, and drive the ball behind you.

In this connection, here's a tip that may be of value. If you have to go to any wall at full-speed for a get, sometimes you save time by taking an extra step or two and then pushing yourself off the wall, it's frequently faster than trying to brake yourself, stop, and start back.

This may come under the heading of court strategy rather than footwork, but I'd like to point out that as the national championship matches near the final rounds, you see fewer and fewer players on the floor.

Dive Is Wasted

The best players have figured out that you can run to the ball faster than you can dive for it—if you keep your feet moving and keep your balance properly distributed. I can honestly say I've never fallen down in the court, unless my foot slipped on some perspiration; and I've never dived for a ball. You can get there faster with your feet than with your body.

In this connection, you will find—if you will believe it—that there's hardly a ball hit that can't be retrieved. You've played some baseball, no doubt, and you must have amazed yourself at least once by catching a fly on the dead run that you thought you couldn't reach. The same thing happens in handball. The ball "hangs" for that split second—or so it seems, and you'll get a large percentage of "impossible" returns if you persevere.

Proper Foot Action

The object of footwork is to get into position to stroke your shot. Now then, what should your foot action be when actually hitting the ball?

It's about the same action you use playing catch with a baseball. Your whole back foot is on the floor as you begin to swing, with your right hand, with the forward toe just touching the floor. As you swing, the weight is transferred, naturally and smoothly, from the back foot to the forward one, with the forward foot coming into full contact with the floor as power is applied. You hit "against" the leading foot just as you

do with a baseball or golf swing. On almost every shot, the knees should be flexed slightly—more for low shots, of course.

Keep Weight Forward

The most important thing is that your weight be on the balls of your feet, even though the entire foot is in contact with the floor. This does not mean it should be on your toes, for if your weight is too far forward, you will be off-balance and will have a tendency to fall or lunge forward after the shot. You will also lose power.

Most handball shots, whether overhand, sidearm, or underhand, are more than an action of the hand and wrist. The whole arm, the shoulders, the back, the hips, the legs—and the feet—come into play.

No matter how much you love the game, you can't spend all your time in a handball court—and very few want to. But there are a lot of things you can do outside the court that will prove rewarding and beneficial to your game.

For Conditioning Legs

I had the tremendous advantage of being an acrobatic tap dancer in vaudeville for five years as a boy, and it's impossible to estimate how much the footwork I learned as a dancer helped my handball.

Not many take up acrobatic tap dancing, but I still do an exercise I learned in those days, and I pass it along here as probably the most beneficial of all for both strengthening and limbering your legs for handball.

The first exercise I recommend is a shallow knee bend or half squat.

The second is to rise up on the toes.

The third is to do deep knee bends (full squat).

Repeat each exercise in various positions several times. This will develop ALL the leg muscles in a uniform way, making them strong enough to stand the stresses of handball, supple enough to respond to the many positions the game demands.

For further muscle development, coordination, and looseness, I am listing here a number of practice suggestions:

1. Practicing alone with emphasis on facing the ball on every shot.

2. Practicing alone, with emphasis on moving at all times with short steps, the weight on the balls of the feet.

3. Practicing alone to retrieve "hangers." Stand near the left rear corner. Throw the ball into the right front corner six inches to a foot off the floor, then run for it—and don't give up. Vary this with shots from various points—but persevere on every shot.

4. To build endurance and to strengthen your legs, running is good. But run a quarter mile or less at a time, ON YOUR TOES. Heel and toe running at long distances will not bring a tenth the benefit of sprints on the toes.

5. Ballroom dancing, on the balls of your feet, will help you achieve a high standard of footwork. Imagine what handball players Fred Astaire and Gene Kelly would have made if they'd tried!

6. Swimming is excellent, since it keeps your legs strong and supple, relaxes your muscles, and builds endurance. An older player who's relaxed will outlast a stronger, younger opponent who is tense. And remember, one tournament game takes as much out of you as half a dozen practice games because of the tension involved. Practice relaxing, and pacing yourself, so you'll do it naturally in competition.

7. Other sports. Basketball and soccer are both excellent because of the footwork and strategy involved. Soccer is especially beneficial in Ireland where you are allowed to kick the ball in handball. ALEX BOISSEREE, one of the best players in the Los Angeles area, was named soccer player of the year in China before the war (and was interned there throughout the war, incidentally).

8. During calisthenics in the morning or evening, practice deep knee bends on your toes.

9. Finally, take care of your feet. Wear one or two pairs of heavy wool sweat socks. Wear sneakers that have not worn smooth (some types actually serve as a squeegee if you hit a wet spot on the floor and prevent spills).

Instructional Writers . . .

KEN SCHNEIDER . . . Holder of national singles and doubles titles, Masters doubles winner 1964-68 with Gus Lewis. Ken, originally from New York City, now plays out of Chicago, is considered one of the real greats of all-time.

VIC HERSHKOWITZ . . . New York fireman, who has accumulated all-time record number of national championships in all phases of the game. Completely ambidextrous, he has been leading player for more than two decades.

GUS LEWIS . . . Has demonstrated the values of speed and foot. Former champion cross country runner, parlayed his quickness into championship play in singles and doubles along with the all-important stamina that is needed in tourney play.

JIM JACOBS . . . Californian, who now has flourishing fight film agency in New York, generally conceded to be finest four-wall exponent in this generation. Has won six USHA singles and five doubles titles.

Jacobs Advises: 1—Change Speed of Serve . . . 2—Don't Overswing . . . 3—When to Concede Point

By JIM JACOBS

1. Concentrate continuously on changing the "speed" of your serve — We all change the place in the court where we serve the ball . . . down the left, down the right, three wall and so on. But, of equal importance, is the continuous change of the speed of the serve. If a ball is always fast, or slow, or simply at the same rate of speed all of the time, your opponent must only accustom himself to the different places in the court you hit the ball.

In other words, he runs to the spot and swings away without one thought of having to time his swing. However, if you hit two serves, hook or not, in the "IDENTICAL" spot on the court, but you have hit each at a different rate of speed, you require your opponent to adjust his timing to compensate for the speed you put on, or take off, the serve. The big difference, of course, is that you know in advance what you are going to do in the service box, while your opponent must make his adjustments in the timing-of his swing "after" he sees the speed you have decided to use.

In conclusion—when you serve the ball to a different spot on the court than you did just previously, and you also change the speed of the serve, you are actually giving your opponent "twice" the problem he would have encountered had you simply changed the area you served the ball, but kept the movement of the ball at the same rate of speed.

2. Make a determined effort not to "overswing" — If handball players could grasp the enormous importance of this lesson it would certainly revolutionize tournament play. We practice all year long using certain "comfortable" strokes, and each of us learns to control our best shots using this stroke in our everyday workouts.

I have seen this pit-fall literally "hundreds" of time. When that same practiced player gets into a tournament he forgets about the comfortable stroke he has been using all year long and starts immediately to "overswing." (Hit the ball harder by swinging much faster.) That is when the ability of the individual leaves the handball court and an "uncultivated type of zeal" takes over. I have witnessed this in countless matches of great importance, and I, too, have been a victim of my own enthusiasm in my early hand-

ball days. But I now realize that there is nothing as important to "tournament play" as the ability to perform as well as you can in practice.

And, the biggest trap you have to avoid, and it takes a conscious mental effort, is don't change your normal stroke once a year in a tournament because of the enthusiasm which always accompanies the contest. We all can hit the ball a bit harder than our accustomed strokes, but there is nothing but futility and inconsistency in doing it once a year at tournament time.

3. Learn when to concede a point — This is an area which is seldom touched on — but since I put it into the practical application of my handball game — allow me to pass an opinion on to you. We all admire the ball player who shows a lot of fire, a never-say-die spirit, who scrambles for everything which is "Gettable." I, too, love to win. And because there is just so much energy in each human body, I want to use every ounce of mine for one simple objective, "A winning effort." I have learned my lesson as most of us do, *the hard way*. There was a time in my handball life, when, if an opponent passed me with a well-placed shot, I would streak after it even if it took a supreme effort merely to flip the ball back in a harmlessly soft arch to the front wall.

When my opponent took a look at the generous variety of places he had to hit the ball, after my "gift" return, he proceeded to send me on the same trip over again, and away I would streak like a greyhound after a rabbit. Naturally, whether I eventually won, or lost, the rally was of little consequence. After a few dozen trips after the rabbit I was melted down to a turtle chaser.

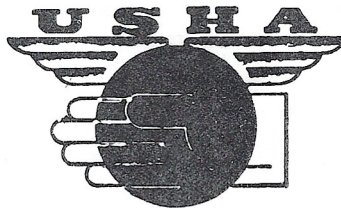
Now then, where is the line of demarcation? When should you "let go" in the interest of "winning?" — First let's rule out the natural objections to this novel suggestion. In any crucial rally, towards the end of a game, you would, of course, do everything humanly possible to win the rally, which would also include running all over the place if necessary.

The fact that you are passed on a shot most certainly *does not* mean that you shouldn't go after the ball because you want to conserve your energy. To the contrary, I run hard when I'm passed — I always attempt

to return the ball hitting one of the two side walls first, very high, which gives me an opportunity to get back into position while the ball is hitting all three walls.

"BUT", if I go running after a well-placed pass shot, and, after catching it, I return the ball weakly because of the accuracy of my opponent's shot, and then find that he chooses to send me on an extended trip over the same area, — I only take that journey "Twice". If my second return of his pass shot is a gain poor, I *will not* take any more

trips, unless, the circumstances of the score demand that it's a "now or never" rally. But those rallies are few and far between, and there is nothing dishonorable in letting a point go when the rally gets out of hand, rather than proving you are a streak of lightning who can run for as long a period of time as your opponent can hit. This is a horrible thought. So seriously think of the logical possibility that giving up a rally, in preference to losing a substantial amount of energy is, at times, an extremely wise choice.



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