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AIA HIGH SCHOOL BADMINTON RULES, ETIQUETTE AND PROTOCOL REVIEW

Badminton has historic roots as an “English gentlemen’s sport” and as such emphasizes honesty, integrity, and fair play. As an AIA high school activity, it is important to promote good sportsmanship among all competing schools, coaches, players, administration, and parents. This should be reflected in all the rules, etiquette, and protocol of the sport by everyone involved, whether written or unwritten. Being considerate and respectful during play and shaking hands after every match is a vital part of badminton. The following is a general review of many of the basic badminton rules from the United States Badminton Association “[Laws of Badminton](#)” and “[General Competition Regulations](#)”, [AIA Constitution and Bylaws](#), and unwritten protocol, especially important considering all the new coaches and players coming into the sport every year.

THE LINE-UP CARD (AIA Bylaw 20.6.3):

Badminton players shall compete with players on the opposing team with the same rank. ***The line-up shall always be based on order of ability.*** When a regular team member is unable to participate in her established position, that position shall be filled by advancing all team members (one position up) ***whether they be varsity, junior varsity or freshmen. When a regular team member is unable to play in her established double position, that position shall be filled by a direct line substitution, whether varsity, junior varsity or freshman. Player movement, including double team, within the ladder is restricted to one position up or down from one match to another.***

An example would be if your varsity 3 was out for a game you would move your varsity #4, #5, and #6 up one spot each and then move JV #1 into the varsity #6 spot. So now you will advance all your JV up one spot and exhibition #1 will become JV #6.

Should a coach be suspected of using the incorrect ranking order at a match, notify your Athletic Director who may contact the other school's Athletic Director to address the issue.

VARSITY, JV AND EXHIBITION PLAYERS: Per AIA Bylaw 14.3, Seniors may only play on the Varsity team. JV and Exhibition team members may be moved up to fill in on the Varsity or JV squads and may play a Singles or Doubles match as a substitute and play the other event on their own level, but not the same event on two different teams.

ORDER OF MATCHES AT A TEAM VS. TEAM MEET: For regular season meets the rules dictate that Singles shall be played first, then the Doubles matches. More specifically, the Singles matches should be played in the order of ranking, such that the Singles #1, Singles #2... through Singles #6 shall be called consecutively until the courts are full. After the specified break between matches for any players participating in both Singles and Doubles, then the three Doubles matches are called available. The order of matches does not need to apply to Invitational tournaments or the AIA State Individual Badminton Championships where Doubles matches may be played before Singles matches if desired.

CHEERING ETIQUETTE AND PROTOCOL: Cheering at any time during matches is encouraged. The more energy the better! However, there is NO COACHING ALLOWED (by coaches, parents, or any fans) from the stands (such as, “let it land out!” “Hit it to her backhand!” or “hit more clears!” or other verbal or non-verbal actions that give instruction. Cheering should also avoid taunting the opponents and reflect good sportsmanship throughout.

COACHING RESTRICTIONS: Coaching for Varsity matches is restricted to a maximum of 2 official team coaches on the court during the 60 second interval at 11 points in the middle of each game and the 2-minute interval between games. Coaching for JV and Exhibition matches can involve any of the coaches or players on the team, but no more than 2 people should go on the court to coach during any of the intervals.

SCORE SHEETS: The AIA provides the official score sheet form [downloadable off AIAONLINE.COM](#)-- look under the "Coaches" menu tab and click on "Badminton." The official AIA Badminton scoresheet is among the items listed to download. The home team should print two copies for each match. The results should be entered in both copies throughout the match and confirmed by both coaches at the end of the meet. Though both coaches have access to enter the match results, it is the home team's responsibility to enter the match scores into the AIA dashboard.

Recommendation: Keep the hard copies of the score sheets until the end of the season.

PLAYER SUBSTITUTIONS: The rules do allow for a substitution should an injury occur to a Singles player that prevents them from participating in a Doubles match they were scheduled for later in the same meet. Should a substitute be required, then a player on the team not already listed in Doubles may be substituted and the ranking order of the Doubles teams shall be adjusted if necessary for any remaining un-started Doubles matches. A reshuffling of the other Doubles pairings is not allowed. Once a match has begun no substitutions are allowed for that match.

FACILITY GROUND RULES: Many gyms have various ceiling obstructions, unusual line colors, or other facility issues, some of which may affect play and involve "lets" or "faults" that should be explained to the visiting team before the match starts. For example, if a gym has basketball standards at a ceiling height in the field of play that is less than legal clearance, then a "let" should be called anytime the bird contacts the obstruction during play. These ground rules should be clearly stated to all players and coaches prior to a meet or tournament. The net height should be measured and properly set at 5' 1" at the sides of the court, and 5' 0" at the center.

TESTING THE SHUTTLECOCK: Testing the Shuttlecock, "bird" or "shuttle" may occur prior to the start of a match to determine if its speed is legal (the distance it travels) and its flight is reasonably smooth, or at times during a match when the bird's condition has been damaged during play. Should the bird's condition be unsuitable for play, the players may raise their rackets and ask for a replacement bird. Testing is done by contacting the bird with a normal, full underhand stroke from the back baseline and seeing if it lands within 18 inches in front of the back doubles service line across the net. Should a new bird be either too fast or too slow, the tips of the feathers of the bird can be bent outward or inward accordingly to adjust the speed to bring it into the legal range.

THE TOSS: Before each match begins the players shall gather on each side of the net and toss the shuttle in the air to see which way it points after falling or spin a racket to see if it is "up" or "down" according to the bottom logo. The winner of the toss has the option to: A) Serve or Receive OR B) Choose a Side. The loser of the toss has the other option.

WARM UP AND GAME BREAKS: The specified warm-up time before a match is a maximum of 10 minutes before the first match played and 5 minutes before a 2nd or additional match to be played thereafter. For Rally Scoring there is a maximum 1-minute break at 11 points for each game, and a 2-minute break between games 1 and 2. For **split sets**, there will be 5-minute break games 2 and 3. If both players wish to resume play earlier than the full break time they may do so. If either player wishes a full break, it will be granted. Players should immediately resume playing following the break time.

THE RALLY SCORING SYSTEM: Most notably every rally rewards a point scored regardless of who served, unlike the traditional scoring system where only the serving side wins a point. This results in generally shorter match times even though in RALLY scoring the match is to 21 points. Along with conforming to international standards, the RALLY scoring system has the advantage of making it easier to teach beginners.

- The winner of the rally gets one point and serves the next point after announcing the score (serving side's score first).

- Serve from the right side when your side has an even score and the left side when your side has an odd score.
 - First to 21 wins the game
 - However, in a case when the score is 20-20 the first person to lead by two points wins, e.g. 22-20, 23-21, etc.
 - The maximum points is 30, so 30-29 is the closest game score possible
- Best of three games wins the match (either straight games 2-0, or with a third game 2-1)
- Final match scores are given with the winner's score first, e.g., 21-15, 22-24, 21-19 (the winner lost the 2nd game)

Additionally, for the 21-point Rally system, there is a 60 second mid-game interval (break) when the first side gets to 11 points and a 2-minute interval between games 1 and 2. The intervals may be used for brief coaching on the court, but the intervals may not be extended to allow for coaches to arrive at the court. Players must remain on the court for the 60-second and 2-minute interval(s).

SWITCHING SIDES IN GAME 3: Players shall switch sides of the net at the interval of 11 points should a match go to game 3. Should players forget to switch sides at the proper time, then they shall switch sides as soon as recognized thereafter with the score continuing as is.

ANNOUNCING THE SCORE BEFORE EACH RALLY: Without a presiding official who is calling the score throughout the match, which is nearly always the situation in AIA High School Badminton matches, it is important for the serving player to clearly announce the current score, with the server's score first, before serving the shuttle to their opponent(s). There should be a pause after calling the score before serving to allow for any disagreements regarding the score to be addressed and, if necessary, corrected by all players. This may also entail players correcting their proper serving and receiving positions on the court. Should any disagreement remain unresolved, then the players should raise their rackets to attract the attention of the tournament desk to resolve the issue.

LINE CALLS: In the absence of line judges, each Singles player and Doubles team is responsible for the line calls on their own side of the court. Honesty and precision are essential. The first part of the bird to contact the floor—the tip of the cork—is its landing place. To call a bird “out” the bird should be clearly seen as out. If it is too close to call “out,” it should be considered “in.” If you are unable to see the bird land, then the bird is presumed to be “in.” Anyone off the court may NOT help with the line calls. As a last resort, should a player or team believe that dishonest line calls are being made by their opponents, then they may raise their rackets to ask for help from the tournament desk which may either issue a warning or decide to assign line judges. If line judges are assigned it is preferred to find those who are unbiased and have a basic understanding of the rules. The simplest assignment is one line judge who stands by the net and oversees any line calls in question. Other options are 2-line judges, one for each side of the net, or 4-line judges sitting or standing at the 4 back corners of the court. A complete set requires 8-line judges to cover all the lines.

OTHER FAULTS OR JUDGEMENT CALLS: Without a presiding court official, anytime there is a question about a rule, the player(s) should raise their rackets to ask for help from the tournament desk before continuing to the next rally. After the next rally has started, it is too late to address previous questions.

CONTINUOUS PLAY: Officially, play is to be continuous except for the specified break times during a match. When a rally is over then the shuttle should immediately and politely be hit, thrown, or handed to the server. The players then should all get in position for the next rally. Walking around the court, retying shoes, constantly toweling off, or any more than a few brief words of strategy with a doubles partner, etc. are considered delays. Water breaks should be kept to the designated breaks between games. Generally, the next rally should resume between 5-15 seconds after the previous rally is over. If a player feels their opponent is using delay tactics to gain extra rest, disrupt momentum or discuss strategy with a partner in doubles, then they may raise their racket to ask for help from the tournament desk. If delays continue, the offending player or team is warned the first time, then faulted a point each time thereafter. *(See the “Miscellaneous Rules and Issues” on page 5 for injury timeouts and break time allowed between matches.)*

SERVING RULES: There are 4 main parts to legal serves whether executed by forehand or backhand:

1. Some portion of each foot must maintain contact with the floor inside the boundaries of the serving court without touching the boundary lines.
2. For Fixed Height Experiment: The whole of the shuttle shall be below 1.15 meters from the surface of the court at the instant of being hit by the server's racket.
3. The serve officially begins with the first forward motion of the racket and only one forward motion of the racket may take place.
4. The server's partner may stand anywhere in the overall court so long as they do not obstruct the view of the bird by the server returner. Any infractions of the above result in a "fault" serve. However, opponents do not have the authority to call a service fault. Without an official by the court overseeing the match, an opponent should raise their racket and call the attention of the presiding officials at the tournament desk to seek a service judge for future rallies.

Note: Due to the difficulty of officiating the serve, it is especially important for coaches to teach the legal serving rules to their players to ensure fair play. Roving officials for the early rounds and match officials for the later rounds will be provided at the AIA State Badminton Championships.

SERVE RETURN RULES: Some portion of each foot must be in contact with the floor within the boundaries of the receiving court without touching the lines. The player may not move a foot off the floor until the serve is contacted. If the serve returner moves before the serve is contacted, it is a "fault." However, opponents do not have the authority to call a serve return fault. Again, without an official by the court overseeing the match, an opponent should raise their racket and call the attention of the presiding officials at the tournament desk to seek a serve/serve return judge for future rallies. The serve return partner may stand anywhere within the overall court.

DOUBLES RULES & ALIGNMENT: In Rally Scoring, whenever the serving team has an even number of points (0, 2, 4...) the player on the even side will serve for their side until they lose a point, or if they have an odd number of points (1, 3, 5...), then the player on the odd side will serve will serve for their side until they lose a point. The server will continue serving alternating to the other side each time their side wins a point. Only one server serves each side.

CORRECTING WRONG POSITIONS ON THE COURT IN DOUBLES: If a rally has just been played and it is discovered before the next serve that one or more of the players were in the wrong position on the court when serving or receiving, then the following happens depending on the situation (no correction in score or position occurs if the next serve has already taken place):

1. If the wrong player served the bird and the serving team won the point, then the point is replayed with the serving players correcting to their proper positions. If the serving team loses the rally, then that serve is lost and the serving players remain in their uncorrected positions on the court from then on.
2. If the wrong player received the bird and the serving team won the point, then the point stands, and the receiving players remain in their uncorrected positions on the court from then on. If the point is lost, then the rally is replayed with the receiving players correcting their positions on the court.

MISCELLANEOUS RULES AND ISSUES:

1. It is legal for a bird to touch the net on the way over, whether on the serve or any subsequent stroke.
2. It is a "fault" if the bird sticks in the net without reaching the top of the net.
3. It is a "let" if the bird sticks at the top of the net or in the net after going over the net.
4. It is a "fault" if a player's racket reaches over the net to contact the bird before it crosses the net.
5. It is a "fault" if two players on the same side of the net contact the bird before the bird is hit over the net.

6. It is legal for any part of a player's body or racket to go over or under the net without hitting the net or the floor on the opponent's side as part of a follow through if they return completely to their own side of the net before the bird returns to their side.
7. It is a "fault" to yell or otherwise distract an opponent when the bird is on the opponent's side of the net.
8. Should an injury occur during a match, the injured player may have up to a 10-minute timeout to be attended to (such as taping a twisted ankle) before continuing play or discontinuing and defaulting. To be eligible for this timeout, the injury cannot be fitness related, such as leg cramps or shortness of breath.
9. At an AIA meet or tournament a player may request up to a 10-minute break between matches, whether for singles or doubles, but they do not need to take the break if they do not wish.
10. Profanity, screaming and other temper displays may result in warnings, faults, or forfeiture at the discretion of the tournament desk or presiding official.

PHILOSOPHY AND PURPOSE OF AIA TOURNAMENT SEEDING: The simplest format for badminton tournaments is a straight draw formed by randomly placing players/teams. This is the purest form of impartiality but may yield an imbalanced draw with the strongest players playing each other in the early rounds. Seeding is a compromise to the completely random method to form more balanced draws. However, the purpose of seeding is not to pre-determine every round-- there should remain a significant "luck of the draw" factor in formatting the tournament! International regulations limit a maximum of 4 seeds for 16–31 entrants, 8 seeds for 32–63 entrants, 16 seeds for 64 and larger draws. However, the AIA tournament committee may choose a different number of seeds as it deems appropriate. Top entries are generally seeded based on their results during the regular season. However, the results may be very mixed. Seeding is not an exact science, will often be subjective, and should not be over analyzed. Rarely do the most diligent efforts in seeding pan out, often proving to be about 50% incorrect when a tournament is played out. The aim is simply to separate the strongest players into different sections of the draw. The AIA tournament Coordinator also makes it a practice to maximally separate players/teams from the same school in the draw.

SUMMARY: Overall, Badminton has a great reputation for sportsmanship world-wide. Although it is not nearly as subjective in its rules interpretations as many American sports such as baseball, football, and basketball, it is still impossible to cover every circumstance that may arise, especially with a high school sport that involves so few officials and so many new players and coaches. From time to time this document will be revised to cover more situations. The best resolution in every circumstance is to encourage honesty, respect, integrity, and common sense. Learn the rules and follow them. Demonstrate sportsmanship, have fun, and enjoy the great sport of badminton!

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