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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 all the more 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 and unwritten protocol, especially important considering all the new coaches and players coming into the sport every year.

THE LINE-UP CARD: It is the responsibility of each Badminton Coach to complete a Singles and Doubles line-up roster IN THE RANKING ORDER OF SINGLES PLAYERS AND DOUBLES TEAMS chosen for that meet. Singles #1 through #6 and Doubles #1 through #3 shall be listed in the players’ ranking order on the roster. Neither the home or visiting team coach should see the opposing team’s roster until they have turned in their own team roster. No adjustments of the line-up roster can be made after seeing the opposing roster. “Strategically” changing the order of the players is not acceptable. Generally, teams hold regular ladder matches during team practices to determine the players’ on-going ranking order in Singles and Doubles, and the most recent results should be adhered to in completing the roster for each meet. The new 2015 rule allows Varsity teams to have more than 6 players, such that players are not required to play both Singles and Doubles. This allows coaches to choose which players play Singles and/or Doubles, however, of the players chosen, they must submit them in the current, honest ranking order.

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

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.

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 as available. The order of matches does not need to apply for Invitational tournaments or the AIA State Individual Badminton Championships where Doubles matches may be played before Singles matches if desired.

VARSITY, JV AND EXHIBITION PLAYERS: 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.

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 meet. The results should be entered on both copies throughout the meet and confirmed by both coaches at the end of the meet. Then, one copy should go to the visiting team and the other is for the home coach and copied for their Athletic Director to turn into the AIA.

FACILITY GROUND RULES: Many gyms have various ceiling obstructions, unusual line colors, or other facility issues, some of which may effect play and involve “lets” or “faults” that should be explained to the visiting team before the meet starts. For example, if a gym has basketball standards at a ceiling height 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.

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TRADITIONAL SCORING SYSTEM: The traditional scoring system remains in force for all AIA high school badminton competition. The format is best 2 of 3 games to 11 points for Singles, with a setting option at 10-all to 13 points for each game; and best 2 of 3 games to 15 points for Doubles, with a setting option at 14-all to 17 points for each game. Points are scored only by the serving team. In singles, the setting option is available one time to the first player that reaches 10 points once the score is tied, and in doubles, to the first team that reaches 14 points once the score is tied. In some cases, Invitational tournaments may adjust the scoring system particularly for consolation matches.

Why not use the Rally Scoring System that is now used by National and International tournament play?

Response: Rally scoring results in games that are generally shorter than would be preferred for high school team meets. The serving rules are more difficult to enforce with a greater incentive to hit illegal serves. There are less “critical” points. The Rally Scoring System was created to reduce the length of matches for TV and major tournaments where 5 or more matches may be played by participants at a very intense level.

TESTING THE SHUTTLECOCK: Testing the Shuttlecock, “bird” or “shuttle” may occur prior to the start of a match to determine if it's speed is legal (the distance it travels) and it's 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 make adjustments to 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.

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.

ANNOUNCING THE SETTING OPTION: Should a Singles or Doubles game reach the setting option, then it is essential that the server clearly announce the score and ask the opponent if they wish to “set” or “no set.” The opponent then chooses, and the server then re-announces the score accordingly, such as in Singles: “10-all set to 13 points,” or “10-all no-set to 11 points;” or in Doubles: “14-all set to 17 points,” or “14-all no-set to 15 points.” Should the server fail to announce the setting option out loud, and the receiver not choose an option, then the default is to the setting option.

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 is 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.

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.

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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. There is a maximum 90 second break between the 1st and 2nd game, and a maximum 5 minute break between the 2nd and 3rd game if there is a split. If both players wish to resume play earlier than the full break time they may do so. If either player wishes the full break, it will be granted. Players should be ready to resume play immediately following the break time.

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.

COACHING RESTRICTIONS: Coaching for Varsity matches is restricted to a maximum of 2 official team coaches on the court during the 90 second break between the 1st and 2nd game. There is no coaching restriction off the court during the 5 minute break between the 2nd and 3rd game. Coaching for JV and Exhibition matches can involve any of the coaches or players on the team, but no more than 2 people should be coaching during the break after the 1st game.

SWITCHING SIDES IN GAME 3: Players shall switch sides of the net in game 3 of matches when the first player reaches 6 points in Singles; and when the first team reaches 8 in Doubles. Should players forget to switch sides at the proper time, then they shall switch sides as soon as remembered thereafter with the score continuing as is.

SERVING RULES: There are 5 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) All of the bird must be below the waist line--the bottom rib—when struck 3) The racket head must be tilted down such that, at the time of contact with the bird, all of the racket head is below all of the hand holding the racket 4) The serve officially begins with the first forward motion of the racket and only one forward motion of the racket may take place. 5) 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 serve returner. Any infractions of the above should 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 explain their concern and seek resolution 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 explain their concern and seek resolution for future rallies. The serve return partner may stand anywhere within the overall court.

DOUBLES RULES & ALIGNMENT: Player A starts on the "even" side. Player B on the "odd" side. For the first serve of each game only Player A will serve before the side is out. Player A serves each rally and continues serving as long as their team wins the point, alternating from side to side. Whenever the serving team has an even number of points (0, 2, 4...) Player A will be on the even side when serving or receiving. Whenever the serving team has an odd number of points (1, 3, 5...) then Player A will be on the odd side when serving or receiving. Player B will be on the opposite side. After the first side of the game is over, then both Player A and Player B will each have the opportunity to serve for their side. When a side comes in, the Player who is on the even side serves first (Player A when the serving team has an even score. Player B when the serving team has an odd score.)

Should the setting option be in effect, the score is the total score, such as for Singles, 10-all, 11-10, 12-10, or 11-12, etc., and for Doubles, 14-all, 15-14, 16-14, or 14-15, etc.; and the Players align on the court accordingly.

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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 re-played with the serving players correcting to their proper positions. If the serving team lost 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 make contact with 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 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) Profanity, screaming and other temper displays may result in warnings, faults, or forfeiture at the discretion of the tournament desk or presiding official.

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 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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