

Badminton - Overview

Badminton, prominently known as Shuttlecock, is an age old game that has its origin about 2000 years ago in parts of Europe and Asia. Badminton was mostly played by the higher society of England as a pastime and the game was mostly practiced by hitting the shuttlecock forward and backward. Rules similar to that of today's Badminton were written in 1893 and the modern game was popularized in England.



Badminton as battledore and shuttlecock is played with sides across a string suspended some five feet above the ground. The sport tests player's athletic stamina, agility and good motor coordination skills.

Objective

The objective of badminton is similar to that of other racket games. This game can be played in three variants; singles, doubles, and mixed doubles. A shuttle cock is shot with a wired metal rimmed racket across the net, called a serve, to player(s) on the other side of the court who try to send it back.

Each player tries to land the shuttle cock on the opposite teams while intercepting it on their side. The cock has to fly over the net and reach the other side once a player hits it. The shuttlecock volleys among the players to make a rally, and they hit it with their rackets till it lands on the court or till one of the players commits a fault.

The player scores a point if the opposite player misses the shuttle. These hits can either be smashes, slow and light, or flat and low.

Team Size

Size is no barrier for forming a badminton team. In university level or junior college level, teams can either be of single gender or mixed. Players from a school can form many teams and participate in the tournament. Two players of the same or different gender can form a team and participate in doubles, while single players can participate in singles tournaments.

Badminton - Participating Countries

The following countries have international players participating in Badminton tournaments.

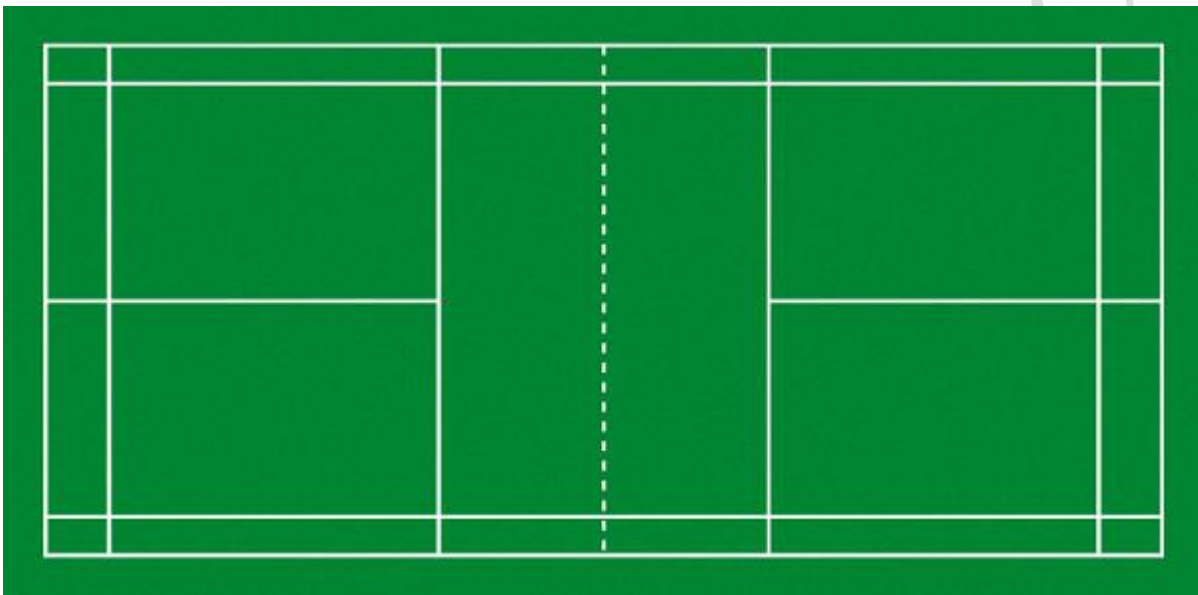
Top ten Men's (field)	Top ten Women's (field)
Australia	Netherlands
Netherlands	Australia
Germany	Argentina
Belgium	New Zealand
England	USA
Argentina	Germany
New Zealand	China
South Korea	England
India	South Korea
Pakistan	Japan

Badminton - Playing Environment

Badminton is usually played outdoors as the shuttlecock drag is higher and it is difficult to play in windy weather conditions. As a recreational activity Badminton can be played outdoors.

Court Dimensions

Badminton court is rectangular and is divided into two equal symmetric halves by a net suspended from two vertical posts fixed at either sides of the court. Courts are marked for singles and doubles, as they differ in their dimensions; the doubles court is larger in breadth than a singles court and has a shorter serve-length dimension.



The width of doubles court is 20 feet and that of singles court is 17 feet, and both are of the same 44 feet length. A short service line is marked on either sides of the court at a distance of 6ft 6inches from the net. A doubles long service line runs across the breadth of the court at 13 feet from the short service line, and the end of the court marks the singles' long service line.

A center line parallel to the length of the court divides each side of the court into two equal halves. A net is suspended from poles at the centre on each side of the court on double sidelines. The bottom of the net is at a height of 5 feet 1 inch from the ground at the edges and 5 feet at the center.

Badminton - Equipment

Apart from the Badminton Racket and Shuttlecock, one would normally get to see the following equipment when a game is on.

Badminton Racket

Modern Badminton Rackets are light in weight and don't weigh more than 100 grams. The frame of the Racket can be made of common metals like steel or aluminium. Sometimes rackets are made of alloys, tough carbon fiber, ceramic, or boron. Its length does not exceed 680mm and width does not exceed 230 mm.



Shuttlecock

Sixteen feathers fixed in a cork base enveloped in a thin leather sheet make a shuttlecock. Interestingly, the best Badminton Shuttlecocks are made from feathers from the wing of a goose. The shuttle weighs between 4.74 to 5.50 grams.

Badminton Shoes

A good pair of Badminton Shoes provide good grip, cushioning and some flexibility at the forefoot.



Badminton Accessories

The commonly used Badminton Accessories are Grip, Badminton Clothes, Socks, Wrist Band and Head Band.

Grip

A grip made of cloth or synthetic fiber absorbs sweat and provides you a drier feel.

Badminton Clothes

Comfortable T-shirts and shorts, that don't hinder your movement are ideal to play Badminton. A cotton round-neck or a collar t-shirts with a pair of light shorts are usually preferred.

Socks

Wear a pair of thick cotton socks as they help to absorb sweat. They also prevent your feet from slipping inside your shoes. Avoid wearing Nylon socks that don't absorb sweat.

Wrist Band

If you perspire a lot, you may consider getting a wrist band that prevents your sweat from flowing to your racket handle.

Head Band

Wear a Head Band if you wear spectacles. It prevents your lenses from getting wet and also stops the sweat and hair from getting into your eyes while playing.

Badminton - Terms

Attacking clear – An offensive player makes this stroke when he shoots the shuttlecock deep into the opponent's court.

Backcourt – Back one thirds of the court before the boundary lines on either sides of the net.

Backhand – The stroke that returns shuttle cock to the left of a right-handed player and to the right of a left-handed player.

Base position – A singles player tries to return to the center of the court during the play; it is also called Base position of the player.

Baseline – The line that marks the boundary at the breadth of court.

Carry – If the shuttle gets stuck for a while in the wires before getting released, the stroke the player makes with the racket is called a carry, sling, or throw and is considered illegal.

Drive – A fast shot when the shuttle flies straight over the net but close to it.

Drop shot – A clever shot when the player rapidly drops the shuttle close to the net to the opponent's court.

Feint – Any pretend shot or movement also called as "balk" that unsettles an opponent before or during the serve.

Flick – A quick wrist-and-forearm rotation that changes the course of a soft shot into a fast one and surprises the opponent.

Forecourt – The front one thirds of the half court on both sides of the net, between the net and the short service line.

Forehand – The stroke that returns a racket to the right side of a right-handed player and to the left side of a left-handed player.

Game – A game is finished when a player or team scores enough points to win a single contest; it is a part of a set.

Hairpin net shot – The trajectory of racket is hairpin shaped when a player lifts it from falling close to the net and sends it to the other side where it drops sharply close to the net.

Half court shot – A low shot to the midcourt, usually used in doubles game.

High clear – A deep shot by a defending player to the opponent's court.

Kill – The shuttlecock is shot very fast; so that, it cannot be returned.

Let – A minor violation of the rules when the referee allows players to replay the rally.

Long Service Line – In singles it is same as the boundary line at the breadth. In doubles the line is 2.5 feet inside the singles line. The serve should not go past this line.

Match – A series of games where a winner emerges at the end.

Midcourt – One third middle part of court between the net and the back boundary line on either sides of the net.

Net shot – A shot hit high from the forecourt close to the net that just flings the shuttlecock over the net and drops it sharply.

Passing shot – Any shot passing the shuttlecock to the opposing player or team.

Push shot – A slight wrist movement that gently shoots the shuttlecock.

Service court – The area into which a service must be delivered; this is different for singles and doubles.

Short service line – The line marked at 1.98 meters from the net in service courts where player plays in a singles game.

Singles sideline – The side boundary of a singles court.

Smash – A hard-hit overhead shot into the opponent's court that pushes the shuttlecock downwards very fast.

Wood shot – A shot with the frame of a racket.

Short Serve – This kind of serve is mostly used in Doubles. The shuttle cock barely clears the net and lands close to the serve line.

Long Serve – This kind of serve is mostly used in Singles. The shuttlecock reaches far and deep into the court.

How To Play Badminton?

Badminton is similar to other racket games, but it requires swift wrist and arm movements. The feathered shuttlecock has a greater aerodynamic drag and it swings differently from a ball.

Below is a simplified version of badminton rules that can acclimatize you to the game.

Getting Ready and Serving

The game starts with a toss. The referee tosses the coin and one player calls 'Head' or 'Tail'. Player or team that wins the toss has an option to choose a side of the court, or an option to serve or receive first. If the player chooses his/her preferred side of the court then, the opponent player or team can choose to serve or receive first and vice versa.

Serving is done diagonally and the first serve is made from the right hand service court. The server should hit the shuttle underarm while it is below his/her waist. The server cannot step on boundaries and should serve from the correct service court. If the shuttle hits the net and doesn't cross it after the service, it has to be served again. If the server commits a fault while serving the opponent gets the opportunity to serve.



The receiving player receives the shuttlecock from the correct service court diagonally opposite to the server's court and returns it, thus starting a rally. Players can move around their side of the court after returning the service.

When a player shoots the shuttle outside the court boundaries or when a player misses to return the shuttle from his/her side of the court, the opponent gets a point and the rally ends.

At the end of a game players change ends, and in a deciding game players change ends when one player or pair scores 8 (men) or 6 (ladies) points.

Serving rules for singles

The server serves from the right and left side of the service courts alternatively. Once the service is lost the opponent gets the chance.

If the players haven't scored any points or if they have scored an even number of points they serve from the right side of the service court to the right side of the opponent.

If the players scored an odd number of points, they serve from the left side of the court to the left side of the opponent.

Serving rules for doubles

Each team gets two chances to serve, one for each player. The members in a team serve alternatively. After losing two serves the opposite team gets a chance to serve, and they start from the right side of the court.

The serving team gets only one chance to serve at the beginning of the game.

In Doubles, the pair that served in the previous rally and at the receiving end in the current rally doesn't change their sides. Players that win a rally and are serving change their sides.

If the players haven't scored any points or if they have scored an even number of points they serve from the right side of the service court to the right side of the opponent.

If the players scored an odd number of points, they serve from the left side of the court to the left side of the opponent.

Scoring

When the serving side wins a rally a point is added to its score and the player/team serves the next rally.

When the receiving side wins a rally they add a point to their score and serve the next rally.

A rally is won when a player or team makes a fault or when the shuttle lands in the opponent's court.

The most common faults during a rally are –

- Not hitting the shuttle before it lands within the boundaries.
- The shuttle is hit into the net.
- The shuttle fails to fly above the net.
- The shuttle lands outside the court boundary (if the shuttle lands on a line, it is in, but if a player steps on a line while serving or receiving, they are out)
- The player's body or the racket coming into contact with the net.
- Same player hitting the shuttle subsequently.

Winning a match

- The best of three games make a match.
- The team or player scoring 21 points faster, wins a game.
- If the score of both the teams is 20 (20-all), then the team that gets a 2 point lead wins the game.
- If the score of both the teams is 29 (29-all), then the team that reaches 30th point first wins the game.
- The winner of a game also wins the right to serve first in the next game.

Fouls

- Players should hit the shuttle only from their side of the court.

- Players should not touch the net or slide under it.
- The racket of a player should not land on the opposing team's side.
- The shuttle should never hit players, even outside the boundaries.
- In Doubles, the shuttle shouldn't hit a player or his clothing or his racket before his teammate hits it.
- Both feet of a player should be on the ground while serving and receiving the service.

Badminton - Variants

Speed Badminton

This game is inspired from Tennis, Badminton and Squash, and is fast gaining popularity throughout the world. It doesn't require a net or any specific court, and players can play on empty roads, beaches, badminton, or tennis courts.

Two squares, each of 18 feet sides at a distance of 42 feet from each other make the court. The rackets are of length 58-60 cm and similar to Badminton's but the material of strings is different. The ball, called a speeder, is heavier than a badminton shuttlecock and can shoot through wind better.

Doubles

The doubles match is a variant of Singles Speed Badminton and is played on a single court.

The serving rules are tweaked a bit; so that, all four players get a chance to play the match. A toss or rotating speeder decides who should serve first, and the server rotate among the four players. While the serving player stands at the back court, the other player stands at the front. The rules of faults are similar. The right to serve goes to the one who lost the previous rally.

Black Lighting

With proper lighting and fluorescent equipment, you may play speed badminton even at night. It is a very flexible sport and can be played indoors or outdoors in a court that is painted or pegged off. In some cases a portable court, similar to a carpet court is also used.

When played at night, speed badminton is called Blackminton. Back light, fluorescent paints, glow sticks also called as speed lights, special rackets and speeders fluorescent in color make it possible to play at night.

Badminton - Tournaments

Badminton has been a part of Summer Olympics since 1992. It is now also held in Youth Olympic Games. BWF World Championships is the most prestigious tournament in Badminton where the winners emerge as world champions. It is held every year but not in the year of Olympics.

Thomas & Uber Cup is a badminton team championship; Thomas Cup is for men and Uber Cup for women. The recent one was held in 2014 in Siri Fort Sports Complex in New Delhi, India.

Here is a list of some prominent tournaments that are being organized for Badminton –

- Olympics
- BWF World Championships
- Thomas & Uber Cups
- Sudirman Cup

Badminton - Champion of Champions

Badminton rules were formulated and the sport was standardized in Europe, but most of the prominent players belong to China, Malaysia, and Indonesia. However, the sport is loved and widely played in Europe too.

Players win points by participating in graded tournaments. The World Championships and the Olympics determine the world champion of the year. Players are ranked in all the five categories men's singles, women's singles, men's doubles, women's doubles, and mixed doubles.

Here are some of the prominent players.

Gao Ling



Ling is a Chinese badminton Doubles champion popular for her consistent performance and sporting smile. She won four Olympic medals, two Gold medals in Mixed doubles in 2000 and 2004 Summer Olympics, a Silver medal in Women's

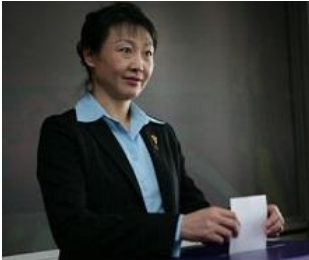
doubles in 2004 Summer Olympics, and a Bronze medal in Women's doubles in 2000 Summer Olympics. She also won four World Championship titles, one World Cup, five Uber cup and three Sudirman Cup titles.

Saina Nehwal



The current world's Women's Singles Champion is from India. She won a Bronze medal in 2012 London Olympics, and is the first Indian to win an Olympic medal for Badminton. She won a Silver medal at 2015 World Championship held at Jakarta. Saina is the first Indian woman to become world number 1 badminton player. In addition, she is the first Indian to win the World Junior Badminton Championships.

Li Lingwei



Li is a former Chinese badminton Champion who dominated the sport during the 80's. She won many Singles as well as Doubles Championships. She won two Gold medals, one Silver medal in Singles, and a Gold medal and a Silver medal in Doubles at World Championships. She retired in 1989, three years before Badminton was included in the Olympics; so she never won an Olympic medal. She carried the Olympic flag during the opening ceremony of Beijing Olympics in 2008.

Lin Dan



Lin Dan is widely considered to be the best Singles Badminton player. He won two consecutive Olympic Gold medals for men's Singles at 2008 and 2012 Olympics. He is also a five time World Champion, having won the title in 2006, 2007, 2009, 2011, and 2013. He is the first and only player to have won nine major titles in Badminton: Olympics, World Championships, Thomas Cup, World Cup, Super Series Masters Finals, Sudirman Cup, All England Open, Asian Games, and Asian Championships.

Taufik Hidayat



Taufik is a former Indonesian Badminton Champion who won Indonesian Open six times. He is popular for forceful smashes, backhand shots, drop shots, and tricky net shots. He won Olympic Gold for Men's singles in 2004 Olympics and a World Championship in 2005.

Lee Chong Wei



Lee Wei is a Malaysian Badminton champion of Chinese descent. He was ranked as the World's top Champion for 199 consecutive weeks. This man won two Olympic silver medals in 2008 and 2012, three Silver medals in World championships in 2015, 2013, 2011, and a Bronze medal in World Championships in 2005.

Tony Gunawan



He is a former Indonesian Men's Doubles Champion of Chinese descent and has been playing for United States since 2002. He is widely considered to be one of the greatest doubles Badminton players. He won an Olympic Gold at Olympics in 2000 and is the World Champion in Men's Doubles in 2001 and in 2005.

Rudy Hartono



Rudy Hartono is a former Indonesian Badminton star and is one of the greatest men's singles badminton champion in the history of the sport. He won the prestigious All England Championship eight times consecutively from 1968 to 1974 and in 1976, and also the World Championship in 1980.

Morten Frost Hansen



Mortean Hansen, a former Danish badminton player and coach is fondly called Mr. Badminton for he was one of the top three world's best Badminton players for twelve years. He won almost every international Championship, but he only won two Silvers at World Badminton Championships in 1985 and 1987. He dominated the All England Open Badminton Championships, European Championships, and Nordic Championships in the 80's. As a successful coach he steered the Danish team to win over 20 major international titles.