

Rules of FourSquare (source: www.SquareFour.org)

Four square is played all over the world by all different communities. We've worked hard to compile the most common rules from all the playgrounds of our childhoods and create a benchmark for everyone. Having a set of standard rules means that each pocket of four square groups can play together with common rules, yet still leave enough room for communities to improvise.



The Object

The object of the game of four square is to eliminate players in higher squares so that you can advance to the highest square yourself. Four square is played with a rubber playground ball on a square court with four players, each occupying a quarter of the court. The ball is bounced between players in squares until someone makes an error and is eliminated. Eliminated players leave the court, all players advance to fill the empty squares, and a new player joins at the lowest ranked square.

The Ball

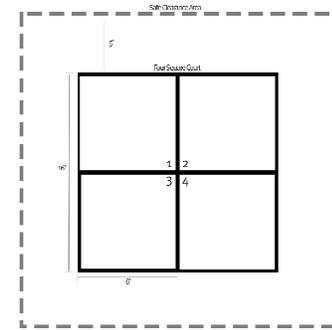
During play, players may only hit the ball with their hands. We describe the "hands" as any area between the player's wrists and her fingertips, including the backs of her hands. The ball may be hit with open or closed fists in the same manner as official volleyball. Players may not catch, carry or hold the ball at any time during play. Spinning the ball is allowed as long as the hit that produces the spin is not a carry or other illegal hit. We get a lot of questions about spins.



In all cases, players who strike the ball incorrectly are eliminated.

The Court

Squares are ranked from highest to lowest. Our league uses numbers 1 through 4, other people use letters and even a few use the title of royalty. In all cases, the highest and lowest ranked squares should be diagonal from each other.



There are two sets of lines on the court. "Outside lines" are the outermost edges of the entire court, while "inside lines" refer to the line dividing individual squares of the court that cross in the center. All lines on the court are 1 inch wide.

Outside lines are in-bounds. If a player bounces the ball onto any outside line, it is still in play. However, if the ball bounces outside of the outside line, it is out of bounds and the player that last hit it is eliminated.

Inside lines are out-of-bounds. If a player hits a ball onto any inside line then that player is out. This applies to ALL inside lines, not just the lines that border her square. If a ball touches an inside line, the player that hit is last is eliminated.

Players are not required to stay in their portion of the court. They may stand, walk or run anywhere on the court, though it is best to stay in a position to protect your own square.

Serving the Ball

The ball is always served from the highest ranked square to the lowest square. Squares one and four are positioned diagonally across the court. The server must drop the ball and serve from the bounce. The

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ball must be allowed to bounce once in the receiving square, then the receiving player must hit the ball into another square of his or her choice. After the receiver touches the ball, the ball is in play. Serves are meant to place the ball fairly into play. Because the server must serve the ball the same way each time, it is the receiving player who controls the first play of the game.

Faults

The receiver of the serve is allowed only one mistake on each round, we call this a fault. If the receiver of the serve hits the ball incorrectly, or fails to hit the ball inbounds, then the receiver is allowed to take a second serve. There is only one fault allowed per player per round. We refer to a fault as "one bad", as in one bad return. However, if a player faults the second time then it we call it "two bad". In other words, that is too bad for you.

Normal Game Play and Possession

Each time the ball bounces in a square, the owner of that square must hit the ball into another square. No exceptions.

Once the ball touches down in a square, ONLY the owner of the square can touch the ball next. If she does not, then she is out. If she hits it poorly or out of bounds, she is out. If another player hits the ball before she does, at any time, the other player is out.

Once that player hits the ball once then any other player may hit it next. This means it is not necessary to let the ball bounce again before another player hits it. The next player to touch the ball is subject to all the normal rules.



Elimination

Each time a player is eliminated, that player leaves the court and all players advance to the higher numbered square squares. The lowest ranked square is then filled with a new player. All eliminated players leave the court and wait for their next turn to join in the lowest square.

These situations represent all the ways in which a player may be eliminated from the court. Players are eliminated for:

- Failing to hit the ball into another square
- Allowing the ball to bounce more than once in their own square
- Hitting the ball out of bounds or onto an inside line
- Hitting the ball incorrectly, such as holding, catching or carrying
- Hitting the ball with a part of the body that are not hands
- Hitting the ball out of turn (poaching)
- Violating any number of local rules that are made up on the playground
- Interference

If the ball is touched by another object which is not one of the four players or the floor, this is called interference. The round is started again. Players waiting in line may not touch the ball when in play.

The Showdown!

If there is a dispute that cannot be settled by the officials then the only proper way to come to work out the disagreement is through the Showdown. The Showdown is mini-game of two square with no custom rules and the loser is knocked out of the game. In the event of a Showdown, there are no points or errors logged for the players, the winner of the showdown is simply allowed to stay in the game.

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