

What is Badminton?

Badminton is a racquet sport played by either two opposing players (singles) or two opposing pairs (doubles), who take positions on opposite halves of a rectangular court that is divided by a net. Players score points by striking a shuttlecock with their racquets so that it passes over the net and lands in their opponents' half of the court. A rally ends once the shuttlecock has struck the ground, and the shuttlecock may only be struck once by each side before it passes over the net.



The shuttlecock is a feathered projectile whose unique aerodynamic properties cause it to fly differently from the balls used in most racket sports; in particular, the feathers create much higher drag, causing the shuttlecock to decelerate more rapidly than a ball. Because shuttlecock flight is strongly affected by wind, competitive badminton is always played indoors. Badminton is also played outdoors as a casual recreational activity, often as a garden or beach game.

Badminton is an Olympic sport with five competitive disciplines: men's and women's singles, men's and women's doubles, and mixed doubles, in which each pair is a man and a woman. At high levels of play, the sport demands excellent fitness: players require aerobic stamina, strength, and speed. It is also a technical sport, requiring good hand-eye coordination and the development of sophisticated racket skills.

Comparisons with other racket sports

Badminton is frequently compared to tennis. The following is a list of uncontentious comparisons:

- In tennis, the ball may bounce once before the player hits it; in badminton, the rally ends once the shuttlecock touches the floor.
- In tennis, the serve is dominant to the extent that the server is expected to win most of his service games; a *break* of service, where the server loses the game, is of major importance in a match. In badminton, however, the serving side and receiving side have approximately equal opportunity to win the rally.
- In tennis, the server is allowed two attempts to make a correct serve; in badminton, the server is allowed only one attempt.
- In tennis, a let is played on service if the ball hits the net tape; in badminton, there is no let on service.
- The tennis court is larger than the badminton court.
- Tennis rackets are about four times heavier than badminton rackets, 10-12 ounces (approximately 284-340 grams) versus 85-93 grams. Tennis balls are about 10 times heavier than shuttlecocks, 57 grams versus 5 grams.
- **The fastest recorded tennis stroke is Andy Roddick's 153 mph (246 km/h) serve; the fastest recorded badminton stroke is Fu Haifeng's 206 mph (331 km/h) smash.**

