



# Players 4 Players Game and Tournament Rules

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## Table of Contents

1. Basics.....	3
2. The Serve.....	3
3. Ball »in Play«.....	4
4. Ball Off the Table.....	4
5. »Dead Ball«.....	4
6. Time Out.....	5
7. Spinning the Rods.....	6
8. Jarring .....	7
9. Reaching Into The Playing Area.....	7
10. Alterations to the Table.....	8
11. Distraction.....	8
12. Language.....	8
13. Passing.....	9
14. Time Limits.....	9
15. Technical Fouls.....	10
16. Officials.....	11
17. Code of Ethics.....	11
18. Tournament Director.....	11

## **1. Basics**

### **1.1. Table Side and First Serve**

A coin flip precedes the start of the match. The team that wins the flip has the choice of table side or first serve. The team that loses the flip has the remaining option.

### **1.2. Practice**

Once a match has begun, no player may practice his serve, shot, or pass on either the table being played on, or on any other table. This rule also applies during time outs and between sets. Practice is defined as moving the ball, by contacting it with a player figure. Penalty for infraction of this rule is a warning, at repeated instances a technical foul.

### **1.3. Switching of Table Sides**

After each set, each team has the right to switch table sides. If both teams forego this right after one set, that does not mean they have renounced the right to switch sides for all the remaining sets.

### **1.4. Positions in Doubles**

In a doubles event, the team that has the first serve has to decide on their positions first. Once the ball is put into play, the players must play the same position until a point is scored or a team requests a time out.

### **1.5. Point Scored**

A ball entering the goal shall count as a point, even if it enters the goal but returns to the playing surface. If a player forgets to mark a goal, a complaint is only possible while the next ball is being played. After the next point is scored, complaints regarding previous goals are no longer allowed.

### **1.6. End of Match**

The team which first scores five points (seven in matches of only one set) wins the set. The team which first reaches the required number of sets, as stated in the tournament regulations, wins the match.

## **2. The Serve**

### **2.1. Regular Serve**

The ball is put into play by a serve through the serving hole, at the start of the match, or after a point is scored. The server may attempt to influence the roll of the ball. A goal can only be scored by the serving team after the ball has touched a playing figure. The serving player may not reach into the playing area, but he may do so to position the ball in the serving hole before the actual serve. The play area is defined as the area above the playing surface to the height of the side boards of the cabinet. If the serving player drops the ball while bringing it into position for the serve in the serving hole, he has to repeat the serve. Should he drop the ball a second time, the ball shall be put into play by the opposing team.

### **2.2. Ready To Play**

The server must not serve the ball until he has the assurance that the opposing team is ready for play to begin. At an infraction of this rule, the ball shall be put into play by the player who originally had the serving right.

### **2.3. Ball »in Play«**

The ball may not be struck by either team following a serve until it has touched the play field, at which time the ball is considered to be »in play«.

### **2.4. Serving the Ball After a Goal**

Following the first serve of the match, subsequent serves shall be made by the team last scored upon. First serves in subsequent sets of a multi-set match shall be made by the team which lost the preceding set.

### **2.5. Serve by the Wrong Team**

If the ball is served by the wrong team, and the violation is discovered before the ball is scored, play shall be stopped, and the ball shall be re-served by the proper team. Once the ball is scored, no protests shall be allowed.

### **2.6. Subsequent Serves After a Rules Infraction**

If a team receives the serve because the opposing team is being penalized for a rules infraction, and if, after the ball is served, it goes dead or leaves the table, it shall be put back into play as described in rule 4.1., by the team who originally served it prior to the rules infraction.

## **3. Ball »in Play«**

### **3.1. Ball »in Play«**

Once a ball is put into play, it has to remain in play until the ball is hit off the table, a dead ball is declared, or a point is scored.

### **3.2. Ball in the Serving Cup**

A ball entering the serving cup and then returning to the play field is still considered »in play«.

## **4. Ball Off the Table**

### **4.1. Ball Out of the Playing Area**

The ball is considered »out of play« if it strikes any object outside of the playing area. It shall be put back into play in the defensive area of the team which originally served the ball, in the following manner: The ball is placed at any figure of the two-man rod; after the opposing team has signalled that they are ready to play, the ball has to be moved to a second figure and be stopped there for a full second before a shot or pass may be executed (like after a time out – see rule 6.9).

### **4.2. The Aerial Shot**

The so called »Aerial Shot« (shot from the defensive area above the heads of the playing figures) is limited to a maximum of two per set and one per ball. An aerial shot is defined as the ball traveling at least above the opponents three-man rod. The penalty for an illegal aerial shot is a technical foul. A ball leaving the playing area due to an aerial shot shall be re-served by the opposing team.

## **5. »Dead Ball«**

### **5.1. Definition**

A ball shall be declared a dead ball when it has completely stopped its motion and is not within reach of any player figure.

## **5.2. Dead Ball Between Goal and Two-Man Rod**

If the ball is declared »dead« in the area between the goal and the nearest two-man rod, it shall be put back into play in this defensive area, in the manner described in rule 4.1.

## **5.3. Dead Ball Between the Two-Man Rods**

If the ball is declared dead anywhere between the two-man rods, it shall be put back into play in the defensive area of the team that originally served the ball, in the manner described in rule 4.1.

## **5.4. Delay of Game**

A ball that is intentionally made dead shall be given to the opposing team for a re-serve.

## **5.5. Influencing a Dead Ball**

If a player tries to influence a dead ball e. g. by jarring or bending the rods, the opponent has the choice of either continuing play from the current position or re-serving the ball.

# **6. Time Out**

## **6.1. Time Out Between Sets**

No time out may be taken between sets. Instead, there is a break of a maximum of 60 seconds between sets. If both teams agree they are ready to play before the full 60 seconds have passed, the game continues. The rest of the 60 seconds is lost in that case.

## **6.2. Time Out During a Set**

Each team is allowed two time outs per set during which the players may leave the table. Such time outs may not exceed 30 seconds. Each team may call only one time out per ball. Before the ball is served following a regular goal, both teams may call a time out. In counting time outs, such a time out will count for the following ball.

## **6.3. Time Out While the Ball Is in Play**

No time outs may be called during a »dead ball« or when the ball leaves the playing area due to a pass or shot. While the ball is in play, only the player who is in possession of the ball may call a time out. A time out can only be called while the ball is not moving.

## **6.4. Time Out Penalties**

A player who removes both hands from the handles and turns away from the table while the ball is in play shall be considered to have requested a time out. Any delay of game is also considered as having requested a time out.

## **6.5. Illegal Time Out**

If a team requests an illegal time out, or surpasses the number of allowed time outs by being penalized with a time out according to rule 6.4, the team will be penalized with a technical foul.

## **6.6. Exceeding the Time Limits**

If a time out surpasses the time limit of 30 seconds, without the tournament director or an official giving his consent, the team causing the delay will be penalized with a technical foul.

## **6.7. Moving the Ball During a Time Out**

During a time out, the players may not touch the ball without the permission of an official, as this can be considered practicing (see rule 1.2). Penalty for violation of this rule is loss of possession and a warning; the ball shall be re-served by the opposing team.

## **6.8. Change of Positions During a Time Out**

Either team may switch positions during a time out (except as stated in Rules 6.10 to 6.12 and 10.2 to 10.3). In a doubles match, the team that is in possession of the ball has to decide on their positions first.

## **6.9. After a Time Out**

The player must have the assurance that the opposing team is ready before moving the ball. A request to pick up the ball and re-position it may be denied by the opponent or an official (example: a ball precariously perched on the edge of the goal). The player in possession of the ball must move the ball from one player figure to another one and stop it there for a full second before a shot or pass may be executed. If this rule is violated, the opponent has the choice of either continuing play from the current position or re-serving the ball.

## **6.10. Official Time Out**

If a rules dispute arises during play, a team may request a time out to call an official. This time out does not count towards the two time outs allowed per set. An Official has to be requested at the tournament direction, and can not be declined by either team. A team may not switch positions during an official time out.

## **6.11. Time Out For Table Maintenance**

Any necessary table maintenance (such as tightening the men, etc.) must be done before the start of the match. The only time that a player may call a table maintenance time out during a match will be in the case of a sudden alteration to the table (example: a broken man). A time out for table maintenance does not count towards the two time outs allowed per set.

## **6.12. Medical Time Out**

A player may request a medical time out. This request must be approved by the Tournament Directors. They will determine the length of the medical time out. A player who is physically unable to continue playing after that time must forfeit the match. If a request for a medical time out is denied, the player can be charged with a time out. Medical time outs will typically be granted only for accidental or unexpected injuries incurred during the course of play.

# **7. Spinning the Rods**

## **7.1. Spinning the Rods With Touching the Ball**

Spinning the rods is illegal. Spinning is defined as the rotation of any soccer figure more than 360 degrees before or after striking the ball. In calculating the 360 degrees, you do not add the degrees spun prior to striking the ball to the degrees spun after striking the ball.

A ball which is advanced by an illegal spin is replayed as follows:

- a) If the ball goes in the goal: the goal will not be counted, the opponent gets the ball for a re-serve.
- b) If the ball does not go in the goal: the opposing team will have the option of continuing play from the current position, or re-serving the ball.

## **7.2. Spinning the Rods Without Touching the Ball**

Spinning of a rod which does not advance and/or strike the ball does not constitute an illegal spin, but may be ruled as a distraction. If a player scores on himself by spinning, this will count as a goal for the opposing team.

## **7.3. Other Cases of Spinning the Rods**

If an un-grasped rod is spun by the force of the ball hitting a player figure on the rod, the spin will be considered legal.

## **8. Jarring**

### **8.1. Jarring the Table**

Any jarring, sliding, or lifting of the table is illegal. Whether or not the table jarring is done intentionally or not is not relevant. This call is a judgement call by the official present at the table. It is not necessary for a player to lose the ball for jarring to be called on his opponent. If a jarring call is made, the official decides the position at which the ball shall be placed before the game continues.

Jarring of the table may be called even if the ball is not in play. In particular, slamming the rod after a shot may be considered jarring. The penalty for that particular infraction is a warning; at subsequent violations, a goal scored in that manner will not count and a technical foul called on the offending player.

### **8.2. Penalties For Jarring**

The first violation of the jarring rule will be penalized by a warning. The official decides the position at which the ball shall be placed before the game continues. Every subsequent violation of the rule by the same player will be penalized by a technical foul.

### **8.3. Touching the Opponent's Rod**

Touching or coming into contact with your opponent's rods in any way shall be penalized exactly like jarring, sliding, or lifting.

## **9. Reaching Into The Playing Area**

### **9.1. Ball »in Play«**

It is illegal for a player to reach into the play area while the ball is in play without first having permission from the official, or if no official is present, from the opposing team. The penalty for an infraction of this rule is a technical foul. If a player touches a ball that is in play in his goalie area, one point will be marked for the opposing team, and the ball shall be re-served as if a regular goal had been scored. A ball which becomes airborne over the table is still in play.

### **9.2. Ball »Out of Play«**

As long as no ball is in the playing area, each player may reach into the playing area (for example, to wipe off shot marks).

### **9.3. Reaching Into the Playing Area With Permission of the Opponent**

It is always allowed to reach into the playing area if the opponent has given his consent.

## **10. Alterations to the Table**

### **10.1. General**

No player is allowed to make changes to the table that would affect the playing characteristics. Violation of this rule may be penalized by disqualification from the event.

### **10.2. Broken Man**

If a player figure should break while striking the ball, an official time out will be declared while the rod is fixed. Play will resume on the rod where the player figure broke, just like after a regular time out.

### **10.3. Foreign objects on field of play**

if an object should fall on the play field, play shall immediately stop at that point, so the object can be removed. There should be nothing on the ends of the table that could fall onto the play field. If the ball hits any object that has fallen on the play field, the ball will be declared »out of play« and shall be put back into play as if it had been a dead ball.

## **11. Distraction**

### **11.1. Movement and Sounds**

Any movement or sound made away from the rod where the ball is in play may be judged as a distraction. The same applies to loud breathing, coughing or talking to the teammate or the opponents while the ball is in play. Only an official can make the decision if the movement or sound made by a player is to be ruled as a distraction.

### **11.2. Hands on the Handles**

A shot or pass may be ruled as a distraction if the player does not grasp the handles with both hands at the time of the shot or pass. A player may take his hands from the handles to wipe them off before a shot, as long as it doesn't take more than 3 seconds. If the ball is set up for a shot, all time limits (rule 14) continue to run while the player wipes his/her hands. Before the shot, both hands must have been on the handles again for a full second.

### **11.3. Penalties**

if a goal is scored as a result of a violation of this rule, the point will not count and the opposing team will re-serve the ball. If no goal was scored, the opposing team has the option of continuing play from the current position, or re-serving the ball.

## **12. Language**

### **12.1. Comments**

Unsportsmanlike comments made directly or indirectly by a player are not allowed.

### **12.2. Cursing / Insults**

Cursing by a player shall not be allowed; the same applies to insulting other persons.

### **12.3. Coaching**

Use of a spotter or coach in the audience who gives acoustical or optical signals during a match shall not be allowed. Coaching is allowed, however, during time outs and between sets.

## **12.4. Penalty**

The penalty for a violation of rules 12.1 or 12.2 is a technical foul; in extreme cases it may be grounds for expulsion of the person from the tournament site. This applies to players and spectators. The penalty for a violation of rule 12.3 is a warning; on subsequent violations a technical foul. The official may order the coach to leave the immediate playing area even at the first infraction.

## **13. Passing**

### **13.1. Stopped Ball**

A stopped ball is defined as a ball that has completely stopped its motion, but is either touching a playing figure or is in reach of a playing figure.

### **13.2. Pass**

A pass is given if the receiving rod touches the ball. If a ball is shot from the defensive area and touches the five-man rod, this is not considered a pass, as long as the ball neither stops its motion in reach of the five-man rod, nor its movement is changed at the five-man rod in a controlled manner.

### **13.3. Pinned Ball**

A pinned ball cannot be directly advanced to another rod of the same team. It must touch at least one other player figure of the same rod before it is passed to another rod.

### **13.4. Squib Pass**

An accidental stub or squib pass is legal. The decision if a squib pass was »accidental« is a judgement call to be made by the official.

### **13.5. Pass With Touching the Wall**

The pass »outermost man – Wall – outermost man – advance to another rod« (with »outermost man« meaning the same playing figure in both instances) is not allowed.

### **13.6. Pass From Defense to Three-Man Rod**

A pass from the defense to the three-man rod is always legal.

### **13.7. Free Ball**

Once a ball is forwarded from either the two-man or the goalie rods, if it should strike an opposing team's player figure, that ball is no longer considered a pass but a live ball that may be legally caught by any player.

### **13.8. Penalty**

If a team violates one of the above rules of passing, the opposing team has the option of continuing play from the current position or re-serving the ball.

## **14. Time Limits**

### **14.1. Time Limits at a Rod**

Possession of the ball in the goalie area and at the three-man rod shall be limited to 15 seconds, at the five-man rod to 10 seconds. By the end of this time the ball must have been advanced past an opponent's player figure, or must have touched an opponent's figure.

## **14.2. Spinning Ball**

A spinning ball that is within reach of a player figure shall be considered to be in that rod's possession and all time limits shall continue.

## **14.3. Penalty**

The penalty for exceeding the time limits is loss of possession to the opposing forward, who will re-serve the ball.

## **14.4. Reset**

If a player has the ball set up to shoot or pass and the ball is unintentionally moved due to jarring by the opponent, the official present will call »reset« and he/she will reset all time limits (rule 14.1). The »reset« call does not constitute an interruption of the game. The player in possession of the ball has not to move the ball to a second player figure before continuing the game, he may shoot or pass immediately. The defensive team should not, therefore, relax or look at the official upon hearing the word »reset«, but rather should stay on defence. Repeated offences may be grounds for the official to call a warning or technical foul on the player causing the reset.

## **15. Technical Fouls**

### **15.1. Calling of a Technical Foul**

If, in the judgment of an authorized tournament official or the tournament director, either team competing in a match is at any time flagrant or intentionally in violation of these rules of play, a technical foul may be called on the offending team. After a technical foul, each subsequent rules violation of the same team, which would normally be penalized with a warning only, will result in another technical foul.

### **15.2. Execution of a Technical Foul**

When a technical foul is called, play shall stop and the ball awarded to the opponents of the offending team at its three-man rod. One shot will be taken. The other two players in a doubles match have to leave the table for the time of the technical shot. The technical shot is considered to be completed once the ball either has left the goalie area of the opponent, is blocked by the opponent, or enters the goal. The shot is also considered to be completed if the player taking the technical shot loses the ball. After the technical shot, the game shall stop again. If the technical scored or not, the ball shall be put back into play at the spot it was when the technical was called. If the ball was in motion, it will be put back as it had been declared dead at that spot.

### **15.3. Loss of a Set or Match**

As there are several rules violations which may result in a technical foul, the following order has been decided on for penalties on repeated technical fouls:

1st technical foul

2nd technical foul

3rd technical foul

4th technical foul = loss of set

5th technical foul

6th technical foul

7th technical foul = loss of set

8th technical foul

9th technical foul = loss of match

## **16. Officials**

### **16.1. Requesting an Official.**

Every player can request an official, either before the match has started or during the match.

### **16.2. No Official Present at the Table**

If a dispute arises during play while no official is present at the table, and an official is subsequently requested, the official shall make the most equitable decision possible under the circumstances.

### **16.3. Official Present at the Table**

Decisions of an official present at the table are final. Discussions with the official present at the table are not allowed. Comments by players concerning rules decisions of the official are considered as trying to illegally influence the official, and may be grounds for a warning or technical foul.

## **17. Code of Ethics**

### **17.1. Violation of the Code of Ethics**

Any action of unsportsmanlike or unethical nature during tournament play, in the tournament room, or on the grounds of the host facility, will be considered a violation of the Code of Ethics.

### **17.2. Penalty**

The penalty for breaking the Code of Ethics may be forfeiture of a set or match, disqualification from an event, or expulsion from the tournament. Whether or not the Code of Ethics has been broken, and what is the appropriate penalty for the infraction will be determined by the tournament director.

## **18. Tournament Director**

### **18.1. Tournament Director**

The administration of tournament play shall be the responsibility of the Tournament Director. This includes making the draws, scheduling the events, timing matches, etc. The decisions of the Tournament Director are final, no appeal is possible.