



DODGEBALL RULEBOOK

2024 EDITION

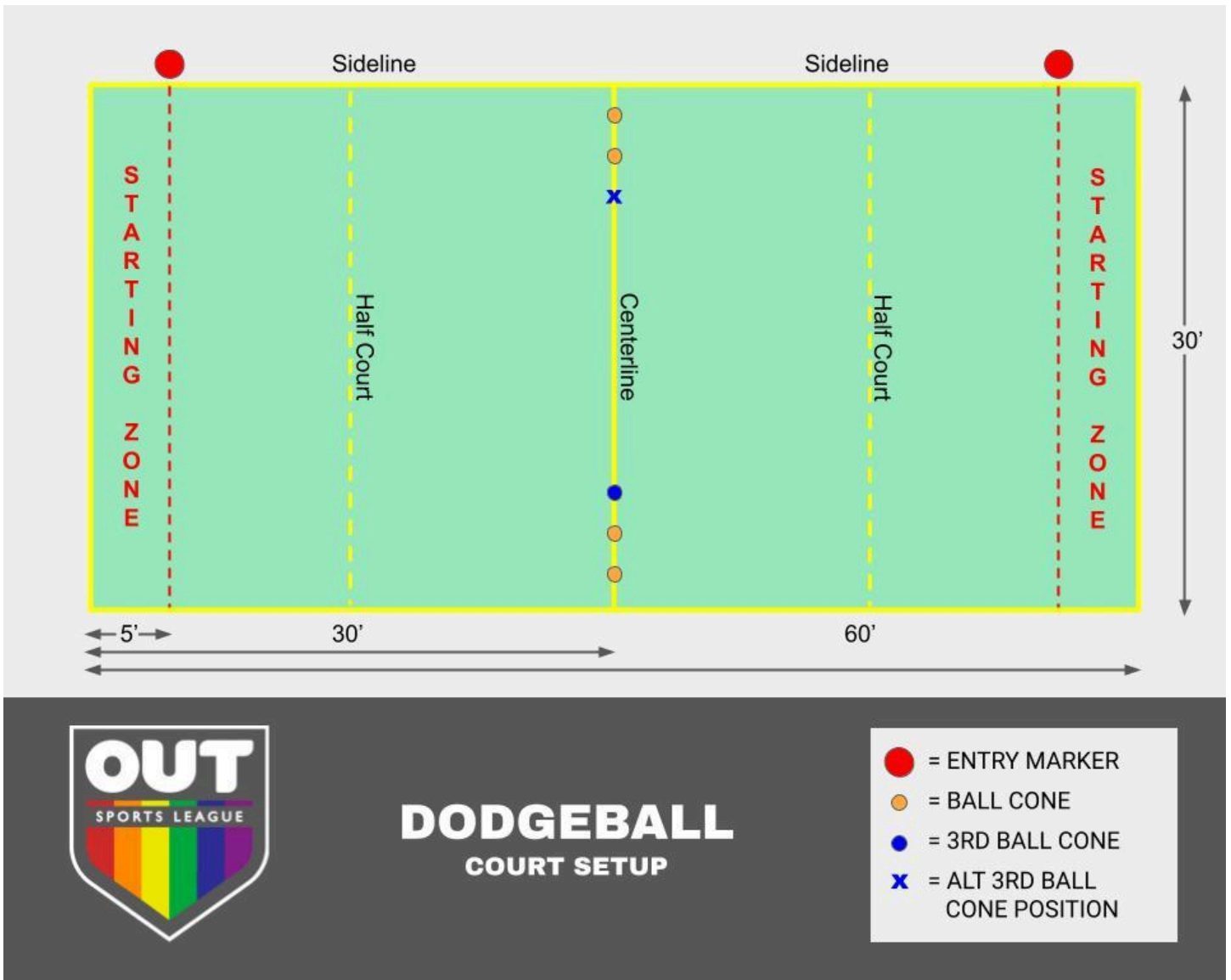
GAME SETUP	3
COURT	3
EQUIPMENT	4
PARTICIPANTS	5
REFEREES	5
TEAMS, CAPTAINS & PLAYERS	5
SUBSTITUTE PLAYERS	6
GAME PLAY	7
REGULATION MATCHES & GAMES	7
GAME START PROCEDURES	7
LIVE BALL / DEAD BALL	8
OUTS & CATCHES	8
SHAGGING	9
BALL CONTROL / COUNTDOWN	9
INJURIES	9
CONDUCT	9
SEASON & TOURNAMENT	10
STRUCTURE & SEEDING	10
TOURNAMENT RULES	10
ABOUT THE RULEBOOK	11

GAME SETUP

1. COURT

- 1.1. The standard court dimensions are 50 ft. by 25 ft. with a Centerline dividing the court into two equal halves of 25 ft. x 25 ft.. Courts may vary in size depending on the venue of the court with a maximum size of 60 ft. by 30 ft. being acceptable.
- 1.2. Center, side and back lines should be marked by tape, rubber markers or some other indicator.
- 1.3. **Centerline** - the length of the court will be divided by a Centerline.
 - 1.3.1. 5 cones will be placed along the Centerline. These cones will be the starting location of game balls when a game begins. 3 cones should be placed near the right Sideline, 3 feet apart, and 2 cones should be placed near the left sideline at 3 feet apart.
 - 1.3.1.1. Between each game, the side with a 3rd cone should change to the other side of the court. This is done to accelerate the game and stop teams from switching sides.
- 1.4. **Sidelines** - the length of the court should have at least a 2 foot Sideline on each side of the playing space. Sidelines are occupied by referees, teams and eliminated players.
 - 1.4.1. **Entry markers** - a single sideline should have a player entry marker placed 10 feet from each back wall. Non-active and then out players will line up in order along the sideline with the next in line to enter the game (in the event of a catch) standing over the entry marker.
 - 1.4.2. **Starting zone** - each sideline should have a cone placed 5 feet from the back wall. When the game begins, balls from the Centerline must enter the starting zone (either run back into the zone or thrown back to a teammate) to be legally thrown.
- 1.5. **Backlines** - the length of the court will run to the back walls of the playing location (unless it is determined to be too long). Otherwise, backlines should be marked (see Rule 1.2).
- 1.6. **Half Court Line** - In each zone the half court line is exactly half the length of the zone, this is only used in larger court configurations.

Diagram 1 - The Dodgeball Court



2. EQUIPMENT

- 2.1. Five (5) official no-sting 7" dodgeballs of the same color should be used in each game.
- 2.2. Players may wear protective equipment providing it does not offer the wearer an unfair performance advantage. Taped fingers, knee pads, sweat bands, etc. are permitted.
 - 2.2.1. All player attire is an extension of the player.
- 2.3. Gloves are not permitted.

PARTICIPANTS

3. REFEREES

- 3.1. Games must be officiated by at least one authorized official, the Head Referee. When available, at least two referees should officiate each game. The Head Umpire governs all game play and issues all final rulings, and has final authority on equipment issues. Other umpires may assist these officials when available.
- 3.2. All referee calls are final. Do not argue with them. For calls that require discussion, in general, referees should reach consensus on calls, with the head referee making the final call, if needed. The Director of Dodgeball or League Commissioner is always on-site and available to help resolve escalated issues.
- 3.3. Referees can call players out, **but they shouldn't have to**. Players should be honest and call themselves out when they've been hit. Players who repeatedly do not call themselves out may be subject to subsequent game or match suspensions.
- 3.4. Referees are advised to coordinate roles/areas of focus (for example, one watches one side only, another watches the other side only, and the remaining referees watch the entire match and are responsible for counting down ball control).
- 3.5. Referees can stop play by blowing their whistle and walking onto the court, at which time all live balls are immediately declared dead until the referees resume play with their whistles.
 - 3.5.1. In the event of a headshot, referees should blow the whistle to check on the hit player.
- 3.6. Referees will announce when time has expired or if a final game will be played.
- 3.7. Referees must keep a record of the final game and match score on the OUT Dodgeball score sheet.
- 3.8. Referees may make rulings on any points not specifically covered in the rules (at the time of occurrence), but the ruling shall not be deemed as a precedent for future rulings.

4. TEAMS, CAPTAINS & PLAYERS

- 4.1. Each game shall have two (2) participating teams.
- 4.2. Team will consist of exactly fourteen (14) or more players.
- 4.3. Each team begins with at least six (6) and no more than eight (8) players on the court.
- 4.4. Each team must utilize at least six (6) of their own rostered (non-substitute) players.
- 4.5. Each team must decide on a captain. Only the Captain may dispute calls with the Head Referee.
- 4.6. If a player sits out one game, they should start the next game even if they enter the game later on a caught ball. It is expected that all players will be allocated equal playing time per day of play.

5. SUBSTITUTE PLAYERS

- 5.1. A team must have a minimum of six (6) players to start the game, of which six (6) must be their own rostered players in order to avoid a forfeit. Teams with less than eight (8) players may add substitute players to their rosters in accordance with the following:
 - 5.1.1. A team with 6 or 7 players may add 2 or 1 substitute players, respectively.
 - 5.1.2. Substitute players must not be on any current dodgeball team roster (non-league players).
- 5.2. If a player from the team's roster shows up they must immediately take the place of a substitute player.
- 5.3. Substitute players must sign the substitute waiver form. Non-league players are allowed to substitute a maximum of two (2) times per season.
- 5.4. All substitute players must be identified to the referee prior to the start of the game.
- 5.5. Substitute players are NOT permitted in the playoffs / tournament.
- 5.6. If, after week 4 a player has not attended any matches they will be removed from the league and replaced by a new full-time player.

GAME PLAY

6. REGULATION MATCHES & GAMES

- 6.1. **Matches** - Each team will play two (2) matches per day.
 - 6.1.1. Matches are 24 minutes. Teams will play as many games as possible within a match.
 - 6.1.2. Teams will alternate sides after each game within a match. The home team will start on the side facing the wall (backs to the divider). The away team will start on the side facing the divider (backs to the wall).
 - 6.1.3. At the 24 minute mark, referees will announce time has expired and the game in progress will continue until completion.
 - 6.1.3.1. When a game ends, referees will check the remaining time, if there is more than one (1) minute remaining on the game clock an additional game will be played.
 - 6.1.4. A match can only begin if each team has at least 6 eligible players (see Rule 7.2).
 - 6.1.5. The team with the most game wins during a match is the match winner.
 - 6.1.6. In the event of a tie of game wins, the match shall be marked as a tie.
- 6.2. **Games** - games are not timed. Games are won by getting all players on the opposing team out.
- 6.3. **Forfeits** - Teams must have at least 6 players, of which 6 must be their own rostered players, participate in a game to avoid a forfeit. In the event of a forfeit, teams are encouraged to play a friendly scrimmage. Forfeited matches will be recorded as a 3-0 win for the non-forfeiting team.
- 6.4. **No Blocking** - Once both teams have 2 or less players on the court Blocking (See 8.11) is not allowed for the rest of the game. Referees should pause the game to notify players of this rule.

7. GAME START PROCEDURES

- 7.1. 5 balls will be arranged on the Centerline. 3 balls for one team, 2 balls for the other.
 - 7.1.1. Each game, the location of the 3rd ball should be moved to the other side of the court, alternating every game.
- 7.2. Initial ball control goes to the away team (the team facing the divider with backs to the wall).
- 7.3. The match timer, set to 24 minutes, will begin at the whistle of the designated start time(s). It is both teams' responsibility to be ready to play on time.
- 7.4. Eight (8) players start at the back of each court, touching the wall in the Starting Zone (Rule 1.4.2.)
- 7.5. The game will start with players rushing for their team's balls (on their right). Balls must be "cleared" before use by bringing them back into the starting zone.
 - 7.5.1. Players may cross the Centerline on the initial rush when obtaining their initial ball. But at any point in the game crossing the Centerline is considered an Out.
 - 7.5.2. Players may only retrieve a single (1) ball from the Centerline.
 - 7.5.3. Players may throw balls back to teammates in the Safety Zone.

8. LIVE BALL / DEAD BALL

- 8.1. **Live Ball** - is a thrown ball, a ball is live from the time it leaves a throwers hand to when it hits anything other than another player or a non-held ball. Opponents hit by a live ball are Out.
- 8.1.1. **Blocking** - Players may use balls in their possession to block incoming balls. Incoming balls deflected by blocks are still live balls. Players must maintain control of all balls used when blocking, if the player drops a ball during blocking they are out (Rule 9.2).
- 8.2. **Dead Ball** - a ball that is no longer capable of getting opponents out. A ball is dead when it:
- touches the floor, wall, ceiling, net, or any other part of the building
 - touches another ball not being held by a live player
 - touches a player who is already out or a non-player or referee
 - is caught

9. OUTS & CATCHES

- 9.1. A player is out when a live ball (Rule 8.1) hits **any** part of the player's body or clothing.
- 9.1.1. If a live ball hits more than one (1) player all players who are hit are out.
- 9.1.2. A live ball deflected into yourself is an out.
- 9.1.3. **Headshots** are legal and the hit player is out. *(However, players who are thought to be headhunting or throw an excessive amount of headshots may be subject to suspensions).*
- 9.2. If a player deflects an incoming ball with a ball(s) they are holding, they must maintain control of them, if a player drops a ball during blocking they are out. The same applies to catches if players are holding a ball(s) at the time of the catch. **Blocking is an out when Rule 6.4 is in effect.**
- 9.3. A player is out when they **step on or over** any of the lines that mark the court (except over the Centerline on the initial rush), this includes the Backline (if used), Centerline, and the Sidelines.
- 9.3.1. Players may reach into these areas to retrieve balls as long as they do not touch the floor.
- 9.4. **Catches** - The throwing player is out when a defending player catches a live ball. If a player catches a live ball while their team has fewer than ten (10) players on the court, they may add a player to the court who is designated to enter from the Entry Marker.
- 9.4.1. If a ball is thrown, hits a player, and is then caught by another teammate before becoming a dead ball (by hitting the floor, walls, ceiling, etc.) the player who threw the ball is out and the player(s) that the ball hit are all safe.
- 9.4.2. Players who enter the game as a result of a catch must enter in the proper order, beginning with non-starting players and then with players in the order that they were called out. Players entering in the incorrect order will be called out.
- 9.5. **Exiting the court** - when a player is out they raise their hand to designate they are out and leave the court as quickly as possible. Players will line up, after non-starting players, in the order they were called out on the sideline starting at the Entry Marker. Only exit to the line up sideline.

10. SHAGGING

- 10.1. Players who are out may collect balls for their team that are fully out of bounds. Shagging players must stay in their lineup area (no crossing the center line into another team's line up area or crossing to the other side of the court). They must then return these balls to the court immediately.
- 10.2. They may be passed to their own players.
- 10.3. If a ball in active play (i.e. on the court) is interfered with by a player who is out, the ball will be required to be sent to the other team. A sportsmanship warning may be given by the referee.

11. BALL CONTROL / COUNTDOWN

- 11.1. We play with five (5) balls. A team has ball control when they have three (3) or more balls.
- 11.2. A team has 15 seconds to give up ball control. After 10 seconds, a referee will begin counting down from 5 to give up ball control. Failing to give up ball control at 0 means your team must give all the balls to the opposing team; the ref will stop play and facilitate the transfer of balls.
 - 11.2.1. Balls must be thrown towards the opponent's side of the court to relinquish control, so placing a ball over the Centerline does not count as relinquishing control.
- 11.3. If additional balls come onto the side with ball control, they do not count for the timer: they're new balls so they aren't a part of the original timer. (Put another way, ball control applies to only the balls already present on the side with ball control).
- 11.4. Deliberately throwing balls so they return without giving the other team a chance to take control (ex. high balls above the opposing team) of them is stalling; referees will issue a warning for stalling and award all the balls to the other team after the 15 second timer.

12. INJURIES

- 12.1. In cases of injury or illness, a time-out may be requested for participant removal and replacement with a teammate as a substitute.

13. CONDUCT

- 13.1. It is expected that players will treat all other players and referees with dignity and respect both on and off the court. Any verbal or physical abuse by any individual or team will not be tolerated. Players may be sent home or suspended for the season at the discretion of league officials.
- 13.2. During a game, referees may warn players about their conduct or dangerous and reckless play.
- 13.3. During a game, referees may issue a **game misconduct** that results in: a player being declared out and a player sitting out the next two (2) games (not matches). Players who receive multiple game misconducts may be subject to suspension. Examples of poor sportsmanship include:
 - a) A player repeatedly not calling themselves out when hit by a ball.
 - b) An out player interfering with active play from the sidelines or when leaving the court.
 - c) Excessive dangerous headshots, headhunting or reckless and aggressive play.

SEASON & TOURNAMENT

14. STRUCTURE & SEEDING

- 14.1. The Dodgeball season is 8 weeks. Teams will play 7 weeks of regular season round robin games and 1 week of a seeded elimination playoff tournament.
- 14.2. In the event of teams having tied rankings going into the tournament, final standings will be based on the following tiebreaker structure:
- | | |
|---|--|
| 1st tiebreaker: Head to Head matchup | 3rd tiebreaker: Game differential |
| 2nd tiebreaker: Total game wins | 4th tiebreaker: Coin Flip |

15. TOURNAMENT RULES

- 15.1. Teams are NOT permitted to use substitute players in the playoff tournament.
- 15.2. Teams will play only one (1) match per round in the tournament. With the following changes to the standard match structure:
- Matches are 20 minutes. Teams will play as many games as possible within a match.
 - At the 20 minute mark, referees will announce time has expired and the game in progress will continue until completion.
 - New games will not be started if time expires in between matches.
 - In the event of a tie after the 20 minute mark, a subsequent tie-breaker game is played.

ADDENDUM: As of 10/10/2022 the Ball control time was reduced from 20 seconds to 15 seconds and the Half Court Rule was added to the rulebook.

ADDENDUM: 4/24/2023 the Half-Court rule has been removed. Rules 6.1.2 and 7.2 have been revised to distinguish the starting positions and ball control of home and away teams. Rule 6.1.3 has been revised to clarify when to begin an additional game if time is short.

ADDENDUM: 7/24/2023 team sizes have been reduced from 17 to 14 players, players on the court have been reduced from 10 to 8, and the minimum team size to avoid a forfeit has been reduced to 6. Clarification of warnings and game misconducts.

ADDENDUM: 4/22/2024 the No Blocking rule (6.4) has been added to eliminate blocking for the remainder of a game when each team has 2 or less players on the court.



ABOUT THE RULEBOOK

These rules were created by OUT Sports League with the influence of various elements from Varsity Gay League, Big Apple Recreational Sports and Stonewall Sports.

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