



# **Official Rule Book**

# Member Nations



The rules are intended to uphold the fun spirit and the integrity of the sport for all participants regardless of skill level. After the end of the World Championships each year, the Board will review the Rules, and may or may not institute revisions or changes based on indepth analysis of the match videos from around the world.

Each player is responsible for ensuring that they have read and fully understand the rules and regulations before playing dodgeball when playing for a national team representing their country during international matches. In the event that there is any confusion or controversy concerning the rules during international matches, the Rules Committee has the right to make a final ruling concerning the matter.

We wish you all great fun and excitement playing! We look forward to the opportunity for all of us to make some new lifelong friends in our dodgeball fraternity.

# **OFFICIAL RULES OF THE WORLD DODGEBALL** **FEDERATION**

## **DEFINITIONS**

**Live Ball:** A ball is considered a Live Ball after it has been thrown and remains a Live Ball until it (a) the ball touches a Dead Object; (b) collides with another live ball in mid-air; or (c) has been caught by an active player on the opposing team.

**Dead Objects:** Anything that is not an active part of the match; i.e., the ground, ceiling, permanent fixtures (e.g., the scoreboard), dead players walking off the court, referees, spectators or supporters. Unused balls (i.e. untouched by players) that are on or off the court are also considered to be Dead Objects and Dead Balls (see “Dead Ball” below).

**Dead Ball:** A ball that is no longer a Live Ball for any reason described in “Live Ball” above. Note: a ball that is blocked (see “Blocking” below) is not a Dead Ball until it touches a Dead Object.

**Out:** A player is Out if the player (a) is hit by a live ball which subsequently touches a Dead Object (b) throws a Live Ball which is caught by a player on the opposing team; or (c) steps/touches the ground outside the designated boundaries for the match (see “Boundaries” below).

**Set:** The duration it takes to get ALL 6 players of the opposing team Out. Each set is worth 1 point for the match.

**Match:** A contest between two teams to accumulate the most number of sets/points within two 20-minutes blocks of time.

## **THE TEAM**

Teams will consist of 6-12 players. Six active players per team will compete during any given Set. Player substitutions are only allowed between Sets or during time-outs as described in “Time-outs & Substitutions” below. If a team makes a catch, it may only revive players who started in that particular set. Inactive players and supporters may assist in ball retrieval as active players cannot leave the court during the game without being eliminated. See “Ball Retrieval” below.

## **THE COURT**

In full court games, the court shall be a rectangle 60 feet long and 30 feet wide, divided into two equal sections by a centerline and attack-lines (10 feet from and parallel to the centerline). These are the same dimensions as on volleyball court.

## **THE EQUIPMENT**

The official ball of the World Dodgeball Federation, used in international tournament and league play is a 7” rubber-coated foam dodgeball between 120– 160 grams in weight.

Any ball over 170 grams in weight is inappropriate for play, as it might inflict bodily harm to the participants of the sport.

Although there is no official format for the acceptable dodgeball jersey, it is mandatory for the players on the same team to dress alike. To prevent injuries, it is recommended that players wear tennis/cross-training shoes for the match. [Further, wearing numbered jerseys is also recommended for the purposes of keeping accurate stats.]

## **THE MATCH**

A Match consists of 40 minutes of game play divided into halves with 5 minutes reserved for halftime and 5 minutes reserved for sudden break/buffer. The game clock will run continuously during each 20-minute half of game play—the clock does not stop between each set. As long as time remains on the game clock in either half of play, a new set may be started. However, any set in progress when time expires shall go into Sudden Death Mode, whether it be at the end of either half or upon the expiry of extraordinary time allotted for a tie breaking match (see “Sudden Death” below). Teams switch sides of the court after halftime. The referees shall maintain the official match time and have discretion to stop the clock for any sudden break, injury, etc., or shorten/forego a halftime break in the event the match begins late or if the first half overruns. There will be no ties at the end of matches, so whichever team wins more sets when the game clock expires will be the winner of the match. In the event that the final set of the match extends beyond regulation time (i.e., it commences before and continues after the clock expires) and the outcome of that set ties the match, a special tie-breaking set will be played (see “Tie Breakers” below)..

## **THE GAME**

The object of the game is to score points by eliminating ALL 6 players on the opposing team by getting them Out. This may be done by:

1. Hitting an opposing player with a Live Ball anywhere on their person, including their clothing, with such Live Ball subsequently hitting the ground or a Dead Object. A player that has been hit by a Live Ball is not Out until that Live Ball touches the ground or hits a Dead Object.

### Corollaries:

- (a) If a Live Ball hits an opposing player and ricochets to strike another opposing player before hitting the ground or a Dead Object, then both players are Out.

- (b) If a Live Ball is blocked by an opposing player (see “Blocking” below) and strikes another opposing player before hitting the ground or a Dead Object, then that player will be Out. However, if a ball blocked by an opposing player hits a player on the throwing team while still a Live Ball, the hit player on the throwing team is not out, but the ball is still a Live Ball which may yet be caught by the opposing team until it hits the ground or a Dead Object.
- (c) If a Live Ball ricochets off a dead player exiting the court and hits another player, the ball is deemed a Dead Ball and the hit does not count.
- (d) Since a player that has been hit by a Live Ball is not Out until that Live Ball touches the ground or hits a Dead Object, any action that the player performs following the hit, but before the first ball touches the ground or a Dead Object, shall be deemed as “in play.”

**EXAMPLE 1:** Two Live Balls are thrown at a player. The first ball hits and bounces in the air while the second ball is caught before the first ball hits the ground. The catch is deemed a good catch, however, the player is still Out the instant the first ball hits the ground.

**EXAMPLE 2:** Player A throws a ball at Player B, but right before the ball hits Player B, Player B throws a ball at Player A. Both balls thrown are Live Balls and both players are Out if Player A got hit by Player B’s ball. Such is called a “double out”.

**Example 3:** If Players A and B are the last players remaining (i.e., there is a one-on-one) and there is a “double out,” the set shall be awarded to the team whose last player died last, keeping in mind that a player is not Out until the ball that hit him/her hits the ground or a Dead Object. If Player A’s ball hit Player B before Player B’s ball hit Player A, but Player B’s ball hits the ground before Player A’s ball, Player A died first and Player B’s team is awarded the set.

**Example 4:** Player A is hit by a Live Ball which bounces high into the air. Player A throws a ball at Player B while the ball that hit him/her is still in the air (i.e. before it hit the ground or a Dead Object). The ball thrown by Player A is still a Live Ball capable of getting Player B Out.

- (e) A ball must be thrown to kill a player from the opposing team. In other words, the ball has to leave the hand and be airborne to be a Live Ball, so tagging a player with a ball in hand will not result in the opposing player being Out.

**2. Catching a Live Ball thrown by your opponent before it touches the ground or a Dead Object.** The instant a Live Ball is caught, the person who threw the ball is Out. To complete a catch, the catching player must have complete

control of the ball and be touching the ground inbounds.

In addition, catching a Live Ball will revive ANY player that was eliminated in that set prior to the catch. The player that comes back into the court must be one of the original six players that started the set. If a player comes back into the court that wasn't part of the starting six, then that team will lose the bonus of having a player revived.

**NOTE:** The revived player must re-enter the court from the baseline under the 1<sup>st</sup> out 1<sup>st</sup> in basis. The revived player is deemed active the instant he/she steps back onto the court.

Corollaries:

- (a) If a Live Ball ricochets off an opposing player and is caught by another opposing player before hitting the ground or a Dead Object, then both opposing players are safe and the player that threw the ball is Out.
- (b) If a Live Ball that is blocked (see "Blocking" below) is caught before the Live Ball hits the ground or a Dead Object, then the player that threw the ball is Out.
- (c) If a player trying to catch a Live Ball loses balance and falls out of bounds, walks out of bounds or is hit by a Live Ball which hits the ground or a dead Object before that player has complete control of the Ball, then it is not deemed a catch and that player is Out.
- (d) If a player throws a ball and is hit and killed before his/her ball is caught by an opposing player, the catch still counts if the ball was still a Live Ball and the opposing team may revive a player. For the purpose of statistics, however, the kill would also count if the kill was completed prior to the catch.
- (e) If a revived player does not re-enter the court from the baseline and is hit, that player is still out. The referees, however, have discretion to invalidate throws by revived players who do not re-enter the court from the baseline when doing so created an unfair advantage.
- (f) If a player is hit by a ball and steps off the court prior to that ball being caught by a teammate, that player is Out. That player or any other previously eliminated player may be revived by the catch, but only ONE player may return.
- (g) If a Live Ball is thrown at an opposing player and is blocked or ricocheted back to the throwing team while it is still a Live Ball, catching that Live Ball does not constitute a catch.

## BLOCKING

Players may use the ball(s) in their hands to block an incoming ball. A successful block is one where the player retains control over the ball that is used to deflect the oncoming ball. If the player drops the ball used to block, the player is deemed Out even if the Live Ball did not otherwise hit that player. In instances where a player is using more than one ball to block and in doing so drops one or more balls used to block a Live Ball, the blocking player may still be out even if he/she drops a ball that was not used to block *if* that ball was dislodged directly or indirectly by the impact of the Live Ball. The referees have the final say on whether a ball was dislodged on account of a block.

**Example 1:** Player A is holding three balls, one in each hand and a third trapped between the other two. Player A attempts to block an incoming Live Ball with the ball in his/her right hand, but in doing so drops the third ball that was trapped. Even though the third/middle ball was not apparently hit by the Live Ball, the ball was dropped concurrently with and due to the impact of the Live Ball and Player A is Out.

**Example 2:** Player A is holding three balls when opposing Player B throws a Live Ball. Player A *clearly* drops one ball before using the other two balls to block Player B's Live Ball. Since Player A did not drop the ball due to the impact of the Live Ball.

**Example 3:** Player A is holding two balls and uses one ball to block an incoming Live Ball. The ball used to block the Live Ball was held out in front of Player A's face while Player A dropped the ball he/she was holding at his/her side at the time of impact. Since the dropped ball was not clearly a result of the impact of the Live Ball which was blocked, Player A is still alive.

A blocked or deflected ball is still a Live Ball until it either touches the ground or a Dead Object, so a deflected ball that hits another player may still result in an Out if it hits another player, or considered a catch if it is caught.

***SPECIAL NOTE:*** **Blocking is not available in Sudden Death.** Balls that are blocked in Sudden Death will be deemed to have hit the person using a ball to block.

## BOUNDARIES

Active players must remain within the boundaries, and should an active player step, fall or otherwise touch with any part of his/her body on or beyond the boundary lines, that player would be deemed as Out the instant s/he touches out of bounds.

The forward boundary in a full-court game is the center line for men and the opposing team's attack line for women. The forward boundary in half-court games may vary by venue and should be confirmed in consultation with the

game's referees in advance of any half-court match.

*EXCEPTION: A player may legally step over the centerline only during the opening rush.*

#### Corrolaries:

- (a) A thrown ball released BEFORE a player steps on or beyond one of the boundary lines will be deemed as a Live Ball and all action from the ball counts even though the throwing player is Out regardless.
- (b) A thrown ball released AFTER a player steps on or beyond one of the boundary lines will be deemed as a Dead Ball as the player is Out the instant he/she stepped on the line.
- (c) If a player trying to catch a Live Ball loses balance and falls out of bounds, walks out of bounds or is hit by a Live Ball which hits the ground or a dead Object before that player has complete control of the Ball, then it is not deemed a catch and that player is Out.

### **THE OPENING RUSH**

A game begins by placing 6 dodgeballs along the centerline - 3 on one side of the center hash and 3 on the other. Players then take a position behind the baseline, with at least one foot touching the baseline. Following the starting whistle by the referee, teams may approach the centerline to retrieve the balls.

Teams may only retrieve the 3 balls to the right of the center hash on the opening rush. Once a ball is retrieved it must be taken behind the attack-line (see "The Court" above) before it can be legally thrown.

Only the ball has to travel back behind the attack-line, not the player. So a ball can be reached or passed back behind the attack-line and thrown as a Live Ball immediately, as long as the ball itself travels behind the attack-line. Any ball thrown before it crosses the attack-line is considered a Dead Ball, and would not count towards a kill or a catch.

**NOTE:** All players must have at least one foot touching the baseline when the referee blows the whistle at the start of each set. At the discretion of the referees, teams may be penalized for false starting or if they are deemed to have blatantly cheated by not having at least one foot on the baseline. Teams shall receive one warning for false starting per half and any subsequent violation may result in a yellow card violation.

### **TIMING & WINNING A GAME**

The first team to legally eliminate ALL 6 players from the opposing team will gain 1 point for the set. The team with more points at the end of the full 40 minutes time frame will be deemed the winner of the match. Although there is neither a time limit per set nor a shot clock, the referee may prompt a team to throw to maintain a fair game pace. In a situation when neither team is



apparently preparing to throw, which team is prompted to throw will be based on the following:

1. If both teams have an equal number of players and each team has three balls after the opening rush, the team that won the last set is obliged to throw first.
2. The team with more balls on their side of the court is obliged to throw first. Even if some balls are on the ground outside the boundary, the team is obliged to throw as long as more balls are on their half of the court.
3. If each team has 3 balls, then the side with more players on court is obliged to throw first.
4. If both teams have 3 balls, and the number of players on court is equal, then the team that threw last is excused from throwing and it is the opposing team's turn to throw.

Once the referees have indicated who must throw first, the team that is required to do so has 5 (FIVE) SECONDS to initiate a throw. Referees may penalize teams who are deemed to have taken an inordinate amount of time to make a throw. Penalties may include warnings, yellow cards, and/or the forfeiture of balls to the opposing team.

## **SUDDEN DEATH**

In the likely event that time expires in either half while a set is still under way, that set will instantly go into "Sudden Death." All the same rules apply in Sudden Death EXCEPT that **BLOCKING IS NOT AVAILABLE**. Players using a ball to block a Live Ball will be deemed killed as soon as the blocked ball hits a Dead Object just as though the Live Ball had hit the player's body. Blocked/deflected Live Balls may still be caught with normal consequences, however. The procedure for sudden death is as follows.

1. At the buzzer denoting the end of regulation play in either half, the game shall stop. Any Live Balls released prior to the expiration of time in either half shall remain Live Balls (i.e., these balls may still kill players or be caught with the normal consequences until such Live Ball becomes dead), however, any ball thrown after time expires shall be deemed dead.
2. After the game has been stopped, the referees shall redistribute the balls to the remaining players on each side so that each side has three balls.
3. Upon the referee's whistle, Sudden Death commences and runs until one team is completely eliminated (i.e., there is no prescribed time limit).

## **TIE BREAKERS**

In the event that the match is tied at the end of regulation play, a special 4-minute tie breaking set shall be played. Tie breaker sets shall commence like a normal set upon the referee's whistle and the time for the tie breaking set shall be kept on the official game clock. If the set has not been completed as the allotted time expires, the tie breaking set shall go into Sudden Death as described above.

**NOTE:** In the event that the match is tied at the end of a set and less than one minute remains on the game clock before the end of the match, team captains may agree to forego the remaining time on the clock and enter directly into a 4-minute tie-breaker set. To avoid confusion and prevent delay, captains should confer and agree on the approach to be taken under these circumstances in advance and in any case no later than the commencement of the second half of play.

## **EXITING THE COURT WHEN OUT**

Once a player is deemed to be Out, s/he must leave the court in a timely manner from the nearest point of exit. If the player is still HOLDING one or more balls when s/he is Out, the player IS ALLOWED to pass those balls onto his/her teammates. If a player is NOT in possession of a ball at the instant when s/he gets out, then that player is NOT ALLOWED to touch any balls that may be on the court. At the discretion of the referees, a team may have a ball stripped from them and given to the opposing side, if an infraction occurs.

## **TIME-OUTS & SUBSTITUTIONS**

Each team will be allowed a single 30-second timeout per match. This timeout can only be used if there is some ruling confusion or if a player on the court is injured. At this time a team may substitute any player to take an injured player's place, however, the injured player is not allowed to come back into the game for the rest of the half.

## **RULE ENFORCEMENT**

Rules will be enforced primarily by the "honor system". Players will be expected to act honestly and rule whether or not a hit was legal or whether they were legally eliminated. However, because of the fast-paced nature of the sport, sometimes a player would not feel a ball skim their clothing or hair. There will be up to 4 game-officials, whose responsibility will be to rule on any situation in which teams cannot agree. **THE GAME OFFICIALS' DECISION IS FINAL – NO EXCEPTIONS.** Blatant dishonesty or failing to adhere to the officials' decision may result in penalties either during or after the match upon review.

## CONDUCT DURING MATCHES

Even though the nature of sport of dodgeball is fast-paced and competitive, it is expected that each and every player act with sportsmanship and conduct that upholds the integrity of the game. A blatant case of poor conduct or sportsmanship will result in a player's expulsion from a match after which his/her team must carry out the rest of the sets in the match one player down.

Behavior constituting misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Fighting or attempting to assault another player
- Racist, sexist, or homophobic comments directed at the other team
- Rude verbal taunting
- Throwing a ball at an opposing player despite having been clearly called Out
- Intentionally inflicting pain or throwing a ball excessively hard at close distance at another player's face
- Excessive use of foul language
- Cheating
- Causing constant distraction to the game by a player that is not on court
- Squeezing and crumpling the ball before throwing it
- Kicking or spiking the ball

Misconduct during matches will lead to a YELLOW CARD or a RED CARD for the player.

Yellow cards act as a warning for the player for his/her conduct on court, and the team should be warned that 2 yellow cards for the **team** and the team will play one player short for the remainder of the match (see example below).

Red cards are for serious misconducts during the match, and may be given without prior warning to the offense. **Should a player get a red card during a match, he/she is ejected from the match and the team will continue playing one player short for the rest of the match. The player receiving the red card shall further be suspended for his/her next match.**

2 yellow cards to the **same player** in the **same match**, equate to a red card, and that player will be ejected from the match. A player receiving a yellow card in two consecutive matches will be suspended for his/her subsequent match.

## CONDUCT FOR TEAM SUPPORTERS

***A team is accountable for the actions of their team supporters, ball retrievers, and spectators.***

### Off-court Interference

Off-court players, coaches, ball retrievers / helpers, and supporters should not interfere with the match. Interference includes, but is not limited to:

1. Unnecessarily loud or abrupt sounds and actions aimed to distract
2. Rude gestures
3. Verbal insults to players
4. Physical contact with the other team's players, supporters
5. Inactive players entering the court
6. Providing unfair or undue assistance to active players by supporting active players' balance inordinately or pushing players off during the opening rush

If a team believes that their opponent or their helpers or supporters are unfairly interfering with the game, such team's captain may request that the referees issue a warning to the opposing team to discontinue the interfering behavior. If the behavior continues, the interfering team may be subject to penalty, including a YELLOW CARD or RED CARD. The referees shall have discretion as to whether the behavior does amount to interference and as to the appropriate penalty in the event a warning is issued but not heeded.

### **Ball retrievers / helpers**

Ball retrievers should NEVER enter the dodgeball court to retrieve or give balls to a player. This includes ball retrievers reaching on to the court to retrieve a ball from the active playing area or to stop a rolling ball from rolling across the center line. Ball retrievers entering the active playing area will be considered off-court interference and shall be penalized accordingly. Further, if an inactive player reaches on to the court to prevent a ball from rolling across the center line to the opposing team, that ball must be forfeited to the other team.

Once a dodgeball leaves the court's boundary lines, a team's ball retriever can collect the ball and pass it to an on-court player. If a ball passes over the half court line, a ball retriever CANNOT crossover to the other team's side of the court to retrieve the ball. If a ball retriever retrieves a ball from the other team's side, that ball must be forfeited to the opposing team.

**Note:** if unmarked on the court, the half-court line is an imaginary line that splits the court into equal halves - this line extends from the actual on-court half-court line to the out of bounds area. The referees will determine whether a ball helper has crossed this imaginary line if there are no markings that extend out of the court.

If a ball comes to rest ON the half-court line, then either team's ball retrievers can take the ball. Ball retrievers are advised to act fairly and reasonably to avoid any unnecessary altercations. If there are any disputes, the referees have the final say on which team gets the ball.