



CAROL STREAM PARK DISTRICT  
DODGEBALL LEAGUE  
OFFICIAL RULES

UPDATED: JANUARY 5, 2023

Based on the  
National Amateur Dodgeball Association (NADA)  
Rules



## INTENT AND PURPOSE OF THE RULES

The purpose of the rules is to create a balance of play; provide reasonable safety and protection; and create an atmosphere of sportsmanship and fair play without unduly limiting freedom of action of individual or team play.

## ADVANTAGE / DISADVANTAGE

It is important to know the intent and purpose of a rule. A team/player should not be given an *advantage*, not intended by a rule. Conversely, a team/player should not be placed at a *disadvantage* not intended by a rule.

## THE GAME

Dodgeball is played by two teams, each made up of six players. The purpose of each team is to eliminate opposing team members. This is done by striking opposing players with thrown balls, or catching balls thrown by opposing players: while preventing the opposition from doing the same.



# **RULE 1: Players, Field and Equipment**

## **Section 1: Team**

1. **Teams will be made up of up of no more than 12 players.** Each game begins with 6 players competing on a side; others will be available as substitutes. Substitutes may enter the game only during time-outs, or in the case of injury.
2. ONLY Team Captains may speak to a referee regarding a call. Team Captains are responsible for their team and fans actions.
  - 1st offense - team will receive warning
  - 2nd offense - 1 player will be called out on team
  - 3rd offense - team captain will be ejected from game.

## **Section 2: Field Dimensions and Markings**

1. The game may be played indoors or outdoors.
2. The playing field shall be a rectangular surface free from obstructions at least 50 feet long and at least 23 feet wide. The ideal measurements are 60' x 30'.
3. The playing field shall be marked with sidelines, end lines, attack lines, and a center hash mark. There shall be at least 3 feet (preferably 10 ft.) of unobstructed space outside boundaries. Attack Line is parallel to and 10ft. from centerline. It is recommended that the centerline be 8 inches wide.
4. A restraining line will be located 6 to 8 feet outside and parallel to each end line. Only active players (those not "out") will be allowed to pass through the area between the end-line and restraining line.

## **Section 3: Boundaries**

1. During play, all players must remain within boundary lines.
2. Players may pass through their end line only to retrieve stray balls. A stray ball is one that has not been picked up and is lying on the ground.
3. When retrieving a ball, the player must also immediately re-enter the playing field only through their end line.
  - a. A player not immediately re-entering the playing area may be declared *OUT*.
  - b. A player retrieving the ball from the bleachers will not be called out if hit when doing so.
  - c. A player may be handed a ball from out of bounds, provided the player receiving the ball remains completely within their team's field boundary.
    - \* If a player from out of bounds does not immediately return the ball back into play, said ball will be given to the other team.

A player shall **NOT**:

- a. Have any part of their body contact the playing surface over a sideline.
- b. Exit or re-enter the field through the sideline.
- c. Leave the playing field (sideline or end line) to avoid being hit by or at tempt to catch a ball.
- d. Have any part of their body cross over the centerline and contact the ground on their opponents' side of the court.
  - A player may, without penalty, step ON the centerline, but cannot cross over the line.
- e. Throw a ball while jumping in the air AND land outside of their boundaries.
  - If a ball is thrown while the player is in the air, the player must land within their boundaries, or the ball will be declared a dead ball, and any hit or catch of the ball will not count for either team The throwing player will be called out for crossing a boundary line.
- f. Give a ball to anyone who is not playing in the game or to any player already declared *OUT*.

**Penalty for violations of (a-f):** Player will be declared *OUT*.  
**Exception to (d):** During the "Opening Rush," many players will cross the centerline. Officials should refrain from calling players *OUT* at this time unless a definite advantage is gained by the action.

*OUT* Players shall NOT stand/sit near court lines (Endline & Sidelines) so to avoid confusion of which players are *IN*. Players should be seated on their teams designated bench at all times.

## **Section 4: Equipment**

1. The official ball used in tournament and league play will be an 8¼" rubber-coated foam ball.
2. The number of balls used in a regulation game is 6.
3. Participants must wear shoes, shirts, and shorts/pants.
  - a. During outdoor events, shoes and shirts (men) are optional
4. Participants may not wear any type of gloves during games.

\*\*\*All clothes/uniforms are considered part of the player's body.



## **RULE 2: Game Play**

### **Section 1: The game**

1. The Referees will determine the side each team starts on.
2. Teams will alternate sides following each game.
3. The object of the game is to eliminate all opposing players by getting them *OUT*.

An *OUT* is scored by:

Hitting an opposing player with a LIVE thrown ball

Catching a LIVE ball thrown by your opponent.

Causing an opponent to lose control of a held ball as a result of contact by a thrown LIVE ball. Even if the player regains control of the ball before it strikes the ground, the player is still *OUT* (Usually occurs when a held ball is being used to block a thrown ball)

An opposing player stepping out of bounds. (see Rule 1, Section 3)

**LIVE (def.):** A thrown ball that strikes or is caught by an opposing player without/before contacting the ground, another player, a **non-held ball**, official or other object.

NOTE: Head hits count as a hit, though any player determined to be purposefully aiming at other players' heads will be given a technical foul.

4. A player may block a thrown ball with a ball being held, provided the holder does not lose control of the held ball as a result of the contact with the thrown ball.
  - a. **The held ball does not need to strike the ground to cause the holder to be out, only be knocked loose of the holder's grip. Even if the holder regains control of the held ball, they are still out. Any actions by the holder after the initial loss of control are ignored.**
  - b. A player may drop the ball with which they have blocked in order to catch a deflected ball. Officials must be sure to recognize the difference between a loose ball and an intentionally dropped ball. A loose or dropped ball contacting a live ball causes it to be come dead.
5. **For every catch the first player to get out can come back in. Catches do not carry over if your team has 6 players "alive". The player must come in through the back of the court.**
  - a. **Ex: if a team has 3 players and 2 of those players catch a ball the first and second player to get out can come back in.**

6. A live ball deflecting off a held ball and/or striking the holder remains live only to the holder. Following the deflection/striking of the holder,
  - a. The holder legally catches the live ball, or
  - b. The live ball becomes dead by contacting the ground, another player, a non-held ball or ball held by another player, official, or other object.

**Result:** In (a), the thrower is out. In (b), the holder is out.

7. A live ball deflecting off the body of Player "A" remains live only to Player "A". If "A" legally catches the deflected ball, the thrower is out. Teammates of "A" may not legally catch the deflected ball. In fact, touching of the deflected ball by another player causes it to become dead.

Once a player is *OUT*, they must drop any balls in hand and exit the playing field at the nearest sideline. If an *OUT* player intentionally contacts a live ball before exiting the playing field, opponents will be awarded a free throw.

### **Section 2: Timing, Time-outs, and Substitutions**

1. **A 3.5-Minute time limit has been established for each game.**
  - a. **A 3 Minute time limit has been established for ALL practice games (first game of night).**
1. **Each team will be allowed one 20-second time-out per group of matches.**
2. Only the Referee's whistle starts and stops the clock.
4. All players are in jeopardy until the referee recognizes AND signals, the beginning of a time-out or end of regulation time.

**Exception:** All LIVE balls in flight at the time of an official's signal (to end regulation time or to begin a time-out) remain LIVE, and may eliminate an opponent, until they become dead.
5. During time-outs, teams may substitute players. Substitutes may be players who did not start the game, or players who wish to re-enter after having been declared *OUT*.  
Following the time-out, play will resume with the same number of players and balls on each side when time-out was granted.

### **Section 3: Beginning the Game**

1. Prior to beginning a game, an equal number of dodgeballs are placed along the center line on each side of the center hash mark. A standard game consists of 6 balls, 3 on each side of the hash mark. Teams may position the balls in any way they choose.
2. Players then take a position behind their end line.

3. Following a signal by the official, teams may approach the centerline to retrieve the balls. Teams may only retrieve balls placed to the RIGHT (as they face the center line) of the center hash mark. If balls remain on the center line after a team has retrieved and moved their balls beyond the attack line, those balls may be retrieved by the opposing team after five seconds (as counted by the Referee).

A **False Start** will be called if players cross their end line prior to the official's signal to start the game.

**Result:** Play will be stopped and one ball from offending team's side will be moved to opponent's side of hash mark. Repeat for each infraction.

#### **Section 4: Declaring a Winner**

The team with the greater number of players remaining at the end of regulation time will be declared the winner of that game.

If an equal number of players remain after regulation play, a "sudden death" style overtime will be played.

#### **Section 5: Overtime**

1. The first overtime period of any game will begin with 3 players from each team. If less than three players were standing at the end of regulation, players must be added. The players starting the first overtime may be any rostered players, not necessarily those left after regulation.
2. Overtime will consist of a one-minute period where the first team to get an opposing player *OUT* will be declared the winner.
3. At the end of the one minute period, if no player has been legally hit out, another one minute period will be played, with the end line moved to the attack line. If no player is hit out at the end of the second period, another player will be added to each team and a third one minute period will be played. If needed, more periods can be added, adding a player to each team for each period until a winner is reached.
4. The winner of overtime will receive one point, the loser receiving 0 points.

#### **Section 6: Stalling and 5-Second Violation**

The following procedure will be used to prevent "stalling."

1. A team trailing during a regulation game must be given the opportunity to eliminate an opposing player. This requires a ball to be at the disposal of the trailing team.
2. It is illegal for the leading team to control all the balls for more than 5 seconds. If the leading team controls all the balls – *i.e. all balls are located on their side of the center line* – they must make a legitimate effort to get at least one ball across the attack line and into the opponent's backcourt. If this is not done within 5 seconds, a "5-second violation" will be called.
3. A team may avoid a 5-second violation by throwing or rolling a ball into the opponent's backcourt. This does not include throwing a ball over and through an opponent's endline.
4. Only a referee may call a 5-second violation.

#### **Penalty for 5-second violations:**

**1<sup>st</sup> violation:** Stoppage of play and balls will be divided evenly between the teams. Play will continue with "balls in hand."

**2<sup>nd</sup> violation: FREE THROW** for the opposing team – a penalty in which one player is allowed an unobstructed throw at their opponent (s) without risk of elimination. This is possible because a caught "free throw" does not result in an *OUT* for the thrower.

**3<sup>rd</sup> violation:** Ejection of one player from offending team.

5. The 5-second count will cease, when in the opinion of the monitor/official, a ball is at the **disposal** of the trailing team.
6. A ball may be considered at a team's **disposal** without being **secured** if, in the opinion of the monitor/official, players of the trailing team are not making a legitimate effort to do so.

#### **RULE 3: Non-Attendance**

##### **Section 1: Non-Attendance**

In some cases, it is not possible for some players to be present at a match. In such an instance, the following rules will be used.

1. If both teams have at least 6 registered players present, no action is necessary and all games continue as scheduled.
2. If one or both teams have 3 to 6 registered players, play continues as scheduled. A team may request a substitute prior to game.
3. **Substitutes must be approved by league supervisor.**
4. If just one team has 2 or less registered players present for a match, the games played by both teams will not count towards their overall score (including individual statistics).  
In this instance, referees should divide teams into equal numbers and play practice games for the allotted time.
4. The games will not be rescheduled

## **RULE 4: Officials and their duties**

### **Section 1: Referees**

1. All contests will be supervised by a referee.  
Rules will be enforced primarily by the “honor system.” Players will be expected to rule whether or not a hit was legal or whether they were legally eliminated.

**Exception:** During tournament play, All Semi-Final and Final round matches will be officiated by no less than 2 officials. These officials will rule in all situations.

### **Section 2: Unsportsmanlike Conduct**

Unsportsmanlike conduct may include, but is not limited to:

1. Foul Language
2. Hits above the shoulders with intent to harm
3. Unnecessary roughness
4. Arguing with officials, volunteers, staff, participants, or fans
5. Abuse of the “Honor System”
6. Exhibiting extreme anger (throwing balls after getting out, etc.)

Players are expected to show good sportsmanship whether they are playing or observing other teams play.

### **Section 3: Technical Fouls**

1. Technical Fouls can be called for unsportsmanlike conduct as listed in section 2, or for any other reason deemed necessary.
2. A player may be warned before being given a technical foul, but warnings are not necessary.
3. If a technical foul is called a referee should call an “Officials Time Out” and make the call needed.
4. All technical fouls will be given by the Referee or League Supervisor, Referees should record the infraction at the bottom of teams score sheet.
5. Technical fouls may be given to any registered player at any time they are present at dodgeball events, whether they are playing or observing.
6. The penalty for a first technical foul will consist of the following:  
The offending player may not play in the next game of the match  
The offending player’s team must start the next game with 5 players (or one player less than they are able if not all players are present)
7. Any player receiving TWO technical fouls in one day will be suspended for the rest of that day’s games and also will not be allowed to play the next time s/he is scheduled to play. A second technical foul will be discussed with the player and his/her parents after it has been issued.

### **Section 4: Protests**

Protests will only be accepted in cases involving use of an ineligible player. Protests of judgment calls will not be accepted.

## **REFEREES RESPONSIBILITIES**

The primary responsibility of a referee is to signal the start/end of games and timeouts, keep time and track eligible players. A secondary responsibility is to rule in cases where teams cannot agree. Because of this, referees must attempt to observe all the action on the court. Although it may not be possible to see all questionable plays, the referee should allow teams to reach a decision, before making an official “call.” **Even if a referee clearly observes a player not going out after being legally hit or stepping out of bounds, they must resist making a call until an official request is made.** (Referees who observe abuse of the honor system may recommend a technical foul on a player to the league coordinator). When a player requests that a referee make a call, play should be stopped and the referee should make one of three calls:

The player is out,  
The player is not out, or  
Didn’t see the play – play on.

Regardless of the call, play will continue with no further discussion of the play/call.

Note: Play continues until the monitor’s signal. A player’s request does not stop play – the referee’s signal does.

***THE REFEREE’S DECISION IS FINAL!***

