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## **Dodgeball Rules**

### **UNIFORMS, NUMBERS & PLAYER GEAR**

#### **Uniforms**

All registered players on each team are required to wear the current season's official Stonewall Dodgeball t-shirt provided to them at the start of each season. In the event a player loses their t-shirt they should contact league management to order a replacement and cannot play until a replacement has been obtained. Shirts may be modified as players wish, provided all sponsors, logos, and number patches (see below) are still clearly visible. Unregistered players are not allowed to participate and sharing of t-shirts is not permitted. Players must play in athletic shoes; no bare feet or flip-flops.

#### **Shirt Numbering**

Every player must have a number between 1 and 18, unique within their team, clearly written in bold permanent marker in the designated circle area on the front of the shirt. It must be clear, bold, large (touching or nearly touching at least the top and bottom of the designated area), and proportionally shaped. Do not make any extraneous marks or decorations inside the area for your number. Players whose uniforms are not numbered according to these rules may not play in a match until all issues are corrected.

#### **Safety Gear**

While not required, protective sports gear is encouraged. These include: kneepads, sports goggles, and mouth guards. Any gear or accessory which enhances player performance (including, but not limited to: gloves with grip, finger tape, grip chalk, etc.) is not permitted.

### **MATCHES, SCORING & STANDINGS**

#### **Match**

A standard Stonewall Dodgeball match consists of a 40-minute time period, during which two teams compete in as many games as time allows. A game ends when one team has completely eliminated all the players from the other team. Every game won will be scored as 1 point. The team with the most points at the end of a match is the winner. The Captain of each team is responsible for confirming the scores.

If match time expires in the middle of a game, the team with the most players remaining on the court wins that game. New games will not be started when less than 90 seconds remain in the match time.

Matches may end in a tie (each team having won an equal number of games) during regular season play. During end-of-season tournaments, rules governing overtime and tie-breaking will be shared with captains along with the brackets and other relevant tournament information.

Teams will play approximately half of the match on each side of the court. Teams will switch sides at the conclusion of the first game which ends beyond the halfway (20 min) mark.

### **Mercy Rule**

If the score differential reaches ten (10) points, the match will automatically end.

### **Standings**

Team standings within their divisions will be determined first by record (win-loss-tie), then by games won, followed by games lost.

## **PLAYERS**

### **Maximum Players**

Each team starts with up to 12 players and must play as many players as they have available up to that number. Only the 12 players on the court at the start of a game may play during that game. Benched players may shag balls from out of bounds and make them available to live players by throwing them onto the court, but may not otherwise participate in the game in any way.

### **Minimum players**

Teams must have at least 8 players present to start a match and 8 players on the court to start a game. Teams should arrive early and be prepared to start their games at the scheduled time. A five minute grace period will be allowed for teams to meet the minimum player requirement. Teams who meet the minimum player requirement within the grace period will be assessed a one game penalty (begin the match 0-1) for starting a match late.

In the event a team drops below the 8 player minimum due to player injury, no penalty is assessed but the match shall end. Teams falling below the 8 player minimum for reasons other than injury (i.e. sportsmanship related ejection) will be assessed a forfeit.

### **Forfeiting**

Teams should inform League Management if they will not meet the minimum player number. Teams who do so 24 hours or more prior to their match will forfeit by a score of 10-0. Teams who fail to notify League Management in advance or who do not have the minimum number of players within 5 minutes of the match start time, will forfeit their match by a score of 15-0.

### **Rotating Benched Players**

Players may not be benched for more than 1 consecutive game. After the conclusion of every game and prior to the start of the next, benched players must return to the court and captains must designate a new set of players to be benched. Exceptions to this rule may be granted, at the discretion of the head referee, if a player expresses a need for additional time on the beach for health or personal reasons. Prior to

starting every game, referees will ensure that benched players have rotated and that both teams have between 8 and 12 players.

## **REFEREES & GAME CONDUCT**

### **Head Referee**

Each match will have one Head Referee. Head Referees will be well versed in all dodgeball rules and referee assignments will be published in advance. The referee's role is to ensure player safety, the integrity of the game, keep the game moving and to rule on any unclear plays. The Head Referee shall make the final decision on any plays in question.

### **Line Referees**

Each match will have 4 Line Referees who will assist the Head Referee in officiating the match. Every team will be expected to provide 2 Line Referees per week, as scheduled. It is the responsibility of team captains to ensure line referees representing their team are familiar with the rules and will serve as attentive assistants to the Head Referee. Teams may be penalized (up to being assessed a forfeit) for failing to provide line referees.

### **Game Conduct**

The role of the entire referee crew is to ensure safe, fair and orderly play, not to call every player out. Players are expected to be familiar with all rules and to follow them in the spirit of good sportsmanship and the mission of Stonewall Sports. Specifically players are expected to leave the court when struck by a thrown ball. Referees will make rulings on close or uncertain plays, as well as in cases when specific rules (i.e. headshots, deflections, etc.) must be applied. Players who fail to leave the court when clearly out will be issued a yellow card. Players in repeated violation (two yellow cards) will be issued a red card.

Captains may calmly discuss a play with a head referee, for the purpose of clarification of a rule or explanation what was observed. Head Referees may discuss these plays with line referees, but captains may not approach line referees directly. Captains may also bring to the attention of the Head Referee any opposing player who they believe is intentionally violating the rules. In this case Head Referee will pay specific attention to the players in question, and may call upon a member of the League Management team for additional support in doing so.

No player may argue with or berate any referee - violations will be subject to an automatic yellow card. Any player who exhibits overly or consistently aggressive behavior, physically contacts or personally insults any referee, official or opponent will receive an automatic red card and ejection.

Arguments between teams, up to and including fighting, will result in red cards issued directly to involved players and may result in the immediate ending of the match at the discretion of the Head Referee and League Management.

### **Yellow Cards**

A player who is issued a yellow card is automatically declared out if they are a live player and must sit out the remainder of the game in session. Players who receive two yellow cards in one match will

automatically receive a red card. In addition to the violations listed above, Head Referees may issue a yellow card for any rule violation which they determine to be flagrant or intentional.

### **Red Cards**

A player who is issued a red card must sit-out the remainder of the match in session. All red cards will be reported to the Director of Dodgeball and Director of Sports Operations, who will review the circumstances of the incident and will follow-up with that player. Players issued a red card for gross violation of rules pertaining to play, safety or sportsmanship may be subject to further action including suspension and/or expulsion. Players who are expelled from the league are not eligible for refunds.

## **GAMEPLAY**

### **Starting A Match**

Prior to the start of every match, the Head Referee will conduct a captains meeting to briefly review or clarify any rules or points of emphasis, and to remind both teams of sportsmanship expectations. At the conclusion of this meeting, captains will Rock, Paper, Scissor to determine which advantage their team will have to begin the game. The winning captain may choose either beginning the match with ball control or to have selection of side, the opposing team will receive the remaining option.

A standard Stonewall Dodgeball match is played with 7 balls. All 7 balls will be placed along the court's center line—three on one side and four on the other. The team which begins with ball control (either by captain's choice, or default) will begin the game with 4 balls placed on their right. For each subsequent game, ball control will alternate between teams.

To start each game, all players on court must line up along the rear wall of their side of the court. Players must maintain contact with the rear wall until the referee's starting signal. On that signal, players may run to retrieve any of the balls within their initial control – the balls on their right.

### **Rushing & Attack Lines**

During the initial rush to retrieve balls (and *only* during the rush), players may inadvertently step over the centerline without being called out.

Following the rush all balls must be brought behind the attack lines before they can be put into play. Attack lines will be clearly designated with tape. Any ball thrown without first returning behind the attack line will be declared a dead ball. Any hit or catch of a dead ball does not count.

The attack lines also designate a 3-foot buffer zone on either side of the centerline. Balls that are thrown from this zone, are dead. During the initial rush when teams grab for the balls, a player must clear the buffer zone before they can be hit out. If the Head Referee determines that a player is abusing the buffer zone or purposely stalling in it, they will be called out.

### **Winning a Game**

A team will be declared the winner of a game when all of the players on the other team have been eliminated from play.

## **Getting Out**

When a player has been eliminated from play, they are said to be out. Players may be eliminated in any of the following ways:

- By an opponent:
  - When any part of the player's body or clothing is struck by a ball thrown by an opponent
  - When an opponent catches a ball thrown by the player
- By stepping out of bounds, or across the centerline, except:
  - If there are no benched or out players to shag balls, players may exit the court through the back to retrieve a ball. Players must then touch the back wall before becoming active.
  - Players are allowed to reach across the center line to retrieve a ball, provided no part of their body or clothing touches down on the opposite side.

When a player is out they must immediately leave the court and line-up in order along the right sideline. Players may not interfere (block, deflect, screen, etc.) with play in any way once they are out - intentional violations of this rule will result in a yellow card, at the Head Referee's discretion.

## **Throwing**

All throws must be made with both feet behind the attack line. Any ball thrown while in front of the attack line is a dead ball.

Players must throw balls across the centerline, rolling or kicking balls over the line is not allowed. Referees will issue a warning to a player who deliberately rolls or kicks a ball over the centerline and rule that player out on any subsequent violation.

## **Catching**

A thrown ball is considered a catch when a player catches it prior to it touching any other person, object or surface. When a ball is caught, the player who threw the ball is eliminated.

If a player has a ball in their hands and catches another ball, the player must maintain possession of both balls for a catch to be ruled. The player may release the held ball *prior* to any contact by or attempt to catch the thrown ball. However, dropping either ball after initial contact by the thrown ball will be considered a strike, and the player will be out.

A trap is when a ball is caught while making contact with the floor, wall or other part of the building at the same time. Traps do not count as a hit or a catch and both players are considered safe.

*Re-Entry:* Following a catch, one player on the catcher's team may reenter the game in the order in which they were eliminated. Players returning to play have to touch the back wall before becoming active. If none of the team's 12 players are fully out of bounds when a ball is caught, play continues without further advantage. Players determined to be intentionally returning to play out of order will be issued a yellow card, teams found to repeatedly violate this rule may be issued a forfeit at the discretion of the Head Referee.

**Deflection**

A ball is considered deflected after it comes in contact with a player, ball or object. Once a ball has been deflected, it is no longer considered a thrown ball and players struck by it are not out.

A deflected ball may be caught by the player it initially hit, or a teammate. In this case the initial player hit is not out, however, an out player does *not* return to the game as they would on a non-deflected catch. In the event a player is struck by a second thrown ball, while their initial deflected ball is still live, both deflected balls must be caught, or the player is out.

**Blocking**

A player may use a held ball to block an incoming thrown ball. Players must maintain possession of their held ball immediately after blocking a thrown ball. If a player drops the held ball, the player is out.

**Headshots & Headhunting**

Headshots present a safety concern for all players, all players are expected to avoid aiming for opponent's heads. Any thrown ball which hits a player in the head will be declared a headshot whether intentional or not, and the player will not be out.

Determination of a headshot will be at the discretion of the referee. Referees may choose not to apply the headshot rule if:

- The ball does not hit the players head first and directly (i.e. deflects off a players hand, into their head).
- The struck player is bending, crouching, diving or ducking in any way.

Players who are hit in the face may remove themselves from play for up to two minutes (at the referee's discretion) in order to compose themselves and make sure they are still able to physically continue the game. However, if the player's team is eliminated while he or she is still off court, the game will be declared officially over.

Deliberately throwing at a person's face is not allowed under any circumstances. Players determined to be "headhunting," or repeatedly aiming towards player's heads will be issued a red card at the discretion of the head referee.

**Ball Control**

The game is played with 7 balls on the court at a time. When a team has possession of the majority of the balls in play (4 or more balls), that team has ball control.

Once a team gains ball control, that team has 15 seconds to relinquish majority possession. Referees will start counting after 5 seconds, counting aloud from 10 to 0. Failing to give up ball control within the 15 second time period will result in referees stopping play and awarding the other team possession of all 7 balls. The 15-second time period resets as soon as a team throws enough balls to give up majority possession.

When a team is down to one player, and that player has ball control, they have 10 seconds to throw at least one ball. The 10-second count resets every time that player throws a ball, until they no longer have the majority of the balls.

### **Time Outs**

Both teams are allowed one 30-second time-out per match. Team captains are the only players who can call for a time out. Time outs are given at the Head Referee's discretion and are not official until the whistle is blown. Once the referees whistle is blown for a time out all game play is stopped and all balls are declared dead. Any questions as to the timing of outs or catches in relation to the whistle will be settled by the referee crew.

## **INJURIES & PLAYER SAFETY**

Consideration for player safety must always be the first priority of all referees, officials and league managers. Referees have complete discretion to stop a game for any reason which they feel may jeopardize player safety, and have authority to take any necessary measures to ensure safe conditions prior to resuming play.

In the event of an injury on the court, the game shall be stopped by the referee and the injured player removed from the court if possible to safely do so. If the injured player is unable to return to play after two minutes, the first person in the out line will be allowed to take his or her place. If there are no players in the outline, and if the team has rostered players present who are not in the current game, then an alternate rostered player may take the injured player's spot.

All player injuries must be reported to the League Manager on duty.