



## Rules of Dodgeball

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*WDBF Rules Committee 2017: Nicole Chasin, Bill Fair, Victor Gravili, Bethel Lascano, Michael Lasiuk, Brian Li, Luke Price, Jen Ritchie, Armando Valdes, Devrim Van Dijk, Duane Wysynski, Yeo Wai Tat*

*Editor: Alex Svetlovsky*

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# Contents

Rules .....	4
Definitions .....	4
Game .....	4
Teams .....	5
Equipment.....	6
Court and Boundaries.....	6
Balls and Throwing.....	7
Invalid Throw.....	7
Advantage.....	7
Players .....	8
Hitting.....	9
Blocking .....	9
Disarming.....	9
Catching.....	10
Opening Rush.....	10
Sudden Death.....	11
Ball Retrieving.....	11
Referees.....	12
Code of Conduct.....	12
Examples .....	13
Hitting, Blocking and Unsuccessful Catching .....	13
Disarm and Complex Catching.....	14
Unclear Hit and Timeout .....	15
Entering Sudden Death.....	16
Code of Conduct .....	17

# Rules

## Definitions

1. "Live Player"
  - a. A live player is any player that is not out.
  - b. Anything worn or carried by that player is a part of that live player.
2. "Dead Player"
  - a. A dead player is a player who has played in a set and has been rendered out.
  - b. A dead player is a dead object.
3. "Live Ball"
  - a. A live ball is a ball that has not become a dead object.
4. "Dead Object"
  - a. A dead object is any object or surface that is not a live player or live ball.
5. "Out"
  - a. A player who is out is no longer a live player, and has become a dead object.
6. "Set"
  - a. A set is the duration taken to render all players on a team out.
7. "Match"
  - a. A match is a contest between two teams to compete against each other over a number of sets.

## Game

8. The objective of dodgeball is to win the most sets in a match.
  - a. A set is won when all opposing players have been eliminated by being rendered out.
  - b. One point is awarded for every set won.
9. A match is 40 minutes of regular play.
  - a. A match has two halves, each 20 minutes in length.
    - i. The referee will indicate the start and end of a half with a clear whistle blast.

- ii. At the end of each half the set will transition into sudden death as in s. 53.
  - b. The game clock runs continuously without stopping.
    - i. Despite s. 9.c, the game clock will be paused for a maximum of 30 seconds in between sets.
  - c. A new set must be started if any time remains on the game clock at the end of the previous set.
- 10. A team captain, designated coach, or other team official may request two timeouts per match at any time.
  - a. At the earliest available moment that does not interfere with ongoing play a referee will clearly signal the start of the timeout.
  - b. During that timeout, the game clock will pause for 1 minute and 30 seconds.
  - c. During that timeout, all play and rules are suspended.
- 11. At the end of the first half, the teams will switch halves of the court.
- 12. If the match is tied for points at the end of regular play, a 4 minute tie breaker set will be played.
  - a. At the end of 4 minutes, the game will go into sudden death as in s. 53.

## Teams

- 13. A team may have between 6 and 12 players on roster.
- 14. Six live players per team play in a set.
  - a. Any 6 live players on the team roster may start a set on a half of the court.
  - b. Once 6 live players start a set, only those 6 players may play in that set.
    - i. In the event of a live player becoming injured and unable to play, another player from the team roster may be substituted during a timeout.
- 15. A team may have 3 ball retrievers.
  - a. Ball retrievers may be players not playing in a set or any other person.
  - b. Ball retrievers may not be dead players.

## Equipment

16. The ball is a 17.8 cm (7 in) polyurethane (PU) coated foam ball weighing 140 g (4.9 oz) +/- 6 g (0.2 oz).
17. The game is played with 6 balls.
18. All players on a team must wear uniforms identical in colour and design.
  - a. Each player must be identified by name and number back of the uniform.
  - b. Each player must be identified by number on the front of the uniform.
  - c. The captain of a team must have clear identifying marks on the front and back of the uniform.
  - d. Players may only wear medically necessary equipment on their hands, with the exception of medically preventative tape that does not improve grip.
19. All ball retrievers on a team must be clearly identified through a uniform.
20. All referees must be clearly identified through a uniform.

## Court and Boundaries

21. The outer boundaries of the standard court are a rectangle measuring 18 m (59.1 ft) by 9 m (29.5 ft).
  - a. The 9 m (29.5 ft) boundary lines are the back lines for each team.
  - b. In a women's game, the outer boundaries of the court are a rectangle measuring 15 m (49.2 ft) by 9 m (29.5 ft).
    - i. The outer boundaries for a women's game may be drawn within the outer boundaries of the standard court.
22. A centre boundary line bisects the outer boundary lines into two equal halves of 9 m (29.5 ft) by 9 m (29.5 ft).
  - a. In a women's game, the two equal halves measure 7.5 m (24.6 ft) by 9 m (29.5 ft).
  - b. The centre boundary line has markings for placing 6 balls, restricting the placement of balls to within 3 m (9.8 ft) of the outer boundary lines.
23. An attack line is drawn in each half 3 m (9.8 ft) from and parallel to the centre line.

24. A player return area must be clearly marked outside of the boundary lines, one for each half, parallel to the one of the long outer boundary lines.

## Balls and Throwing

25. A ball must be thrown by a live player within their team's half of the court at the opposing team to become a live ball.
26. A live ball becomes a dead object the instant it touches a dead object.
27. A live ball becomes a dead object the instant it is caught.
28. A live ball becomes a dead object the instant it touches an opposing team's live ball.

## Invalid Throw

29. If a live player throws a ball that is not intended to contribute to that player's team hitting an opposing live player and is not thrown in the general direction of an opposing live player, that player will accrue one warning at the discretion of the referee.
- If that live player accrues more than one warning, they may be rendered out at the discretion of the referee.
  - A live player's accrual of warnings is reset to zero at the end of each set.

## Advantage

30. The team with advantage must throw a ball within 10 seconds.
- The 10 second countdown restarts when a ball is thrown by any team.
31. Advantage is given to the team that;
- has the most balls on their half of the court; or
  - if the number of balls on each half is equal, has the most live players; or
  - if the number of live players on each team is equal, has not thrown last; or
  - if neither team has thrown, that last won a set.
32. If a ball has not been thrown within 5 seconds, a clearly audible countdown will begin.
33. If a ball has not been thrown within 10 seconds, the team with advantage must forfeit all the balls on their half of the court to the opposing team.

- a. Live players and ball retrievers must pass those balls to the opposing team in a timely manner.

## Players

- 34. Only live players playing in a set may be inside the boundaries of their half.
- 35. If any part of a live player touches a boundary line they are rendered out.
- 36. If any part of a live player touches a surface, object, or person outside of the boundary line on their team's half of the court they are rendered out.
- 37. A live player who has been rendered out must exit the court in a timely manner from the nearest point on a boundary line.
  - a. That player may pass any balls they are carrying to any live player on their team.
  - b. That player may not intentionally touch any other balls.
  - c. That player may not intentionally obstruct any live players or ball retrievers.
  - d. That player may not intentionally obstruct any live balls thrown by the opposing team.
- 38. Dead players must line up in the marked player return area in the order that they have been rendered out.
- 39. A live player may pick up any balls that are within reach.
  - a. That player may reach over any boundary lines to pick up a ball.
    - i. Despite s. 36, that player is not rendered out if they only touch that ball.
- 40. A live player may carry one or more balls.
- 41. A live player may pass the ball to any live player or ball retriever on their team.
- 42. A live player may not excessively pinch, squeeze, compress, or otherwise distort a ball before that player throws that ball or that live player will accrue one warning at the discretion of the referee.
  - a. If that live player accrues more than one warning, they may be rendered out at the discretion of the referee.
  - b. A live player's accrual of warnings is reset to zero at the end of each set.
- 43. A dead player that has been revived must enter the court through the back line.

- a. That player becomes a live player once they are completely within the boundary lines.
- b. That player must enter the court in a timely manner from the nearest unobstructed point on the back line.
- c. That player may not touch any balls until they become a live player.
- d. While entering the court, that player may not obstruct any live players or ball retrievers.
- e. While entering the court, that player may not obstruct any live balls thrown by the opposing team.

## Hitting

44. Any live player who is touched by a live ball thrown by the opposing team is rendered out once that live ball touches a dead object.
- a. Despite s. 44, that player is not rendered out if they have caught that live ball.
  - b. Despite s. 44, that player is not rendered out if that live ball is caught by a live player on the same team.

## Blocking

45. A live ball may be blocked using one or more balls carried by a live player.
- a. The live ball may only come in contact with the ball(s) carried by the live player, and not any other part of the live player.
  - b. Despite s. 44, that player is not rendered out once that live ball touches a dead object.

## Disarming

46. If a ball carried by a live player is dislodged as a result of a block, the instant that dislodged ball touches a dead object that player is rendered out.
- a. Despite s. 46, if control of that dislodged ball is regained by that live player before it touches a dead object, that live player is not rendered out.

## Catching

47. A live ball may be caught by a live player, rendering the opposing live player that threw that live ball out.
- a. A catch is made the instant that live player has control of the ball and has two points of contact within bounds, with no points of contact on the boundary line or out of bounds.
  - b. That opposing live player is rendered out the instant a catch is made.
48. A dead player on the same team is revived when a catch is made.
- a. That dead player is revived in the same order that they were rendered out.

## Opening Rush

49. The 6 balls are placed on the centre line within the ball markings.
50. Before play begins, players must stand with one foot in contact with the back line and the other foot within the boundaries.
- a. If a player's foot leaves contact with the back line before the start of a set, a false start must be called.
  - b. If a false start has been called, that team will accrue one warning.
  - c. If a team accrues two warnings, that team may only play 5 players on the court during the next set, despite s. 14, s. 14.a, and s. 14.b.
  - d. A team's accrual of warnings for false starts will be set to zero at the end of the first half.
51. A referee will indicate the start of a set with a loud whistle blast.
- a. Play begins immediately on that whistle blast.
  - b. All players become live players on that whistle blast.
  - c. All players must move completely within court boundaries on that whistle blast.
    - i. Despite s. 35 and s. 36, those live players may be in contact with only the back line at the start of play, only until they move completely within court boundaries.
52. Live players may retrieve only the 3 balls placed on the designated right centre line area on their half.

- a. Despite s. 35 and s. 36, those live players may touch or cross the centre line once to retrieve those balls.
- b. Despite s. 25, that ball may not become a live ball until it has traveled back past the attack line on that team's half of the court.
- c. Despite s. 52, a team may retrieve any balls placed on the centre line as in s. 52 after they have cleared all 3 of their balls as in s. 52.b.

## Sudden Death

53. A referee signals the transition to sudden death with a loud whistle blast.
- a. The whistle blast in s. 9.b.i may be used for the whistle blast as in s. 53.
  - b. Despite s. 25, a ball may not become live after that whistle blast.
  - c. All live players must stop play, if any, at the earliest possible moment, and must take position as in s. 50, and s. 50.a-d.
  - d. Balls are redistributed so that each team has possession of 3 balls.
    - i. Players may hold those balls.
  - e. Despite s. 54, if, once all live balls have become dead objects as in s. 26, s. 27, and s. 28, all opposing live players have been eliminated sudden death will not begin.
54. A referee signals the beginning of sudden death with a loud whistle blast.
- a. Play resumes on that whistle blast.
  - b. All live players must immediately move completely within boundaries, as in s. 51.c and s. 51.c.i.
  - c. Despite s. 45, live players may not block.
  - d. Sudden death ends when the set is won.

## Ball Retrieving

55. Ball retrievers may not touch any boundary line.
56. Ball retrievers may not touch any surface, ball, or live player within the court boundaries.
57. Ball retrievers may retrieve any ball that is outside the boundary lines.

- a. Ball retrievers may not retrieve any ball that has crossed the centre line away from their team's half of the court.
  - i. If not marked, that centre line extends the full width of any area a ball may roll during play.
- b. Ball retrievers may pass balls to live players or other ball retrievers.
- c. Ball retrievers may place balls within court boundaries.
- d. Ball retrievers may not pass balls to the opposing ball retrievers or opposing team.

## Referees

58. One or more referees monitor the game and enforce the rules of the game.

59. A referee is the final authority and arbiter of the rules during a match, and may interpret and enforce the rules to their absolute discretion.

- a. A referee may issue warnings to any player that does not follow the rules as described.
- b. A referee may, at their discretion and most appropriately for the infraction, after a player intentionally and deliberately disregards the rules or referee instruction, call for the forfeiture of any balls or render that player out after clear warnings have been given.
- c. A referee may, at their discretion, stop and resume the game clock.

## Code of Conduct

60. All teams, players, ball retrievers, referees, and spectators must adhere to the code of conduct as described in the WDBF Code of Conduct.

- a. Referees may reasonably give warnings, yellow cards, red cards, or other infractions.

# Examples

## Hitting, Blocking and Unsuccessful Catching

### Flow of play

Chuck on the yellow team throws a ball at Alice on the blue team. That ball hits Alice, and then deflects toward Bob on the blue team. Bob blocks that ball high into the air with a ball that he is carrying. David on the blue team sees that ball and runs to attempt to catch that ball. David gains control of the ball in his hands while in mid-air, and lands one foot on the ground inside bounds first then his second foot outside of bounds.

### Rules involved

*Definitions, 25, 26, 36, 44, 45, 47.*

### Analysis

Following the flow of play, the ball thrown by Chuck becomes live due to rule 25.

That ball hits Alice and thus she becomes subject to rule 44, pending that ball becoming dead.

That live ball then hits Bob, but due to rule 45, if that live ball only hit the ball that Bob was holding then he is exempt from being rendered out via rule 44. Note that the ball that is being carried by Bob is considered a part of him as per rule 1.b.

That live ball is then grabbed by David who gains control of the ball in mid-air. Rule 47 is triggered, pending the conditions listed in 47.a.

David then lands with control of the ball with one foot in the court. The condition in 47.a is not yet triggered because David only has one point of contact in bounds.

David's second foot then lands outside of bounds. Because David's second point of contact is out of bounds, the condition in 47.a is never triggered and David's catch is not valid.

David is rendered out the instant he touches a surface outside the boundary, as in rule 36. Because the ball thrown by Chuck is in contact with David when he becomes dead, that ball

becomes dead as per rules 26 and 2.b. This then completes the rule 44 and Alice is rendered out at this point in time.

Bob is never rendered out.

## Disarm and Complex Catching

### Flow of play

Chuck on the yellow team throws a ball at Alice on the blue team. Alice blocks that ball with a ball she is carrying, deflecting it toward her teammate Bob. In that process, the ball that Alice is carrying is knocked out of her hands and hits the ground. Bob dives for the ball to attempt the catch and holds on to the ball while in mid-air, then lands ball-first on to the ground within bounds maintaining control of the ball the whole time.

### Rules involved

*Definitions, 25, 27, 46, 47.*

### Analysis

Following the flow of play, the ball thrown by Chuck becomes live due to rule 25.

That ball hits Alice's ball that she is carrying, but because it is knocked out of her hands and hits the ground rule 46 is triggered. Alice is rendered out the instant her ball hits the ground.

Bob dives for that live ball thrown by Chuck and gains control of it in his hands in mid-air. At this point, the ball has become a part of the player as per rule 1.b.

The ball that Bob is now carrying is the first point of the contact with the ground within bounds. Because of rule 1.b, this is considered a part of the player and is no different than if any other part of Bob's body had been the first point of contact.

The instant that any other part of Bob's body touches the ground, the conditions in rule 47.a are triggered and the catch becomes valid. That ball becomes a dead ball as per rule 27 in the same instant. Chuck is rendered out as per rule 47.b in the same instant.

# Unclear Hit and Timeout

## Flow of play

Chuck on the yellow team throws a ball at Alice on the blue team. Alice dodges away from the ball, and the ball hits the ground immediately before bouncing and hitting Alice in the toes. Alice stops in her tracks and look at referee Peggy for confirmation if that was a hit, however Peggy has not made a call as she was watching another play occurring. Noticing the confusion, blue team coach Erin requests a timeout. While stopped and looking at Peggy, Eve on the yellow team throws a ball and hits Alice which then touches the ground. Referee Peggy then signals the start of a timeout with a whistle blast.

## Rules involved

*Definitions, 10, 25, 26, 44.*

## Analysis

Following the flow of play, the ball thrown by Chuck becomes live due to rule 25.

That ball then becomes a dead object the instant it hits the ground due to rule 26.

Alice is touched by a dead object, which does not trigger any rules and thus nothing happens.

Erin requests a timeout at this point, however the game play is not stopped and this request does not affect any live players or live balls currently in play.

The ball thrown by Eve is live due to rule 25, then hits Alice, and touches a dead object. Alice is rendered out due to rule 44.

Referee Peggy begins the timeout, and as per rule 10 only then is play suspended.

In this case, Alice is unquestionably out as she was hit and rendered out with a valid throw during play. It is the responsibility of the players to keep playing unless play has been stopped by a referee with a clear whistle blast.

It is also the responsibility of Alice to determine whether or not she has been hit. In this case, Alice needed to have made a decision whether or not the ball thrown by Chuck was live when

it hit her. A referee may clarify a hit or not, but it is not the responsibility of the referee to enforce every hit on a player.

## Entering Sudden Death

### Flow of play

The time for the end of a set is being counted down by referee Peggy. At less than one second remaining, Chuck on the blue team throws a ball at Alice on the yellow team. Referee Peggy signals the start of Sudden Death with a loud whistle blast. Bob on the yellow team throws a ball at David on the blue team. Both Alice and David catch the balls thrown at them.

### Rules involved

*Definitions, 9.a.i, 25, 47, 53.*

### Analysis

Following the flow of play, the ball thrown by Chuck becomes live due to rule 25.

While that ball is still in the air, referee Peggy signals the transition to sudden death as per rules 9.a.1 and 53.

The ball thrown by Bob does not become live despite rule 25, because of rule 53.a.

Both Alice and David catch their balls at essentially the same time. This kind of play is allowed after referee Peggy's whistle blast through rule 53.b. Alice and David are simply reacting to the play as it was unfolding, despite acting after the whistle blast.

In this case, however, the ball thrown at Alice is a live ball because it was thrown before the whistle blast but the ball thrown at David is not live as above.

Alice makes a valid catch as per rule 47, and Chuck is rendered out.

Bob is not out, despite being caught at the same time as Chuck, because the ball he caught is not live.

# Code of Conduct

Every player, coach, referee, ball retriever, and any other participant is expected to act with sportsmanship and conduct that upholds the integrity of the game. They are prohibited from the following:

- Fighting, attempting to assault another participant, or any uninvited physical contact
- Discriminatory comments on a person's sex, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, creed, ethnicity, age, or any form of discrimination
- Taunting
- Throwing a ball at an opposing player despite having been clearly rendered 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 distraction to players on the court
- 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.

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.

Two 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.

A team is accountable for the actions of their team supporters and spectators.

If a team believes that their opponent or their 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.