

Rule Changes for 2024

Executive Summary

The rules committee has made a number of changes to the ruleset to incorporate feedback from the Dodgeball community. It also aimed to clarify penalties for violations of rules more explicitly.

General Changes

The team areas have been moved to the same side of the court to ensure a single timing and scoring device can be used and both teams have a good view of it (court diagrams will be updated once we receive the source files).

The reset time between sets has been standardized to a fixed 30 seconds in order to allow better predictability for broadcasted games.

Cloth-specific Changes

The determination when a final set is played increases from 90 to 120 seconds, in an effort to align with EDF rules.

False starts will now forfeit all balls and play continues after a reset, in an effort to align with EDF rules. In most cases, this is the outcome of a false start anyways.

The save rule has been removed after overwhelming feedback from the community.

Players that have been hit behind the attack line are now allowed to pass their balls to their team. The moment of the hit has been chosen to avoid confusion about the position of a player when they are deemed out.

Successful sacrifice plays require the player to only return to the neutral zone, not their fair territory. Any balls caught in the opponent's territory are voided and do not render any player out.

Foam-specific Changes

In the last 60 seconds of a half, time will be stopped after a set ends and 30 seconds will be deducted to avoid time wasting before sudden death situations.

~~Advantage time only resets after the team with advantage has thrown a ball rather than allowing any throw.~~

A catch can be completed mid-air. This change now aligns the rule with Cloth.

*The rules committee is still working on a rule clarifying how sudden death is to be handled, with a **potential change** to prevent players from circumventing the no-blocking rule.*

Full List of Changes

Any changes correcting grammar or typographical errors have been omitted from this list.

Alter **Rule 1.4.3** from

“The queue area is an area of 5 meters in length and 1 meter in width, located 1 meter away from the side line of the court and its rear edge aligning with the rear edge of the back line. It is placed on the right-hand side of each court facing from the center line to the back line.”

to

*“The queue area is an area of 5 meters in length and 1 meter in width, located 1 meter away from the side line of the court and its rear edge aligning with the rear edge of the back line. **There is one queue area on each side of the center line and both queue areas shall be on the same side.**”*

Considering the use of a digital scoreboard in competitions, having both teams be on the same side provides a fair and equal opportunity for both. This has been tested during the EDF Euros 2023.

Amend **Rule 3.1** to add

“When using the Cloth playing format, there is also one official timing device for the running set time on one side of the court.”

Clarification that there is to be an official timing device on the court.

Amend **Rule 3.2** to add

“Timing and/or scoring devices may be combined into a single device.”

Clarification to allow the use of a digital scoreboard.

Add **Rule 7.4.2**

“Any jewelry that can’t be removed must be taped and approved by a match official.”

The technical committee is taking player safety very seriously and wants to ensure that the rules provide a good framework for this.

Alter **Rule 7.5.1** from

“Goggles or sporting glasses may be worn and must be secured with head straps.”

to

*“Goggles or sporting glasses may be worn and must be secured with head straps. **If goggles or sporting glasses cannot be secured with head straps, they may only be worn after approval by a match official.**”*

The technical committee is taking player safety very seriously, but wants to ensure that devices that are safe to wear are allowed to be worn, without having to be too specific, hence the ability for the referee to approve non-standard equipment.

Alter **Rule 7.7.1** from

*“Any other equipment, **not outlined in the rules**, may only be used after approval by the match officials.”*

to

“Any other equipment may only be used after approval by the match officials.”

The technical committee is taking player safety very seriously, but wants to ensure that devices that are safe to wear are allowed to be worn, without having to be too specific, hence the ability for the referee to approve non-standard equipment.

Alter **Rule 9.2.3** from

“After a set ends, each team has 30 seconds to line up for the start of the next set.”

to

*“After a set ends, **officials will wait 30 seconds for teams to reset. Should a team not be ready after 30 seconds, it may receive a verbal warning or team yellow card, upon discretion of a match official.**”*

Provide predictability for broadcasting, players and spectators when to be ready for the next set. This has been used in EDF Euros 2023. Clarification on what penalty would be given in case of a rule violation.

Add **Rule 9.4.2 (3)**

“in the last 60 seconds of a half, after a set ends. The reset time will be deducted from the match clock after each set.”

Avoid time wasting, in Foam format, between sets to force sudden death.

Amend **Rule 9.5** to add

“The set clock is only used in the Cloth playing format.”

Clarification where the rule applies.

Alter Rule 9.6.1 from

“A final set shall be played if a set ends with less than 90 seconds to play in a half when using the Cloth Playing Format.”

to

*“A final set shall be played if a set ends with less than **120** seconds to play in a half when using the Cloth Playing Format.”*

Include the reset time in the determination for a final set. This has been used in EDF Euros 2023.

Add Rule 9.6.1 (2)

“In the event of a false start, the 90 seconds will restart.”

Clarification on what happens in case of a false start during the final set.

Add Rule 9.6.1 (3)

“The half ends, when the final set ends.”

Clarification when the half ends in case of a final set.

Amend **Rule 9.8.3 (2)** to add

“The moment of the timeout is determined by the match official.”

Clarification, that the referee decides when a timeout is given in Foam format.

Amend **Rule 9.8.7** to add

“This does not apply to timeouts per 9.8.3.”

Clarification that team timeouts during a set in Foam format do not require players and team officials to stay in their designated areas.

Add **Rule 9.8.8**

“While play is suspended, any balls not in control must remain at their location at the time of the stoppage. It is up to the match official to determine the location of a ball.”

Clarification on where balls should be placed during a stoppage in play, including rolling balls.

Rule 9.8.8 becomes **Rule 9.8.9**

Alter **Rule 13.5.5** from

*“No **deliberate** physical contact between players is allowed, when retrieving the center ball. The offending player or players will be deemed out. Any incidental contact shall not be penalized.”*

to

“No physical contact between players is allowed, when retrieving the center ball. The offending player or players will be deemed out. Any incidental contact shall not be penalized.”

Deduplication.

Amend **Rule 13.7.1** to add

“Any thrown ball that did not fully cross the attack line can still be caught.”

Clarification that invalidly thrown balls can always be caught.

Alter **Rule 14.2.1** from

“The offending team will forfeit 1 ball to the opposing team, starting with the center ball.”

to

“The offending team will forfeit all balls to the opposing team.”

Remove complicated false start procedure as in 95% of plays the team that made a false start will no longer run for balls if the opposing team already has a live ball from the false start. This rule has been used in EDF Euros 2023.

Alter **Rule 14.2.1** from

*“The offending team will forfeit 1 ball to the opposing team, **starting with the center ball.**”*

to

*“The offending team will forfeit **all balls** to the opposing team.”*

Remove complicated false start procedure as in 95% of plays the team that made a false start will no longer run for balls if the opposing team already has a live ball from the false start. This rule has been used in EDF Euros 2023.

Alter **Rule 14.2.2** from

“In case of additional false starts, balls are forfeited to the non-offending team in order of outside to inside, starting with the non-offending team’s balls.”

to

*“**Play shall continue with a reset.**”*

Remove complicated false start procedure as in 95% of plays the team that made a false start will no longer run for balls if the opposing team already has a live ball from the false start. This rule has been used in EDF Euros 2023.

Remove **Rule 14.2.3**

Alter **Rule 17.2.1** from

“If each team is in possession of an equal amount of balls and the remaining balls are stationary in the neutral zone, advantage is given to the team that is closer to the balls, as determined by the match officials.”

to

*“**Balls that are stationary in the neutral zone are considered in possession of the team that is closer to the balls, as determined by the match officials.**”*

Clarification on balls in the neutral zone to be included in the ball count regardless of having an equal amount of balls in possession within their own fair territory.

Alter **Rule 17.3.1** from

~~“The team with advantage has 10 seconds to make an attempt. This time resets if any ball is thrown.”~~

to

~~“The team with advantage has 10 seconds to make an attempt. This time resets if a ball is thrown by that team.”~~

The committee has reconsidered this rule change after feedback and will not implement it before Worlds 2024.

Alter **Rule 17.3.2** from

~~“If a ball has not been thrown within 5 seconds of having advantage, the match officials will start an audible countdown.”~~

to

~~“If a ball has not been thrown by the team with advantage within 5 seconds of having advantage, the match officials will start an audible countdown.”~~

The committee has reconsidered this rule change after feedback and will not implement it before Worlds 2024.

Alter **Rule 17.3.3** from

~~“If a ball has not been thrown by the team with advantage within 10 seconds of having advantage, play is stopped, the offending team must forfeit all balls in their possession to the opposing team.”~~

to

~~“If a ball has not been thrown by the team with advantage within 10 seconds of having advantage, play is stopped, the offending team must forfeit all balls in their possession to the opposing team, and both teams must line up at the back line.”~~

Clarification on the procedure after advantage has been violated, but revert rule change from 17.3.2 and 17.3.3.

Alter **Rule 19.2** from

“A hit player can continue to make valid actions until any live balls that hit them come in contact with a dead object.”

to

“A hit player can continue to make valid actions until any live balls that hit them come in contact with

(1) a dead object, **or**

(2) a live player, when using the Cloth Playing format.”

Revert save rule to before Worlds 2022 after receiving a large amount of community feedback on this change.

Alter **Rule 20.6** from

“When using the Cloth Playing Format, an exiting player has to immediately drop all balls in their possession. If a match official determines that an exiting player intentionally passes balls to another player or the opposing team, they will receive a blue card.”

to

*“When using the Cloth Playing Format, an exiting player has to immediately drop all balls in their possession, **if they were hit in front of the attack line**. If a match official determines that an exiting player intentionally passes balls to another player or the opposing team, they will receive a blue card.”*

A variation of this rule is in-place in the British Dodgeball ruleset. The committee has considered various ways of determining when it is acceptable to pass a ball to a teammate, and considering the moment of the hit, rather than the moment of being out, will lead to more consistent calls and better predictability for players.

Alter **Rule 23.2** from

“A catch is deemed complete, when

- (1) the catching player is in control of the ball, and*
- (2) the catching player has at least two points of contact with the surface within the boundary lines, when using the Foam Playing Format.”*

to

“A catch is deemed complete, when the catching player is in control of the ball.

Control can be established in the air, a catching player does not have to touch the ground to be considered in control of a ball.”

The technical committee takes player safety very seriously, however this rule has been in-place in the Cloth format and does not lead to increased injury or difficulty in determining completeness by referees.

Alter **Rule 23.7** from

“When a live ball is caught after being deflected by one or more players of the catching team, those players will not be rendered out.”

to

*“When a live ball is caught after being deflected by one or more players of the catching team, those players will not be rendered out, **when using the Foam Playing Format.**”*

Revert save rule to before Worlds 2022 after receiving a large amount of community feedback on this change.

Amend **Rule 24.2** to add

“If an out player interferes with a live ball, the player receives a yellow card and it is up to the referee’s discretion to call a player of the offending team out, should they determine that the ball would have hit that player.”

Clarification on penalty for rule violation.

Amend **Rule 24.3** to add

“If an out player passes a ball, they will receive a verbal warning or blue card. Continued infraction can be awarded a yellow card.”

Clarification on penalty for rule violation.

Alter **Rule 25.2** from

“An entering player must step into the playing area immediately over the back line. Once they make contact within the boundary lines with both feet, they immediately become a live player. If the player is deemed to delay their entry they forfeit their opportunity to put a player into play.”

to

*“An entering player must step into the playing area immediately over the back line. Once they make contact within the boundary lines with both feet, they immediately become a live player. If the player is deemed to delay their entry they **are immediately called out.**”*

Clarification on penalty for rule violation.

Amend **Rule 25.4** to add

“If a player picks up a ball before entering, their team forfeits that ball and the player is immediately called out.”

Clarification on penalty for rule violation.

Add **Rule 26.8**

“A player cannot use a ball to prevent themselves from being out of bounds. Any such player will be called out.”

Clarification on allowing players to pick up balls outside the boundary lines, but not allowing them to use balls to prevent them from being out of bounds.

Amend **Rule 27.1** to add

“A player can be penalized further, should a match official deem the action deliberate or dangerous.”

Clarification on penalty for rule violation.

Alter **Rule 28.6.1** from

“If a player attempting an airborne attack successfully hits an opposing live player, they may return to their own fair territory.”

to

*“If a player attempting an airborne attack successfully hits an opposing live player, they may return to **the neutral zone or their own fair territory. They must do so as quickly as possible.**”*

Clarification that players can stop in the neutral zone and continue play there, also clarification that players cannot delay returning to the neutral zone for any reason.

Alter **Rule 28.6.2** from

“The player may not make any thrown attacks until they reach their own fair territory.”

to

*“The player may not make any **valid plays** until they reach **the neutral zone or their own fair territory.**”*

Clarification that players can stop in the neutral zone and continue play there and that they cannot make any valid catches (players are not out when catching a ball) while in the opponent’s fair territory.

Alter **Rule 28.6.3** from

“The player may not pick up any balls until they reach their own fair territory.”

to

*“The player may not pick up any balls until they reach **the neutral zone or their own fair territory. If a player picks up a ball, they are deemed out and any picked up balls are forfeited to the opposing team.**”*

Clarification on penalty for rule violation.

Alter **Rule 31.2** from

“Ball retrievers may not touch any surface, ball, or live player within the court boundaries.”

to

*“Ball retrievers may not touch any surface, ball, or **affect a live player** within the court boundaries.”*

Remove no touching rule to clarify the intention of the rule to not interfere with players.

Alter **Rule 31.4** from

“Ball retrievers may not retrieve any ball that has crossed the center line away from their team’s half of the court.

(1) *If not marked, that center line extends the full width of any area a ball may roll during play.*

(2) ***Ball retrievers may not retrieve any ball that has crossed the center line away from their team’s half of the court.”***

to

“Ball retrievers may not retrieve any ball that has crossed the center line away from their team’s half of the court.

If not marked, that center line extends the full width of any area a ball may roll during play.”

Deduplication.

Alter **Rule 31.8** from

“Ball retrievers may not make contact with an opposition retriever.”

to

*“Ball retrievers may not make contact with an opposition retriever **or match official.**”*

Clarification that retrievers must be aware of match officials and keep away from them. This is to prevent injury to match officials, as occurred during Worlds 2022.

Add **Rule 31.10**

“Ball retrievers violating rule 31.1 ff. will receive a verbal warning or retriever yellow card at the discretion of the match official.”

Clarification on penalty for rule violation.

Rule 31.10 becomes Rule 31.11

Alter **Rule 36.1** from

“In addition to any penalties stated in the rules, players may also receive a penalty following aggressive, abusive, unsporting or other unacceptable use of profanity or unsavory language at the discretion of the match officials.”

to

*“In addition to any penalties stated in the rules, players **and team officials** may also receive a penalty following aggressive, abusive, unsporting or other unacceptable use of profanity or unsavory language at the discretion of the match officials.”*

Clarification that all participants in a match are bound by the fair play rules.

Alter **Rule 36.1 (3)** from

“Taunting”

to

“Taunting, and calling opponents out”

Expansion of the fair play rules to be more specific.

Alter **Rule 36.1 (9)** from

“Kicking or spiking the ball”

to

*“**Mistreating equipment such as** kicking or spiking the ball”*

Expansion of the fair play rules to be more specific.

Add **Rule 36.1 (10)**

“Causing unreasonable delay to the match”

Expansion of the fair play rules to be more specific.

Add **Rule 36.1 (11)**

“Performing actions to gain unfair advantage”

Expansion of the fair play rules to be more specific.

Add **Rule 36.1 (12)**

“Showing poor sportsmanship”

Expansion of the fair play rules to be more specific.

Alter **Rule 40.1** from

“The head referees are the officials that stand on the referee stand positioned on the side of the court across from the team benches. There will be a maximum of 2 head referees in the game.”

to

*“The head referees are the officials **located on either side of the center line**. There will be a maximum of 2 head referees in the game.”*

Remove any references to stands, as referees are free to move around.

Alter **Rule 41.1** from

*“The line referee is the official that stands on the referee stand positioned on the outer boundaries of the court. **There will be a maximum of 4 line referees in the game.**”*

to

*“Line referees are officials **positioned around the boundaries of the court.**”*

Remove any upper limits to the number of referees, the more the better.