



Fédération Internationale de Tchoukball  
International Tchoukball Federation

# **THE OFFICIAL TCHOUKBALL RULES**

**ER-01 26.09.2009 E**

# THE RULES OF TCHOUKBALL

## Foreword

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This document defines the rules of Tchoukball applicable in all official meetings - national and international. This new version of the rules (2009) is the result of numerous FITB Technical and Refereeing Committee meetings held between 2000 and 2009. The decisions taken and some of the suggested proposals have been integrated into this updated refereeing code.

The rules have undergone several modifications since 1970, when Dr Hermann Brandt for the first time officially introduced Tchoukball. New modifications have been added in order to adapt the rules to the game as it is played nowadays, though making sure the original spirit of the game is being maintained.

## Introduction

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Tchoukball can be played on various surfaces of different sizes. The most common surfaces are synthetic floors (indoors), sand (beach Tchoukball), and grass. Nowadays, Tchoukball is being played with seven players in each team on a wooden or synthetic surface of approximately 27 m x 16 m. Beach Tchoukball is played with five players in each team on a playing area of approximately 21 m x 12 m. This document only defines the rules for the seven-a-side game.

These official rules are completed by:

- rules for juniors<sup>1</sup>
- hand signals<sup>2</sup>
- official interpretations of the rules of Tchoukball<sup>3</sup>, which contain examples and explanations on how to apply and understand the rules. These interpretations are not included in the present document in order to keep it as short as possible; however, they are an essential companion to it.
- beach Tchoukball rules<sup>4</sup>

All these documents are available on the FITB website [www.Tchoukball.org](http://www.Tchoukball.org)

Note: for sake of simplicity, the present document refers to players, officials, referees, and other persons with the masculine pronoun 'he'. However, the rules it mentions apply equally to male and female participants, except the one concerning the size of the ball (rule 3).

## Basic rules

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One rebound frame is placed at each end of the field of play. In front of each frame, a D-shaped semi-circle measuring 3 m in radius must be drawn; it defines the limits of the "forbidden zone". Depending on the category of players, the ball measures between 54 and 60 cm in circumference and weighs between 325 and 475 grams. It must never touch the ground. During the game, the ball in possession of one team may not be intercepted by the other team, so as to prevent any aggressive behavior or violent physical contact between the opponents. The control of the ball transfers to the other team after every shot at the frame or after every fault made by the opposition.

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<sup>1</sup> A-02 Recommendations for the rules of Tchoukball for juniors

<sup>2</sup> ER-02 Official Referee Hand Signal

<sup>3</sup> ER-03 Official interpretations of the rules of Tchoukball

<sup>4</sup> ER-04 Beach Tchoukball rules

In order to score a point for his team, a player shoot the ball at the frame so that it rebounds off in a way no defending player can catch it before it hits the field of play.

The team that has just conceded a point restarts the game. A maximum of three consecutive passes is allowed to put a player in a position to shoot at the frame. Defending players are not allowed to break the opponent players' game; instead they must anticipate the trajectory of the rebounding ball in order to catch it before it hits the surface of the playing field. At the end of the allotted time, the team with the most points wins the match.

Outside of competitions, it will often prove necessary to adapt the rules to the number of available players, to their skills and their physical condition, or to the size of the playing field. Such adaptations are allowed to make Tchoukball a sport accessible to all. However, any adaptation brought to the rules of the game must agree with the values of Tchoukball. Among those the respect for other players, whether belonging to the same team or to the opposite team.

**Rule 1****The Playing Area**

- 1.1. The playing area and court markings are illustrated in Figure 1. The playing area is a rectangle measuring between 26 and 29 m in length and between 15 and 17 m in width. It consists of a field of play and two forbidden zones.
- 1.2. The long sides of the playing area are referred to as the side lines, and the short sides as the back lines. The playing area is divided into two zones by a median line joining the midpoints of the side lines.
- 1.3. The forbidden zone is a semi-circle with a 3 m radius measured from the centre of each back line.
- 1.4. The rebound frame must be placed according to Figure 2.
- 1.5. The lines
  - 1.5.1. The lines must be clearly visible and have a minimum width of 5 cm.
  - 1.5.2. All lines are part of the area they delimit: the side lines and the back lines are part of the field of play, while the lines of the forbidden zones belong to the forbidden zones (Figure 1).
- 1.6. In sports halls, the ceiling is considered to be out of the playing area. Any sport device situated higher than 7 m is also considered to be out of the playing area.
- 1.7. A 1 m wide unobstructed area around the playing area is mandatory. A 2 m wide unobstructed area around the playing area is recommended.

**Rule 2****The Rebound Frame**

- 2.1. The frame and the net must meet FITB standards<sup>5</sup>.
- 2.2. The frame must be fixed during the game so that the rebound is not affected. However, it must be movable in case of an impact with a player.

**Rule 3****The Ball**

- 3.1. The ball must meet the FITB standards<sup>6</sup>.
- 3.2. In men's matches, the ball must have a circumference of 58 to 60 cm and weigh between 425 and 475 grams.
- 3.3. In women's matches, the ball must have a circumference of 54 to 56 cm and weigh between 325 and 400 grams.
- 3.4. In mixed matches, the ball must meet the standards used for women's matches.

**Rule 4****The Players**

- 4.1. Number of players
  - 4.1.1. A squad consists of up to 12 players.
  - 4.1.2. Of the 12 players, only 7 can be on the playing area at any given time - the remaining 5 act as substitutes.
  - 4.1.3. If a team has 4 or less players on the playing area, it forfeits the game with an imposed score of 0-30.

<sup>5</sup> EH-01-V2\_FITB\_Homologation\_R&R: Frames

<sup>6</sup> EH-01-V2\_FITB\_Homologation\_R&R balls

## 4.2. Substitutions

- 4.2.1. Substitutions take place in front of the official table, within 4.5 m of the median line (Figure 1), without stopping the clock. The substitute must wait for the exiting player to totally leave the field of play before crossing the side line.
- 4.2.2. Substitutions can only take place after a point has been scored and must be done before the game restarts.
- 4.2.3. The number of substitutions during a game is unlimited.
- 4.2.4. If rule 4.2.1 is broken the referee must ask the faulty team to replay the substitution. The restart is then awarded to the non-faulty team [incorrect substitution, ER-02, hand signal #1].
- 4.2.5. If rule 4.2.2 is broken, the referee must give a breakdown to the non-faulty team and cancel the substitution (ask the outgoing player to re-enter the field of play and the substitute to leave the field of play) [incorrect substitution, ER-02, hand signal #1].
- 4.2.6. If a player leaves the field of play as a result of an injury before a point is scored, his substitute can only enter the field of play after the point has been scored.

## 4.3. Equipment

- 4.3.1. Players must be dressed uniformly within a team and have a clearly visible number going from 1 to 99 displayed on their clothing.
- 4.3.2. Players must wear appropriate sport shoes without studs. On grass, sport shoes with rubber-ridged soles are authorised.
- 4.3.3. Players are not allowed to use any artificial improvement to enhance their performance (e.g.: doping substance, glues/resin, gloves, etc.). Finger tape/strapping is authorized provided it is used for medical reasons. Knee pads and elbow pads are authorised. The final decision on the recourse to artificial improvements is taken by the main referee.
- 4.3.4. It is forbidden to wear any jewellery that could cause injuries (e.g.: rings, broaches, watches, earrings, etc.). The final decision on the wearing of jewellery is taken by the main referee.

## Rule 5

## The Referees and the Official Table

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- 5.1. The official body for international matches comprises 3 referees (one main referee and two field referees, see rule 5.2), as well as 2 officials (one timekeeper and one scorekeeper, see rule 5.3) who are serving at the official table.
- 5.2. Referees
  - 5.2.1. The referees control the game according to the rules.
  - 5.2.2. The referees may take decisions not covered by the rules according to the official interpretation of the rules, to analogies with other rules, and to their own experience, provided that these decisions lead to the successful continuation of the game.
  - 5.2.3. The main referee stands along the side line near the official table. The field referees stand near the rebound frames, along the back lines.
  - 5.2.4. The main referee holds the ultimate authority over the game. He has the control on the official table and ensures that substitutions (rule 4.2), the start and restarts (rule 10.3) are made correctly. He ensures that the score sheet is correctly filled out and signed by the relevant team officials, scorekeeper and referee.
  - 5.2.5. The referees' outfits are mainly grey and clearly different from the outfits worn by both playing teams. Referees have at their disposal a whistle, a yellow card (warning), and a red card (expulsion).

### 5.3. Official table

- 5.3.1. The timekeeper starts and stops the official clock, and controls the score on the display according to referees' instructions.
- 5.3.2. The scorekeeper fills out the score sheet according to the referees' instructions. He reports the issuance of any yellow or red card as well as the names of injured players.
- 5.3.3. The officials' outfits must have a uniform colour, different from the referees' outfits.

## Rule 6

### The Duration of the Matches

- 6.1. The duration of a match is three periods of 15 minutes, with a maximum interval of 5 minutes between periods.
- 6.2. Official clock
  - 6.2.1. The official clock may not be stopped during a period.
  - 6.2.2. As an exception to rule 6.2.1, the referees may decide when to stop and restart the official clock (especially in cases of a serious injury, wet floor, a defective ball or rebound frame) [time-out, ER-02, hand signal #2].
  - 6.2.3. There is no technical time out.
- 6.3. Upon the final blast of the whistle or the sound of the siren (end of period or match), the game ends at once. At that point, any ongoing action must be declared null [end of playing period, ER-02, hand signal #3].

## Rule 7

### The Faults

- 7.1. A player commits a fault if:
  - 7.1.1. he touches the ball with a part of his body below the knee (a contact with the knee or the kneepad is allowed) [lower legs, ER-02, hand signal #4];
  - 7.1.2. he makes more than 3 contacts with his feet on the ground while holding the ball [travelling, ER-02, hand signal #5];
  - 7.1.3. he holds the ball for more than 3 seconds [more than 3 seconds, ER-02, hand signal #6];
  - 7.1.4. he makes a pass that takes the team count of successive passes over 3 (a deflection of the ball from one player to another is considered as a pass) [4 passes, ER-02, hand signal #7];
  - 7.1.5. he touches any area outside of the field of play while holding the ball, or takes his last step outside of the field of play before catching the ball [outside, ER-02, hand signal #8];
  - 7.1.6. he drops the ball during a pass;
  - 7.1.7. he obstructs, voluntarily or not, the movement of an opponent about to receive, shoot, or pass the ball, or about to position himself [obstruction, ER-02, hand signal #9];
  - 7.1.8. he touches the ball passed or shot by an opponent before the ball gets in contact with the rebound frame [obstruction, ER-02, hand signal #9];
  - 7.1.9. while being in the field of play (excluding the forbidden zone, see rule 8.2.4), he touches the ball rebounding from the frame after a team mate's shot [obstruction, ER-02, hand signal #9];
  - 7.1.10. he makes a 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive shot at the one frame on which 3 consecutive shots have already been made (a breakdown or restart returns the count of consecutive shots to zero) [4 shots, ER-02, hand signal #10];
  - 7.1.11. he steps on the line of the forbidden zone with the ball in his hands or while taking his last step before catching the ball [step on the line, ER-02, hand signal #11];
  - 7.1.12. he comes into contact with the forbidden zone before throwing the ball [landing, ER-02, hand signal #12];

7.1.13. he shoots after a restart before the ball has crossed the median line (rule 10.3) [crossing the median line, ER-02, hand signal #13].

## 7.2. Breakdowns

7.2.1. A fault is penalised by a breakdown in favour of the opposition. It is taken from the point at which the fault occurred or at the nearest place inside the field of play [breakdown, ER-02, hand signal #14].

7.2.2. The game restarts after a player has taken the ball with both hands and touched the floor with it. He must keep it in his two hands when taking it off the floor.

7.2.3. If the breakdown is not correctly done (rule 7.2.1, wrong place and/or rule 7.2.2, in a wrong way), the referee must give a new breakdown to the same team (and not to the other team) [breakdown, ER-02, hand signal #14], [breakdown to be replayed, ER-02, hand signal #15].

7.2.4. Following a breakdown, at least one pass must be made before shooting at the frame.

7.2.5. The ball should be rolled (and not thrown) to the player performing the breakdown.

## Rule 8

### The Awarding of Points

8.1. A player scores a point if the ball rebounding from the frame [point scored, ER-02, hand signal #16]:

8.1.1. touches the field of play before a defender catches it;

8.1.2. touches a defender who fails to control it so that it falls on the floor or is knocked out of the field of play;

8.1.3. touches a defender on a part of his body below the knee (rule 7.1.1);

8.1.4. touches a defender who is inside the forbidden zone or outside the field of play (rule 7.1.5), who enters the forbidden zone or leaves the field of play to catch the ball, or who runs through the forbidden zone to take a defensive position.

8.2. A player concedes a point (i.e.: a point is awarded to the defending team) if [point given, ER-02, hand signal #17]:

8.2.1. he shoots and misses the frame;

8.2.2. the ball, rebounding from the frame after he has shot, falls out of the field of play or into the forbidden zone;

8.2.3. he shoots and the ball rebounds onto him;

8.2.4. he touches the ball rebounding directly from the frame after a team mate's shot, while being in the forbidden zone or outside of the field of play;

8.2.5. he deliberately touches the ball rebounding directly from the frame after a team mate's shot, preventing it from falling out of the field or into the forbidden zone (see also rule 12.2.1).

## Rule 9

### Winner

9.1. The team that has the highest score at the end of the allotted time is the winner.

9.2. If the teams are tied after all of the allotted time and if the match cannot end with a draw, an extra time period of 5 minutes must be played. In case of another draw at the end of the extra time period, a second extra time period of 5 minutes must be played, and so on until there is a winner at the end of a period.

**Rule 10****Starting and Restarting the Game**

- 10.1. The start and the restarts take place behind the back line and beside either side of the frame; in the case of a restart, it takes place beside the frame on which the last point was scored. The player starting or restarting the game will throw the ball from a position fully outside of the field of play.
- 10.2. A start is given at the beginning of the match. The team that gets the ball is chosen by the toss of a coin. As for a restart, it is given in the following situations:
  - 10.2.1. At the start of the second period. The team that did not get the start gets this restart.
  - 10.2.2. At the beginning of the third period. The team with the lowest score gets this restart. In the event of a tied score, the team which started the match gets this restart.
  - 10.2.3. At the beginning of an extra-time period. The team that did not restart the previous period gets this restart.
  - 10.2.4. After a point. The team that has conceded a point restarts the game.
  - 10.2.5. If rule 10.1 is broken. The opposite team is awarded this restart [crossing the back line, ER-02, hand signal #18].
- 10.3. Crossing the median line
  - 10.3.1. Following a start or a restart, the first shot may be made on either frame provided the ball has crossed the median line.
  - 10.3.2. The ball is considered to have crossed the median line if no part of the body touches the half of the field of play from where the ball was thrown.
  - 10.3.3. One or more passes are allowed before the ball crosses the median line.
  - 10.3.4. If rule 10.3.1 is broken, the opposite team is awarded a breakdown at the location at which the faulty shot was made [shot at the frame before ball crosses median line, ER-02, hand signal # 13]
- 10.4. The start and restart (also called "pass zero") do not count as a pass. All passes thereafter are counted in line with rule 7.1.4.

**Rule 11****Faulty Rebound**

- 11.1. A faulty rebound occurs when:
  - 11.1.1. the ball touches the metal edge of the rebound frame;
  - 11.1.2. the rebounding ball does not follow the expected mirror angle trajectory as a result of hitting the frame's bungee cords, hooks, or rings.
- 11.2. If a defending team successfully catches the ball after a faulty rebound, the game may continue. However, if the defending team fails to control the ball or has difficulties in catching it, the referee stops the game and the defending team is given a breakdown at the place where the ball fell or where it was when the game was stopped [faulty rebound, ER-02, hand signal #19].
- 11.3. Rules 8.2.2 to 8.2.5 remain in effect even after a faulty rebound.

**Rule 12****Spirit of the Game**

- 12.1. Every player, referee, coach, and official must respect the spirit of the game defined in the Tchoukball Charter<sup>7</sup> and demonstrate a respectful behaviour.

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<sup>7</sup> ER-00 Tchoukball Charter

## 12.2. Disrespectful behaviour

- 12.2.1. Disrespectful behaviour of any player, coach, or official towards an opponent (player, coach, official), a referee, a spectator, or a team mate must be sanctioned. Disrespectful behaviour comprises rudeness, intentional wasting of time, contesting the referees' decisions, intentional fouls, or any behaviour altering the spirit of the game.
- 12.2.2. As means to achieve this goal, according to the severity or recurrence of the disrespectful behaviour or act, the referee may use:
- 12.2.3. an oral warning,
- 12.2.4. an oral warning and give a breakdown for the other team [serious or intentional fault, ER-02, hand signal #23],
- 12.2.5. a yellow card and give a breakdown for the other team [warning, ER-02, hand signal #20],
- 12.2.6. a red card and give a breakdown for the other team [expulsion, ER-02, hand signal #21].

## 12.3. Oral warnings, yellow and red cards

- 12.3.1. Sanctions (rule 12.2.2) should be used in the same order as they are stated, namely from a) to d). However, if the offence is serious, the referee may use a sanction of a higher and more appropriate severity right away.
- 12.3.2. Oral warnings (sanctions a) and b)) may be given directly to the players, or indirectly by summoning the captain(s) [summoning the captains, ER-02, hand signal #22].
- 12.3.3. Twoyellow cards given to the same person during a match automatically lead to an immediate expulsion (red card).
- 12.3.4. An expelled player may be replaced, but only after a point has been scored. An expelled player/coach/official must immediately leave the field or the bench, as well as all the area around the field, and may not play any further part in the match.
- 12.3.5. Warnings (yellow cards) and expulsions (red cards) must be noted on the score sheet.

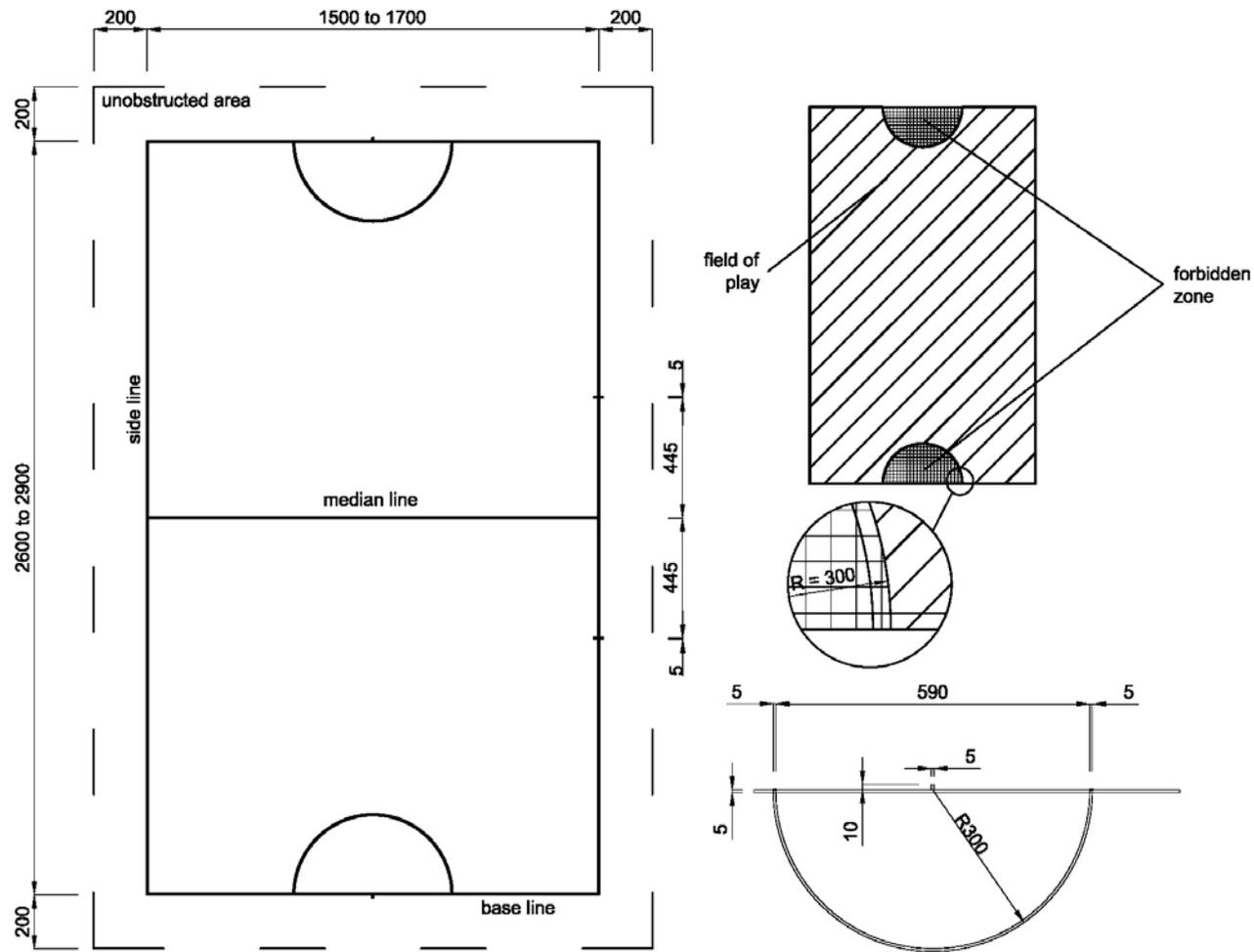


Figure 1 – Playing area and unobstructed area [cm] (diagonal lines = field of play; squares = forbidden zones; diagonal lines + squares = playing area).

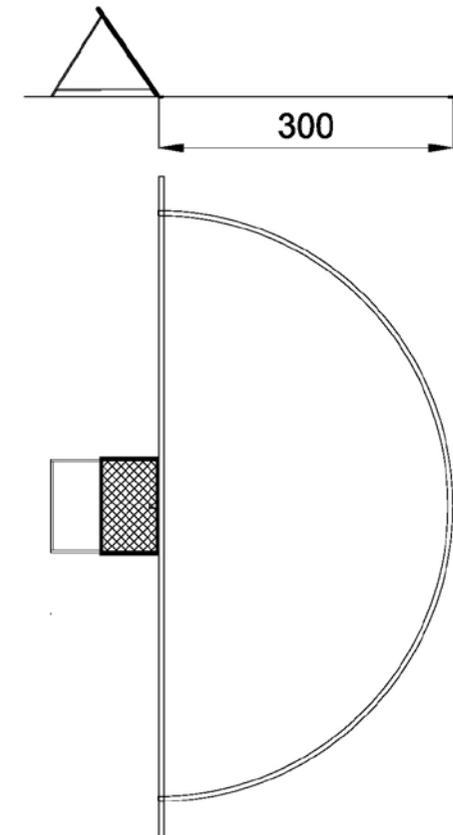


Figure 2 – Position of the rebound frame: the back line must be fully visible from above, the frame stands behind the back line.