

# OFFICIAL RULES OF THE ARIZONA FOOSBALL LEAGUE

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# SECTION 1 MATCH PLAY AND SCORING

## 1.1 PREPARATION

**1) Bring necessary match documents.** The team captain of *each* team is responsible for producing the appropriate score sheet(s) for each match. This may be foregone if the captains make an explicit arrangement for someone to deliver the proper sheet to the match. Note that if your opponent has not officially declared their lineup and number of players to be fielded, you should bring *all score sheets supporting your desired lineup* for each match in order to facilitate the chosen lineup of your opponent. (E.g., if you plan on fielding 4 players in the match, you should bring both a 4 vs 4 sheet AND a 4 vs 3 sheet for the relevant home/visitor positions.) Failure to bring the proper score sheet may result in a penalty (see "Penalties" below).

**2) Table selection.** The home team reserves the right to select the match table and initial table side.

**3) Set up score sheet.** The home team reserves the right to fill in their section of the score sheet *after* the visiting team.

## 1.2 SCORE SHEET SET-UP

**1) Set your lineup.** At the top of the score sheet, assign each of your players into the numbered slots in the order of your choice. Be sure to take care when assigning your lineup, as this will dictate the game types and match ups for each of your team's players! Also, fill in each player's current rating in the box labeled "Rtg".

### SET-UP PROTOCOL:

Three things must be established *IN ORDER* when setting score sheet lineups...

1. The number of players to be fielded for each team (visitor assigns first).
2. The score sheet type and version (home team selects when available).
3. The order of the players in the lineup (visitor assigns first).

**2) Fill in player names for each game** in the live rounds of play. Use the lineup ID's to guide you in filling in your teammates' starting assignments for each game.

**3) Fill in player/team ratings for each game.** This is simply the rating (or average rating) of each team member in a given game. There may occasionally be rating adjustments or penalties applicable (see 7.4 "Notes on Player Ratings" for more).

**4) Set "point spots".** Once both teams have completed steps 1-3, point spots can be assigned for each game. The lower rated team shall receive a point spot equal to the rating difference between the two teams, rounded to the *nearest* full point. In the case of split (a half point difference), a point spot is NOT awarded.

### Notes on calculating point spots

1. A team's rating for a game is calculated as the *average rating* of its participating players.
2. Maximum point spot is 4 for all games except those denoted with a red exclamation to indicate a max spot of 3.
3. Point spots are to be scored at the table before the start of each game.

## SET UP YOUR SCORE SHEET FASTER ONLINE!

You can set up your score sheet using the online tools at [www.arizonafoosball.com](http://www.arizonafoosball.com)! Simply open the match page via the schedule or your team's home page, and you will be able to quickly set up your score sheet and then print it out for the match! (Make sure to coordinate with the opposing team captain if you want to be able to print out the complete score sheet with both sides filled out.)

### **1.3 PLAYING & SCORING THE MATCH**

Each match is composed of several rounds of games, with each round representing a different type of game (see "*Game Types and Rules*"). **The winner of the match is the team that wins the most rounds.**

#### Game scoring format

All league games are played as a simple race-to-7 points, with teams alternating serve upon each point scored.

The only deviation from standard scoring applies in **games featuring a 4-point spot**. When a team or player has to spot 4 points, that team is entitled to one "make it, take it" serve. This means that after the spotting team scores its first point, they maintain possession at the start of the next point. Note that this is only permitted after their **first** goal! (If a team fails to take possession before the start of the next point, the privilege is forfeited.)

#### Marking results on score sheet

After completing each game, record the final score and then mark the winner of the game in the "W/L/T" column. After completing all games in a round, add the number of wins together for each team to determine the winner of the round, and enter a W, L, or T (win, loss, or tie) for each team in the round totals box.

Note that a "Point Champion" round is simply a points total of the entire match; the winner of this round is the team that has scored the most total points in all rounds.

Upon completing all rounds, enter your team's total round score in the "Rounds W/L/T" boxes at the top of the score sheet for your final match score, and circle the winning team.

#### Game play order & time limits

It is recommended to play games in the order they appear on the match score sheet. However, games and rounds may be played out of order if both teams agree, *with the exception of the final round of live games - which MUST be played last*. (This is to deter "sandbagging" of rating points by teams who have already locked a victory. See "*Miscellaneous --> Notes on Player Ratings*".) New games should begin within three minutes from the completion of the last game, unless all players in the match agree to a break.

#### Note on "early decisions"

Occasionally, a match may be decided before the last several games are played. In this case, the match can be terminated **if all players agree to do so**. (Some players may be in the running for individual prize categories, e.g., and may wish to play on.) When electing for this option, simply cross out unplayed games on the score sheet to ensure that they will not be included in league statistics or player ratings.

### **1.4 TIEBREAKER/OVERTIME**

In the event of a tie in the final match score, the match will enter "overtime", and will be decided by one final game, played in the "win-by-2" format (see *game scoring formats* in section 1.3). Game selection will be determined as follows:

1. One team will select the game type.

2. The other team then selects the participating players for *both* teams. (Note that this applies to the selection of players only – not their positions or rotation order.)

The options must be exercised in order, and the home team reserves the right to choose which option it wishes to exercise.

In the case that a match is tied and teams fail to play an overtime game, the following tie breakers, in order, will be used to decide the winner.

1. Point champion.
2. Winner of the "doubles" round.
3. Team with least number of substitutes.
4. Home team.

### **1.5 FINISHING UP**

At the end of the match, each team captain should check the score sheets to make sure the rounds and match totals were scored correctly, and sign the bottom of the sheet. Also, if players voted for the MVP of the match (in the "★" column in the lineup section!) captains should also sign there. The captain of the *winning team* is responsible for delivering the score sheet to a league coordinator (via text message, fax, email, etc.).

#### Note on MVP voting

If players voted for a game MVP and two or more players are tied in votes, the captain of the winning team shall decide the MVP.

### **1.6 PENALTIES**

#### FAILURE TO BRING MATCH MATERIALS

Each team captain is required to bring the appropriate match score sheet(s) to the match. If a team fails to do so, *they must spot one additional point to the opponent in the first game that their team captain plays* (it is the captain's task, after all!).

#### LATENESS

Players who are late for a match are subject to the following penalties, at the discretion of the opposing team:

- **At 20 minutes past scheduled match start time** all players who are not physically on location for the match will be penalized a timeout in every game they participate in during the match. Note that this is not cumulative – no team will suffer more than the loss of one timeout for any game regardless of how many members are late.
- **At 30 minutes past scheduled match start time** and every 10 minutes afterward, one game shall be forfeited by each missing player. The forfeiting team may select which game(s) are forfeited. If no representative from the forfeiting team is present, the forfeited game(s) will be selected by opponent.
- **At one hour past scheduled match start time**, ALL remaining games of the missing player(s) shall be forfeited.
- **De-merits** can be assigned for lateness by checking the appropriate spot on the score sheet.

#### NO-SHOW

Any league player that is scheduled to play a given match and does not show up (or secure a substitute) and neglects to inform his/her teammates at least one hour prior to the match that he/she will not be able to attend, will be suspended from the league for a length of time determined by a league coordinator. The player will not be refunded league fees, and will forfeit any league prize money he/she may have already or potentially secured. (Although it is expected that occasionally players will be unable

to attend a given match, there are many options to handle this situation with due respect to both the affected players and to the league in general, the least of which is to simply notify those involved.)

#### ILLEGITIMATE PLAYERS

Players who play in a match illegitimately (e.g., replacing a player who has already started a match, an illegal substitute, banned player) will have all games played scored as forfeits to the opposing team. This may result in a change in the outcome of the match.

#### ILLEGITIMATE VENUES

Matches must be played at designated venues per the league schedule. This is critical to the success and reputation of the league and agreements made with league sponsors. Under unusual circumstances, a match may be moved with consent of a league coordinator. Matches played in violation of this rule will be nullified (see "*Miscellaneous --> Unplayed Matches*"), and violating players may be subject to fine or suspension.

#### STEALING AND SABOTAGING LEAGUE OR VENUES

Players who are caught stealing from or sabotaging the players, venues, or their property either directly or indirectly (this includes placing tables on "free play") will be suspended from league play, and potentially banned from the venue of the offense.

### **1.7 LOST SCORE SHEETS**

In the case of a lost score sheet, it will be up to the two team captains to re-assemble the score sheet to the best of their recollection. Games whose results are known, but whose score cannot be accurately recalled should be scored as 7-6. If agreement cannot be reached by both captains on a game, it will be a scratch or a mutual forfeit (scored as "F" in both players' result column). If the overall result of the match is in dispute between the captains, resolution shall be deferred to the league coordinator (who may either select a winner, offer a "playoff" game, or choose another solution at his/her discretion). Note that the league coordinator may also amend or overrule any decisions made by team captains in this case.

### **1.8 ERRORS ON SCORE SHEETS**

Obvious errors on score sheets will be corrected by the league coordinator when possible and prudent. This includes errors that may change the outcome of a match. If parts of a score sheet are unclear, the league coordinator will first attempt to resolve issues by contacting the participating team captains. If the captains do not agree on a resolution or they cannot be reached, the decision will be deferred to the coordinator. Note that errors effecting the logical flow of the match or season, or cases where the score sheet indicates that the teams agreed on the issues in question (by circling the winning team and signing the sheet, e.g.), will likely be ruled as stands.

Players whose ratings are marked incorrectly on a match score sheet may not be eligible for a rating reduction for that week (see "*Miscellaneous --> Notes on Player Ratings*").

## **SECTION 2 GAME TYPES AND RULES**

Various types of games are sanctioned for play in Arizona Foosball League matches. Standard ITSF rules apply in all games, except for the editions and exceptions listed herein.

### **2.1 GENERAL RULES OF PLAY**

- **SCORING:** Standard games are played as a simple race to 7 points. (See section 1.3 for special notes or exceptions.)
- **SIDE SELECTION & FIRST SERVE:** First choice of table side goes to the home team. Sides

may be switched each round if either team desires. The first serve of any league game goes to the team or player that is spotting points. If there is no point spot for a game, then the first serve belongs to the home team.

- **PLAYER POSITIONS:** For standard doubles games, the player with the lowest lineup ID must start in the forward position. Once the game has commenced, players may change positions as per normal rules of the game. In roto-style games, each team may set any player rotation they wish, but the rotation order must remain the same throughout the game.
- **TIME OUTS:** 2 per team per game.

## 2.2 GAME-SPECIFIC RULES

### 2.2.1 DOUBLES & SINGLES

Standard ITSF rules.

### 2.2.2 TEAM ROTO

Teams play standard rules and rotate positions after scoring a goal.

- In triples play (3 vs. 3), one player must be assigned to both forward rods. (Note that this does not apply to 3 on 3 *Rollerball!*)
- After a team scores a point it must rotate players from back to front, with the forward-most player either leaving the table (in singles and doubles), or moving to the rear position (in triples).
- Players may not change positions during the match (except after scoring, as indicated).

### 2.2.3 GOALIE WAR

Players lift up the forward rods and battle it out from the goal. Standard ITSF rules apply, with the following notes/exceptions:

**Serve:** Players serve per standard rules directly to their goalie position.

**Ball Possession:** Once a ball leaves a player's goalie area, it is considered to be in the possession of the opposing player until it enters and leaves his/her goalie area. A ball that stops between the two goalies shall be re-served by the player ruled in possession.

**Neutral men:** All unused player figures are considered neutral; a ball that strikes these figures is a live ball.

**Time limits:** 10 seconds.

### 2.2.4 FORWARD SHOOT OUT

Players take turns serving the ball to their forward 3-man and shooting for goal. For the purpose of FSO rules, the "field of play" is defined as the entire playing field forward of the area of control of the forward's 3-bar.

**Serve:** Players serve per standard rules directly to their forward position. The serve alternates between players for the entire match.

**Shooting:** A shot on goal commences when the ball leaves the forward's 3-man. A shot is complete after the ball is stopped and controlled by the opposing goalie, passes out of the field of play, or goes dead anywhere in the FSO field of play. (Note that a shot ball that escapes the goalie and returns to the shooter without leaving the field of play is still a live ball; the shot timer is reset and the player's turn continues.)

### 2.2.5 5-BAR WAR

Passing competition between opposing forwards. Each player controls the 5-bar and forward 3-bar, and points are scored by catching (and stopping) the ball on one's own 3-bar. Standard ITSF rules apply, with the following notes/exceptions:

**Scoring Option:** If a player catches and stops the ball on his/her 3-bar and his/her opponent currently has 6 points, he/she may elect to either score a point or deduct a point from his/her opponent's score.

**Possession:** The game is considered live as long as the ball is in the zone between the opposing 3-bars. A ball that leaves this zone and escapes a player's 3-bar is considered to be captured by the opponent's goalie, and is then re-served at the opponent's 5-bar.

### 2.2.6 ROLLERBALL

Ball(s) may not be stopped during play.

**Stopped ball violation:** If a ball comes to a stop for one second or longer while within reach of a player, the following protocols may be used to render a violation:

- If a single ball is in play and within a player's reach, a violation may be immediately called by the opponent.
- If multiple balls are in play, opposing players must advise the offender to move the stopped ball. The player then has two seconds to either move the stopped ball or demonstrate that he/she cannot reach it.

Upon a violation, all balls are re-served by the opposing team.

**Pinned balls:** A pinned ball is considered stopped. *Consecutive pins by the same player figure shall be considered a single pin*, and are subject to the stopped ball violation (i.e., players cannot move the ball around by tapping it with a single player figure for a second or more).

There are two basic rollerball game types, each with distinct rule sets, as follows:

#### 2.2.6.1 1 Ball Rollerball

All standard ITSF rules apply, with the inclusion of the *stopped & pinned ball* rules defined in section 2.2.6 above. Timeout can be called (as long as player can demonstrate control by stopping the ball either before or immediately after calling the timeout).

#### 2.2.6.2 2 Ball Rollerball

Free-for-all excitement with "old school" foosball rules!

- There are no rules regulating which rods must be used by a team's players. However, each participant must be in sole control of at least one rod.
- Distractions, talking during play, and incidental spinning of rods are legal.
- A shot that goes "in and out" of goal *does not count*, and play continues.
- 10 second time limit per rod (or goalie area).
- Timeouts cannot be called during play.

**Serve:** Each team serves a ball via the serving hole on the count of 3. Both balls must hit the table within one second of the count.

**Scoring:** Once a team has scored the first ball and has gained possession of the remaining ball, it has the option of stopping the ball (while demonstrating control) and recording a single point. A team that scores both goals gets two points. If each team scores a goal, it is a scratch and neither team receives a point. In each case, balls are then re-served.

**Ball off table:** When a ball leaves the table, play is stopped and unscored balls are re-served (if one ball has been scored, the remaining ball is re-served by the team that was scored upon).

**Dead ball:** A ball is deemed "dead" if no player figure is able to reach it. If another ball is still "live", play continues. Otherwise, unscored balls are re-served.

## SECTION 3 SUBSTITUTE PLAYERS

Substitute players are welcome to play in league matches under the following rules:

- *No more than two substitutes can be used by any team in a match, and at least one official team member or reserve must be fielded.* Violation will be scored as a forfeit.
- In the case where more than one substitute is used by the same team, a 1 point rating penalty will be levied against each substitute.
- If using an unregistered player (one who has no established league rating), a league coordinator should be contacted in order to have a rating assigned. If a coordinator is not available, players from both teams should assign an initial rating via a brief scrimmage with the new player.
- Players may not be replaced or substituted once a match is under way. If a player leaves before the match is finished, the remainder of his/her games (including team games in which he is scheduled to play) will be scored as forfeits.

### 3.1 SUBSTITUTES FOR REGULAR SEASON MATCHES

Any player (including players not currently registered in the league) can freely substitute for an absent team player in any match played before the last two weeks of the regular season. Substitutes used in a match that includes one or more teams that have reached the penultimate match of their regular season schedule are subject to the provisions listed in the section "Substitutes for Playoff Matches".

### 3.2 SUBSTITUTES FOR PLAYOFF MATCHES

Any match that contains one or more teams that have reached the penultimate match of the regular season will be subject to "playoff" rules. Substitute players may be used in playoff matches under the following terms and restrictions (note that stipulations for substitutes do not apply to reserve players playing for their own team). *Violation will be scored as a forfeit.*

- No more than 1 substitute per team allowed in a playoff match.
- The substitute's rating cannot exceed the rating of the player he/she is replacing by more than 1 point, OR 4.0, whichever is higher.
- The substitute must be an established and active league player (having played in the current season). If the player was previously a member of a different team for three or more matches, he/she will be considered an active "team member" for the purpose of determining eligibility to substitute in playoff matches (and subject to the requirements for using team players as substitutes in playoff matches detailed below). Substitutes incur a rating penalty for a playoff match depending upon their activity during the regular season (see chart.).

# Matches Played	Rating Penalty in Playoff Season
2 or more	1 point
1	1.5 points
0	Ineligible

- Team players and reserves may act as substitutes for different teams in playoff matches per the provisions listed in section 3.3 (Using a Team Player as a Substitute) AND with the following exceptions:
  1. Player cannot be registered as a teammate or reserve in the same conference as EITHER team in the playoff match.
  2. Teammates & reserves cannot substitute in a league finals match.

### 3.3 USING A TEAM PLAYER AS A SUBSTITUTE

A player that belongs to a team will be allowed to substitute for another team per the following

rules/stipulations:

- If the player's true team is in the same conference as EITHER team in the match, he/she will incur a 1 point rating penalty. (I.e., no rating penalty for a cross-conference substitution.)
- The player's official rating will not be affected by the match results.
- The player will be classified as a "substitute" for the match (results will not count toward individual statistics [except those that apply to substitutes]).
- Two or more players from the same team cannot act as substitutes in the same match.
- A player cannot play against his/her own team.

## SECTION 4 RESERVE PLAYERS

Some leagues may offer the option of allocating one or more "reserve" players for their team for a small fee. A reserve player is a special substitute player that has agreed to grant certain rights to a particular team. He/she has all the rights of a normal substitute, with the exception of the additional rights and limitations outlined below:

- The team reserves exclusive rights to that player as a substitute as long as such action is declared at least 48 hours before the start of the match in question.
- The player may be freely inserted into the team at any time during the season *including the final two weeks of the season and playoffs*, with full team member privileges (i.e., without a rating penalty and without being counted as a "substitute"). Note that to avoid playoff rating penalties, a reserve must have played a minimum of 3 matches with the team preceding the start of the team's ratings lock date. Refer to the following chart:

# Rated Matches Played w/Team	Rating Penalty in Playoff Season
3 or more	None
2	0.5 point
1 or less	1 point

- The player may not be used as a substitute against the team who has him/her designated as a reserve.
- The player is subject to special restrictions regarding his/her eligibility to join a different team at any point in the season, as outlined in the section *Changing Team Members*.
- A reserve player is not eligible for team awards. (However, a reserve player that becomes an official team member per the rules under *Changing Team Members* is retroactively eligible for team awards.)

Reserve players are subject to special rating adjustments (see "*Miscellaneous --> Notes on Player Ratings*".)

In the event that a reserve player *joins a team* under the conditions outlined in *Changing Team Members*, the replaced team member may be reclassified as a reserve player for the team without any additional fee.

A reserve player may be acquired at any time preceding the penultimate game of the regular season. Note that the cost of a reserve player may rise as a season progresses.

In short, a reserve player is essentially a glorified substitute – a player with all the perks of a substitute

but also with some benefits of a team member. It offers some of the benefits of a fully matriculated team player, while allowing the reserve player the freedom to freely substitute for other teams without a penalty, while preserving his/her eligibility for awards that are available to normal substitutes.

## **SECTION 5 PLAYOFFS**

### **5.1 TEAM PLAYOFFS**

Teams compete for playoff spots in each conference, and then face off in the postseason to determine the overall league champion via a series of elimination matches.

#### **5.1.1 QUALIFICATION FORMAT**

In a typical season, the top X teams in each conference earn a playoff berth. In some formats one or more "wildcard" teams may also qualify. Teams with the best records will gain byes and other advantages. Specifics for each season's playoffs shall be configured by the coordinator. Sample formats are provided below.

##### **2-CONFERENCE SAMPLE FORMAT #1 (5-8 teams per conference)**

The top three teams from each conference gain entry to the playoffs (division winner, wildcards 1 & 2). The division champion will earn a first round playoff bye, while the "wildcard" runner-ups must face off in round 1 to decide who meets the division champion in the Conference Championship Match.

##### **2-CONFERENCE SAMPLE FORMAT #2 (9-12 teams per conference)**

The top four teams from each conference gain entry to the playoffs (division winner, wildcards 1, 2, & 3). The only difference between this format and the sample for 5-8 teams is the addition of an early round "preliminary" wildcard match between the two lowest ranked playoff teams (wildcards 2 & 3). After completion of this match, there will be a division winner and two wildcard teams remaining, and the format will then revert to the outline for 5-8 teams above.

##### **3-CONFERENCE SAMPLE FORMAT (5-6 teams per conference)**

The top two teams from each conference gain entry to the playoffs, plus one wildcard team (see 5.1.2 for tie-breakers). The best team overall earns a first round bye. Matches are set as "top vs. bottom"; e.g.: #2 vs. #7, #3 vs #6, etc.. (Note that division winners always "outrank" wildcard teams.)

The top two teams emerging from the Conference Championships will meet in the League Championship Match (*Foos Bowl*) to determine the overall league champion.

#### **5.1.2 CONFERENCE TIE-BREAKERS**

- Head-to-head record \*
- Conference record ¶
- "Rounds won" pct † (ties count as ½ a win)
- Points for/against ratio †
- Strength of opponents (win pct.)
- Strength of common opponents (win pct.)
- Team beer chug

\* HTH record applies to teams within any set of two or more teams with the same overall record and a minimum of one match played within the set.

¶ Not applicable for multi-conference assessments (e.g., wildcard slot, "best team" in 3-conference sample above).

† Excludes forfeits

### **5.1.3 MATCH FORMATS**

All regular league rules apply, with the following exceptions and provisions:

- Special rules for substitutes (see playoff notes under "Substitute Players" section).
- *CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH ONLY:* Since the championship event is played in a neutral location and there is no official "home team", the following amendments apply to the standard home field match privileges:
- *Table choice:* The teams in the league championship main event shall have choice of table from all available.
- *Ball possession for games with no point spot:* The initial drop in games without a point spot shall rotate for all such games, in order from top to bottom on the score sheet.

#### Home Field Privileges

The "home field" privileges for a championship match are listed below:

- *Table choice*
- *Right to set lineup after or before opponent ("Home" or "Visitor" on score sheet, respectively)*
- *Initial table side*
- *Initial possession in first game with no spot*

#### Selection Protocol

Before the start of the match, privileges shall be awarded via the following protocol:

- Table choice will be addressed first, and uniquely. If both teams agree on the choice of table, it will be removed from the list.
- All remaining privileges will be awarded on an alternating basis, with the first choice being determined by a coin toss. (Note that a team may select *any of the available privileges* upon their turn.)

In the event of an overtime match, the right to select the game type shall be determined by coin toss.

## **5.2 INDIVIDUAL PLAYOFFS**

Individual player statistics are kept for a variety of categories. At season's end, the top two players from the conference playoffs square off to determine the overall league champion of each category.

### **5.2.1 QUALIFICATION FORMAT**

#### General qualifier rules

- The total number of games needed to qualify for an individual conference title will be set at the beginning of each season.
- Players from the same team may not compete head-to-head in individual playoffs. Therefore, all individual playoff contenders must be members of different teams.
- Specifics declared on a per league basis.

#### Rules for 2-conference leagues

The top two teams of each conference will qualify for the conference playoffs (see 5.2.2 for tie-breakers).

**In the event that one or more candidates are unable to compete in a match...**

- *For conference championships:* No replacements or substitutions in this series. The first runner-up shall be awarded the conference title and will receive no penalty in the league championship match .
- *For league championships:* The conference shall replace the absent representative with a runner-up in the given category (awarded to the highest runner-up available to play). However, the replacement player will incur a 1 point rating penalty in the series (*unless the player's win/loss percentage exceeds that of the opposing finalist, or the opposing finalist is also a replacement* ).

#### Rules for 3-conference leagues

The winner of each conference plus one wildcard will qualify for the semifinals (see 5.2.2 for tie-breakers).

#### **In the event that one or more candidates are unable to compete in a match...**

- *For semifinals:* No replacements or substitutions in this series, and the highest remaining player that is available to play the final automatically qualifies (note that this CAN include either of the semifinalists) and will receive no penalty in the league championship match.
- *For league championships:* Absent players will be replaced by the highest remaining player. However, the replacement player will incur a 1 point rating penalty in the series (*unless the player's win/loss percentage exceeds that of the opposing finalist, or the opposing finalist is also a replacement*).

### **5.2.2 CONFERENCE TIE-BREAKERS**

For ties among qualifying players in any category, the following tie breakers apply (against games within the same category). If two or more players remain tied after players are eliminated during any step, tie breaker reverts to step 1.

- Most games played.
- Head-to-head record. (Note that a player may not be disqualified by this method if he/she hasn't played any HTH games.)
- For TWO-WAY TIE (for first place only, when regular conference playoffs are not supported and when players are not on the same team):

Head-to-head 1 game playoff match. (See "5.2.3 Match Formats" for format.) Note that the loser of this match retains #2 spot for purposes of replacements in league title match.

- Points for/against ratio.
- Strength of opponents played (winning percentage).
- If players are ON THE SAME TEAM: the player with least number of alternative conference titles in current season will advance. If still tied, coin toss will decide.

### **5.2.3 MATCH FORMATS**

#### *Conference playoff matches:*

#### VENUE & DATE

Matches will initially be scheduled to be played at the corresponding team conference championship venue and date. However, matches may be played at any *active league location* preceding the league championship if both participants prefer (*the higher seed can choose the venue*). Note that the location and time must be approved by a coordinator and scheduled at least 2 days prior to playing.

#### MATCH/SERIES FORMAT

Below are typical match formats for different league setups. Active format may vary depending on your league preferences.

### **2-conference leagues:**

The #1 seed only needs to win a single game to earn the conference title. The #2 seed must win 2 consecutive games to unseat the leader and earn the conference title.

### **3+ conference leagues:**

Constestants will be paired via the conventional "top vs. bottom" structure. (Note that conference winners always "outrank" wildcard entries.) Each match will be played as a "best-of-3" series.

### MISCELLANEOUS

Game selection and substitutions follow the rules outlined in the next section for "league championship matches".

### *League championship matches:*

Individual title matches are normally scheduled as a best-of-3 series of the appropriate game type(s), although this may vary per season depending upon the playoff configuration selected by coordinator. All regular league rules apply, with the "home team" privileges assigned as follows:

- Player with better record in the title category.
- If players have equivalent records, the "home team" advantage will rotate each game, with the first game decided by a coin toss.

Substitutes may be allowed per rules specified for each title category, according to the terms outlined in the table below.

## **TERMS FOR SUBSTITUTES**

### ELIGIBILITY

Substitute must be an established and current league player (having played at least three matches in the current season), and cannot belong to a team in the opponent's conference.

### SELECTION PROTOCOL

A player may freely select a substitute from a pool of eligible players who have declared themselves available *only if his/her opponent grants this option*. Similarly, the same substitute player may be used more than once only if opponent grants the option.

If manual selection is not agreed, substitutes will be selected at random for each game from a pool of eligible players who have declared themselves available. The same substitute may be selected more than twice in this protocol only if there are no remaining unused players in the available pool.

### RATING PENALTIES

No penalty is incurred for the first use of a substitute player in the match. Afterward, there is a 1 point rating penalty for each use of a substitute.

Following are details for the title match of each category.

**LEAGUE STUD TITLE MATCH** – Each player takes turns selecting the game type, with the player possessing home field advantage having the first pick. Any current league game type may be selected, with the following conditions:

- Any multi-player game must be played with each player's currently registered team or reserve members (*ex-teammates and substitutes are not allowed*), and each player *must have at least one* teammate or reserve on hand. Failure to have a teammate or reserve available to play will result in the forfeit of one game (unless, of course, both players do not have any available – in which case all three games will be 1 on 1).
- Each player may select a particular game type only once (he/she may select a game type already selected by his/her opponent).
- If the series reaches a 3rd and deciding game, that game must be a 1-on-1 (heads-up) game.

**DOUBLES TITLE MATCH** – Each player must assign his/her full lineup for all games before starting the match ("visitor" selects first). Each player must also rotate his/her starting position in each doubles game. Players may freely play with teammates from the current season without restriction or penalty. Substitutes are allowed according to "Terms for Substitutes" table.

**ROLLERBALL TITLE MATCH** – Each player takes turns selecting a game type from those available in the current season, with the player possessing home field advantage having the first pick. Substitutes are allowed according to "Terms for Substitutes" table.

**GOALIE WAR, FORWARD SHOOTOUT, 5 BAR WAR, SINGLES TITLE MATCHES** – No special rules.

## SECTION 6 INTERIM LEAGUE EVENTS

The *Interim League* consists of informal league events intended to provide continuity between official seasons, as well as foster player communication, camaraderie, and introduction of new players.

Interim league play is open to all players. New players (without an established league rating) will be assigned an initial rating by the coordinator. A small entry fee may be charged on site, and prize money is usually awarded from the player entry fees and sponsor contributions.

### 6.1 AWARDS

Typically, additional prizes will be awarded at the end of the interim league period. E.g.:

- **League Medal** to the player with the best overall winning percentage
- **Free entry to next league season** to player with best winning percentage & rating < 4.0
- **Free entry to next league season** to player with best winning percentage & rating >= 4.0
- **50% off league entry fee** to player with most interim events played

#### Notes on qualifiers & tie-breakers

- Winners must have played in at least 33% of the scheduled interim events.
- Tie-breakers, in order: win pct., most events played, lower league rating, split

#### Notes on ratings

League player ratings may adjust slightly for performance in interim league events. Coordinator may arbitrarily assign/adjust ratings for new players per judgment.

Various event types may be offered at an interim league event. All standard league rules apply, with the given exceptions and provisions described hereafter.

## 6.2 HANDICAPPED TOURNAMENT

This is a hybrid league/tournament event, featuring league-style games in a tournament format (double elimination or round robin, "monster", e.g.), with all matches using the current league rules and handicapping system.

### Specifications

- Matches are handicapped via normal league rules.
- Games are usually played to 7 points in a best-of-3 format, however this may be modified for time considerations.
- If there is a point spot in the match, that team will get first possession of the ball, and a coin is tossed for choice of table sides.
- If there is no point spot in the match, a coin is tossed per standard ITSF rules: the winner may choose to take either first possession of the ball, or first choice of table sides.

## 6.3 1 ON 1 BATTLE

Before each match, a coin is tossed and the winner selects a 1-on-1 league event.

## 6.4 SHUFFLE MATCH

This is a standard league match where teams are generated at random from those participating.

## 6.5 MATCH TIME CONSIDERATIONS

In the spirit of traditional league play (where players typically play on weekdays and match times are kept within reasonable limits to facilitate a standard work & family schedule), the interim league tournament director may impose several provisions in the tournament in order to ensure its prudent operation. Among them:

- Matches that do not require a handicap (no points spotted) will be played as standard best of three "game-to-5".
- If attendance is high, some matches (usually only those played on the losers' side of a double elimination bracket) will consist of one game played to 10 points. (The coordinator will scale/interpolate the handicaps for these matches to fit the longer game format.)

# SECTION 7 MISCELLANEOUS

## 7.1 MEMBERSHIP FEES

League fees apply to team members or reserve slots only (substitutes do not owe any league fee) and should be paid in advance of the season. Payment arrangements may be available through a league coordinator. The following schedules will be in effect in regards to payment or non-payment of league fees:

### FEE SCHEDULE FOR TEAM MEMBERS

Pre-season	10% discount if fee paid in full before season begins.
Week 1	Full rate is in effect.
Week 2-3	Unpaid fees highlighted on public league sign-up sheet.
Week 4	1 point rating penalty levied upon players with unpaid fees, and offending players' ratings will be locked in the downward direction (i.e., his/her rating may rise based on performance, but will not fall). Penalty also applies to substitutes used in players' place.  Offending player's opponent does NOT have discretion to waive penalty, and all

	games played without such penalty will be scored as forfeits. Penalty may be waived if acceptable payment arrangement is made with coordinator.
Week 5	\$5 late fee imposed.
Week 8	Players with unpaid league fees will be suspended from league. Any games played in violation will be scored as forfeits. Penalty also applies to substitutes used in players'place.  Unpaid fees of suspended or banned players are subject to confiscation at season's end as described in section " <i>Fee Confiscation</i> ".

### **FEE SCHEDULE FOR RESERVE PLAYERS**

Pre-season	10% discount if fee paid in full before season begins.
Week 1	Initial rate applied.
Week 2+	Rate rises each week.

#### *Fee Confiscation:*

Any player or team that has unpaid fees at the end of season (including teams that have unfilled rosters, and hence a missing contribution to the league prize fund) will have said fees deducted from any prize monies earned by the team or any member of the team of a delinquent player. (E.g., if a team member has not paid his/her league fee and a different team member wins a cash prize, the delinquent fee will be deducted from that prize amount).

## **7.2 AWARD CEREMONY**

Upon completion of finals events at the season ending league championships, awards will be presented to all team and individual title winners.

Players who are not on hand for the award ceremony should contact a coordinator in order to arrange to have their award(s) either mailed to them, or given to a teammate or entrusted friend at the ceremony.

## **7.3 UNPLAYED MATCHES**

Matches that are not played (or forfeited) by their scheduled time (or an alternate time agreed by both teams and coordinator) will be scored as a double forfeit.

## **7.4 NOTES ON PLAYER RATINGS**

- **INITIAL & FINAL RATINGS:**  
Two weeks prior to the start of the season, and also starting with the final two matches of the regular season, player ratings will be locked to each player's recent simple moving average. These are enacted in order to best reflect each player's respective playing level before beginning the regular season and playoff season, as well as to minimize "sandbagging". (Note that the "lock date" for each team may differ depending on schedule.)
- **MID-SEASON:**  
Player ratings are updated every week according to a formula which considers various factors (including % games won, types of games played, match result, etc.).
- **WHEN MATCH RESULT IS LOCKED:**  
In the case where a match winner has been decided before or during the final round of live play, succeeding games will not be counted towards league rating points. (This is to deter "sandbagging" of rating points by teams who have already locked a victory.)

- **MINIMUM RATINGS FOR ESTABLISHED VETERANS:**  
Any player that has played for a minimum of 3 years AND has at some point been rated a 2.0 or higher can not have their rating adjusted to less than 50% of their previous 3 year high.
- Match player rating penalties are *not* cumulative; i.e., only the highest applicable penalty is levied per player. (I.e., in situations where more than one ratings penalty is applicable to a given player for a given match, only the highest penalty is applied.)
- Players whose ratings are marked incorrectly on a match score sheet may not be eligible for a rating adjustment for that week (depending on size of the error and the "direction" of the potential adjustment).
- Players whose ratings have been locked or penalized due to league sanctions will not be eligible for a rating reduction.
- A reserve player who legally substitutes for a different team will be subject to a reduced rating adjustment for that match (typically 50%). This is to deter sandbagging.

### **7.5 ADDING & CHANGING TEAM MEMBERS**

Teammates may be freely changed in the first two weeks of the season. After this point, teammates may only be officially changed under the following provisions:

- The prospective teammate must be able to play with the team a minimum of three regular season matches *before the penultimate match of the season*. (Matches already played with the team as a substitute or reserve qualify).
- The prospective teammate cannot have been an official member of a different team.
- The prospective teammate cannot have been an official reserve of a different team unless he/she was officially released from reserve status before the start of the second half of the regular season.
- The union must be approved by the league coordinator.

Teams must designate the minimum number of official teammates (usually equal to the smallest number of players that can be fielded per team in match) by the midway point of the season.

### **7.6 LEAGUE COORDINATOR AND RULES INTERPRETATION**

In cases of dispute, a league coordinator or commissioner shall have the final word on rules interpretations and judgments. A coordinator also reserves the right to make exceptions to rules when he/she feels the circumstances warrant such action.