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ITSF

RULE BOOK



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INTRODUCTION

All Players and organizers must follow this rulebook.

- a- The rulebook is meant as a guide to assist the Officials. Its goal is above all to explain the rules of the game. And so, as much as the Officials goal is to show his authority for the good of the game, he must also be careful not to slow it down by a too strict arbitration.
- b- Reminder: Federation Officials represent the highest authority of the rulebook in a tournament. Their decisions must be respected and cannot be disputed. A Federation Official can be called upon by an Official to advise on interpretations of the rulebook. If no Federation Official is present at the tournament, the Tournament Director assumes the duties of a Federation Official.
- c- The rules of the game of table soccer are conceived as much to facilitate ruling by Officials as by the Players themselves.
- d- The objective is to limit subjective interpretations to an absolute minimum.
- e- The aim of the rules is also to bring the game to a level of mutual respect between the Players while seeming transparent to the spectators.
- f- We remind the reader that while the Official is indisputable he is also fallible and error of judgement can be a part of the game.

QUALIFIED AUTHORITIES

- a - This rulebook has been written and edited by the Judges and Officials Commission under the responsibility of the Sporting Commission. It is put to a vote and set up at the beginning of each season by the Managing Committee of the ITSF (International Table Soccer Federation). It can be examined and amended in a general assembly.
- b - In cases of inconsistencies or of difficult situations, immediate amendments can be proposed by the Judges and Officials Commission in course of the season. These amendments must then be put to a vote by the Managing Committee.
- c - The use of the rulebook is the responsibility of the Federation Officials, the Officials and the Players.
- d - The matches can be either arbitrated or auto-arbitrated. In an arbitrated match, the Official is the qualified authority. In a match without an Official, any Official by title that is present on the premises can be solicited. In the event of an unsolvable difficulty, the Judges and Officials Commission can be summoned. They are responsible to make the decision known to the Sporting Commission which in turn is responsible to make this decision widely known to the members.
- e - An Official, solicited in mid-game in order to solve a problem, may receive advices from other Officials who witnessed the incident. If more than one Official was present, he will receive advice from the highest graded Official (up to Federation Official). If no Official is present, the solicited Official will call for the continuation of the game, without granting any request for Fault or goal.
- f - Questions, requests for explanations, as well as requests for modifications of the rules, must be addressed to the person in charge of the Judges and Officials Commission. He in turn answers to the person in charge of the Sporting Commission.
- g - The penalties and sanctions, up to the loss of a set or match, are the responsibility of the Officials. In the event of a more serious sanction, a report must be transmitted by the Tournament Director to the Discipline Commission.
- h - These rules can be modified or adapted during a tournament in very exceptional circumstances with the consent of an ITSF Delegate and/or an ITSF Head Official. Any changes must be reported to the Sport Commission and the ITSF Executive Committee immediately for confirmation or the tournament can be disqualified from the ITSF ranking.

Official Words

Players:

- Time-Out
- Technical
- Medical
- Ready

Official:

- 10 seconds
- Play
- Reset
- Fault
- Official Time-Out
- Medical Time Out
- Time
- Warning
- Technical fault

Sanctions

- Reset
- Fault
- Jarring
- Warning
- Technical fault
- Game
- Match

MATERIALS AND HARDWARE

TABLE

- a - The Official tables are voted by ITSF General Assembly. This choice of table can be modified according to the agreements between the ITSF and manufacturers and partners.
- b - The organizers must provide competitive equipment (sandpapered players, clean and straight bars).
- c - In no cases may the surface of the table be sandpapered, and doing so will be penalized by exclusion of the tournament and reimbursement of the surface.
- d - Players are free to lubricate the exterior of the bars. Not interior in case of telescopic bars.
- e - The organisers may make it compulsory to utilise specific brands of lubrication products and cleaning agents. These must then be made accessible to the Players. Under these circumstances, the use of another brand will result in exclusion of the Player from the tournament.
- f - Use of resin (as used in handball) or magnesium or anything similar on the table (surface, handle, balls) is strictly prohibited, and can be penalized by exclusion from the tournament.
- g - The organisers are free to prohibit any products considered to be dangerous for the equipment or for the Players.

BALLS

- a - The Official balls are voted by ITSF sport commission. An appendix to this rule will be provided after the final choice for the season has been made.
- b - In a tournament, games must be played with balls bought on the tournament site.
- c - All Players should be able to provide a tournament ball.

HANDLES

- a- Each Player may use the handles of his choice on tables where handles can be changed. They must be able to fit onto the bars without causing damage to the table or injury to the player.
- b- The Players movements must be unassisted and unobstructed. No mechanical systems will be authorized. The handles must be securely attached to the bar on which they are installed.
- c- The organisers may rule that specific handles are dangerous and therefore require that the Player not use them. Refusal by a Player to remove his handles will lead to exclusion from the tournament.
- d- In a multiple game match players must be able to change the handles within the time allotted between games, time outs or between points.

OTHER ACCESSORIES

- a- All other accessories (gloves, elastic bands, no-skid handle-sleeves...) are authorized unless they are perceived to endanger the Player or other participants.
- b- Under no circumstances may the surface or sides of the table be modified by the accessories.

1. Code of Ethics

Any action of an unsportsmanlike or unethical nature during tournament play, in the tournament room, or on the grounds of the host facility, will be considered a violation of the Code of Ethics. Mutual respect between all players, officials and/or spectators is a requirement. It shall be the aim of every player and official to present table soccer in public in the most positive and sportive way possible.

- 1.1 The penalty for breaking the Code of Ethics may be forfeiture of a game or match, expulsion from the tournament, and/or a fine. Whether or not the Code of Ethics has been broken, and what is the appropriate penalty for the infraction will be determined by the ITSF Disciplinary Commission or if not present by the Head Official and Tournament Director.

2. The Match

Unless otherwise stated by the tournament director, a match shall consist of 3 out of 5 games. Each game shall consist of 5 points. The final game of the match shall be to 5 points but you must win by 2 up to a maximum of 8 points.

- 2.1 The number of games played is in responsibility of the Tournament Director and will be published in the tournament announcement.
- 2.2 The Tournament Director may reduce the amount of games and points played per match if time becomes a factor.
 - 2.2.1 This decision is final and refers to all matches played in this event.
- 2.3 In every official ITSF tournament the number of games played will be announced by the ITSF Sports Commission and will be published in the official ITSF tournament announcement.
- 2.4 The penalty for breaking the official number of games or points played may be forfeiture of a match or expulsion from the tournament to both teams involved.

3. To Start a Match

A coin flip shall precede the start of the match. The team that wins the flip has the choice of table side or first serve. The team that loses the flip has the remaining option.

- 3.1 Once a team has chosen either the table side or the first serve, they may not change their decision.
- 3.2 The match officially starts once the ball has been put into play. (BUT violations such as cursing, etc. may be called by the official assigned to judge the match as soon as he and both teams are present at the table.)

4. The Serve and the "Ready" Protocol

- 4.1 Whenever serving the ball or putting the ball back into play, the Player must follow the "Ready" protocol. The Player controlling the ball shall ask: "Ready?" and the Direct Opponent has 5 seconds to answer "Ready". Waiting beyond this time to answer will be considered a delay of game. (See Rule 25)
 - 4.1a The serve shall begin from a stationary position at the middle figure of the five man rod. Once both sides are declared ready, the player with possession must move the ball from one player figure to another and then stop the ball for one full second before advancing. Time limits begin one second after the ball touches the second player figure.
 - 4.2 The penalty for illegally putting the ball into play is the opponent's choice of either continuing play from the current position or reserving the ball. This includes the cases where a player either loses the ball or scores on him/herself before the ball has been put back in play.

5. Subsequent Serves

Following the first serve of a match, subsequent serves shall be made by the team last scored upon. The first serve in subsequent games of a multi-game match shall be made by the team that lost the preceding game.

5.1 If the ball is served by the wrong team, and the violation is discovered before the ball is scored, play shall be stopped and the ball shall be re-served by the proper team. Once the ball is scored, no protests shall be allowed, and play shall continue as if no infraction had been committed.

5.2 If a team receives the serve because the opposing team is being penalized for a rules infraction, and if, after the ball is served, it goes dead or leaves the table and must be re-served, it shall be re-served by the team who originally served it prior to the infraction.

6. Ball in Play

Once a ball is put into play by the server (see 4), it shall remain in play until the ball is hit off the table, a dead ball is declared, time out is called, or a point is scored.

7. Ball Off the Table

If the ball should leave the playing area and strike the scoring markers, ash trays or any object that is not part of the table, the ball shall be declared off the table.

7.1 The play area shall be defined as the area above the playing surface to the height of the sideboards of the cabinet including top of the side rails and cabinet ends.

7.2 A ball entering the serving hole (if present) and then returning to the playfield is still considered "in play."

7.3 If the ball shall leave the table it will be put back into play at the two-man rod of the team who did not have the last possession during play. (See Rule 24 regarding Possession) Play shall resume using the "Ready" Protocol (Rule 4.1).

7.4 A player may not perform any shot that causes the ball to lob or volley over the opponent's rods (Example: Aerial Shot). It is not considered a penalty if a shot, which leaves the current rod of possession, deflects off another rod and then goes airborne.

7.5 Penalty for violating rule 7.4 is loss of possession to opponents five man rod for re-serve.

8. Dead Ball

A ball shall be declared a dead ball when it has completely stopped its motion and is not within reach of any player figure.

8.1 If the ball is declared dead anywhere between the five-man rods, it shall be put back into play at the five man rod by the team who originally served the ball. See "Ready" Protocol (Rule 4.1).

8.2 If the ball is declared dead between the goal and five-man rods, it shall be put back into play at the two-man rod nearest the spot of the dead ball. Play shall resume using the "Ready" Protocol (Rule 4.1).

8.3 A ball that is spinning in place is not considered to be a dead ball and time limits continue.

8.4 A ball that is intentionally made dead in order to advance the ball or reset the time limits shall be given to the opposing team for a re-serve on the five man rod. (Example: pushing the ball from the bottom until out of reach)

9. Time Out

Each team is allowed two time outs per game during which the players may leave the table. Such time outs shall not exceed 30 seconds. If the ball is in play, time out may be called only by the team in possession of the ball, and then only if the ball is completely stopped. If the ball is not in play, either team may call time out.

- 9.1 Either team may take the full 30 seconds, even if the team that called the time out does not wish to take the full allotment.
- 9.2 Either team may switch positions during a time out. (see Rule 14)
- 9.3 A time out called between games shall count towards the number of time-outs allowed in the following game.
- 9.4 A player who removes both hands from the handles and turns completely away from the table while the ball is in play shall be deemed to have requested a time out.
 - 9.4.1 A player can take his hands from the handles to wipe them off before a shot, as long as this takes no more than two or three seconds. All time limits continue to run while the player wipes his hands. The team on defense should not relax if the opponent takes his hand(s) off the rod.
 - 9.4.2 Once the hand/wrist is replaced on the rod, a shot or pass may not be attempted until one full second has elapsed.
- 9.5 Only the player/team in direct possession of the ball may call time out. The time out starts the moment the time out is called.
 - 9.5.1 If the team with the ball attempts a shot or pass immediately after requesting a time out, the play shall not count, and the team shall be charged with a distraction (see 20) rather than a time out.
- 9.6 If the team in possession of the ball calls a time out while the ball is in play and moving, that team shall lose possession, and the ball shall be served by the opposing goalie. If the team not in possession of the ball calls a time out when the ball is in play, that team shall be charged with a distraction
- 9.7 If a team is not ready to play at the end of the 30 second period, that team shall be charged with delay of game (see rule 25).
- 9.8 A team calling and/or charged with more than two time outs per game shall be charged with an automatic technical foul. The technical foul shall be shot before the 30 second period is granted.
 - 9.8.1 A team charged with a time out shall always be given the full 30 second period, even if they have previously taken two time outs, and either team may switch positions during this time.
- 9.9 Once a player begins to put the ball back into play following a time out (by moving the ball), a time out may not be called again until the ball has left the current rod of possession. Both goalie rods are considered as one rod.
 - 9.9.1 A Penalty for violation of this rule (9.9) is loss of possession, and the ball shall be served by the opposing goalie. The team shall not be charged with a time out.
- 9.10 During a time out a player may reach into the play area to lubricate the rods, wipe the playfield, etc. The ball may only be picked up by hand as long as it is returned to its original position before play is continued. A request to move the ball or pick the ball up can be declined (e.g. when the ball is too close to the goal-line).

10. Resuming Play After Time Out

Following a time out, the ball shall be put back into play at the rod of possession when the time out was called.

10.1. If the ball was in play when the time out was called, the player must have the assurance that the opposing team is ready before moving the ball, see ready protocol (rule 4.1).

10.2 If the ball was not in play when the time out was called, the ball shall be put back into play by the team legally entitled to do so according to the rules.

10.2.1 If the time-out was called between balls (after a goal is scored but before the next ball is served) the ball shall be served on the 5-rod by the team which was last scored upon.

10.3 The penalty for illegally putting the ball back into play is the opponent's choice of either continuing play from the current position or re-serving the ball.

11. Official Time Out

An official time out does not count towards the two time outs allowed per team per game. After an official time out, the ball is put back into play as though a regular time out were called.

11.1. If an official is not present at the start of the match, and a dispute arises during play, either team may request an official. Such a request can be made at any point during the match that the ball is stopped or dead.

11.1.1. The first request for an official is considered an official time out.

11.1.2. If the defensive team makes a request for an official while the ball is in play and stopped, and the offensive team simultaneously attempts a pass or shot, the request for a time out will be treated as a distraction by the defensive team. Likewise, a request for an official while the ball is in motion will also be considered a distraction.

11.2 Any team subsequently requesting an official time out will automatically be charged with a time out. Such a request may only be made during a dead ball. The penalty for requesting another official while the ball is in play is a technical foul.

11.2.1 The Head Official will decide whether the request for a new official will be granted. The second officials will become official assistant. An official may be replaced only at the discretion of the Head Official.

11.2.2. If there are already two officials present, any request for a new official will be denied, and the team will be charged with a technical foul.

11.3. A team may not switch positions during an official time out, unless they are otherwise entitled to do so (see 14).

11.4. Table Maintenance - Any necessary table maintenance, such as changing balls, tightening the men, etc., must be requested before the start of the match. The only time that a player may call a table maintenance time out during a match would be in the case of a sudden alteration to the table, such as a broken man, broken screw, crumbling bumper, bent rod, etc.

11.4.1. If a player figure is broken while in contact with the ball, an official time out will be declared while the rod is fixed. Play will resume on the rod where the player figure broke.

11.4.2. If the table lighting fails, play shall immediately stop at that point (as though an official time out were called).

11.4.3. Routine maintenance, such as spraying the rods, etc., should only be done during time outs and between games.

11.5. Foreign objects on field of play - if an object should fall on the playfield, play shall immediately stop at that point. There should be nothing on the ends of the table that could fall onto the playfield.

11.6. Medical time out - a player or team may request a medical time out. This request must be approved by the Tournament Director, the Head Official, and a member of the officiating staff. They will determine the length of the medical time out, up to a maximum of 60 minutes. A player who is physically unable to continue playing after that time must forfeit the match.

11.6.1 If the request for a medical time out is denied, the player will be charged with a time out. The player may also be penalized for delay of game (see 25), at the discretion of the official.

11.6.2. Medical time outs will typically be granted only for accidental or unexpected injuries incurred during the course of play.

12. Point Scored

A ball entering the goal shall count as a point, as long as it was legally scored. A ball which enters the goal but returns to the playing surface and/or leaves the table still counts as a goal.

12.1. If a point is not counted on the scoring markers and both teams agree that it was previously scored and inadvertently not marked up, the point shall count. If both teams do not agree that a point was scored and not marked up, after another ball is scored, that point shall not be counted.

12.2. If there is a controversy over whether or not the ball entered the goal, an official should be called.

12.3. Any team intentionally marking up a point not scored shall not get credit for the point illegally marked up and shall be charged with a technical foul. Further violations of this rule will be grounds for forfeiture of game or match (to be determined by the Head Official).

13. Table Sides

At the end of each game, teams may switch sides of the table before play of the next game can begin. If both teams switch sides they will have to switch after each game. A maximum of 90 seconds is allowed between games.

13.1. Either team can request the full 90 seconds. If both teams acknowledge that they are ready to resume play before the full time is used, play shall continue and the remainder of that 90 seconds is then forfeited.

13.2. If a team, is not ready to play at the end of the 90 second period, that team shall be charged with delay of game.

14. Change of Positions

In any doubles event, each player may play only the two rods normally designated for his position. Once the ball is put into play, the players must play the same position until a point is scored, a team requests a time out, or a technical is called.

14.1. Either team may switch positions during a time out, between points, between games, or before and/or after a technical foul shot.

14.2. Once a team has switched positions, they may not switch back until after the ball has been put back into play or another time out has been called.

14.2.1. A team is considered to have switched positions once both players are in their respective places facing the table. If both teams wish to switch positions at the same time the team in possession of the ball must decide their position first

14.3. Illegally switching positions while the ball is in play will be judged a distraction.

14.3.1. In any doubles event any player placing their hand on any rod normally designated as one played by their partner while the ball is in play shall be judged as a distraction violations.

15. Spinning the Rods

Spinning of the rods is illegal. Spinning is defined as the rotation of any soccer figure more than 360 degrees before or more than 360° after striking the ball. In calculating the 360° you do not add the degrees spun prior to striking the ball to the degrees spun after striking the ball.

15.1. A ball which is advanced by an illegal spin is replayed as follows: If the ball goes in the goal, then it will not be counted as a point and will be put back into play by the goalie as if the ball had been declared a dead ball between the goal and the nearest two-man rod. If the ball does not go in the goal, the opposing team will have the option of continuing play from the current position or re-serving by goalie.

15.2. Spinning of a rod which does not advance and/or strike the ball does not constitute an illegal spin. If a player's spinning rod hits the ball backwards into his own goal, it will count as a goal for the opposing team. Spinning of a rod away from the ball (when there is no possession) is not considered an illegal spin, but may be ruled as a distraction.

15.3. If an ungrasped rod is spun by the force of a ball hitting a player figure on the rod, the spin will be considered legal (example: a two-man shot in singles hitting the three-man).

16. Jarring

Any jarring, sliding, or lifting of the table shall be illegal. Whether or not the table jarring is done intentionally is of no consequence. It is not necessary for a player to lose the ball for jarring to be called on his opponent. Jars are accumulated for the entire match.

16.1. The penalty for violation of this rule: First and second offense - the opposing team has the option of continuing play from the current position, continuing play from the point of infraction, or re-serving the ball. If an illegal jar causes the player to lose possession of the ball from a rod, play may be continued from that rod. Subsequent violations - Technical foul. After the technical shot the non-offending team continues to have the options listed under First Offense.

16.2. Touching or coming into contact with your opponent's rods in any way shall be penalized exactly like jarring, sliding, or lifting.

16.3. Jarring of the table after a point has been scored or when the ball is not in play may be judged unsportsmanlike behaviour. Slamming the rod after a shot while the ball is still in play may be considered a jar.

17. Reset

If a player exerts sufficient force on the table to impair the opponent's ability to execute a shot or pass, but the opponent's possession of the ball has not been jeopardized, the official present will call "reset" and the time of possession shall be reset. The player with the ball has the option of setting the ball up again or ignoring the reset call and continuing play from the current position.

17.1. Any movement of the ball, no matter how slight, may be considered grounds for a reset (example: a ball rocking in place). A reset can be called even if the ball is pinned or moving.

17.2. A reset is not considered a distraction, and the player with the ball may shoot immediately. The defensive team should not, therefore, relax or look at the official upon hearing the word "reset," but rather should stay on defense.

17.3. A reset call does not count as jarring infraction; however, repeated offenses may be grounds for the official present to call a technical foul on the defensive player causing the reset.

17.4. A reset violation behind the ball shall not be considered a reset violation. It shall be considered a jarring violation. (Example: if the opposing forward is judged to have reset his opponent when the opponent has the ball on the 3 rod.)

17.5. An intentional reset by the team in possession of the ball for the purposes of attempting to get a reset call from the official shall not be allowed. The team judged to be in violation of this rule shall lose possession of the ball, the ball to be reserved by the other team. (This is not counted as a reset.)

17.6. After the first reset call in a game, a team causing two successive resets during the same point will be charged with a technical foul. Once the first reset call is made, upon any subsequent violations the official present will call "reset warning" or just "warning". If there is another reset violation on the same ball following a reset warning a technical foul shall be called.

17.6.1. If a technical foul is called for excessive resets, the next reset call shall not result in a technical foul.

17.6.2 Resets are charged per team not per player and are also charged per game not per match.

17.7. If the defender intentionally jars the table, this will not be considered a reset, and jarring will be called immediately.

17.8. A reset call made while the ball is on the five-man rod will reset the amount of times the ball has struck the wall as well as the time limit.

18. Reaching Into the Playing Area

It is illegal for a player to reach into the play area while the ball is in play without first having permission from the opposing team, whether he touches the ball or not. However, whenever the opposing team grants a player permission to reach into the playing area, it is legal for the player to do so.

18.1. A spinning ball is considered "in-play," even if it is not in reach of a player figure. It is illegal to reach into playing area to stop a spinning ball, even if done for an opponent.

18.2. A ball which becomes airborne over the table is still in play until it has hit something not a part of the playing area. Do not catch a flying ball over the table.

18.3. A ball which has gone dead is considered out of play. The ball may be freely touched once permission has been granted by the official, or if no official is present, by the opposing team.

18.4. A player may wipe shot marks off any part of the table while the ball is not in play. He does not need to ask permission of the opposing team.

18.5. The penalty for violation of this rule is as follows: If the player has possession of the ball, and the ball is stopped - loss of possession to the opposing team. If the ball is moving in the player's goal area behind the two-man rod - a point is scored for the opposing team, and the ball is re-served as if it had gone in the goal. Any other case - technical foul.

18.6. If a technical foul is called for touching a flying ball over the table it will be served by the non-offending team following the technical shot.

19. Alterations to the Table

Playing area - no changes can be made that would affect the interior playing characteristics of the table by any player. This includes changes to the men, playing surface, bumpers, etc.

19.1. A player cannot wipe sweat or spit or any foreign substance on his hand before wiping ball marks off the table.

19.1.1. Wiping rosin on the table is illegal.

19.1.2. Any player using a substance on their hands to improve their grip must make sure that this substance does not get on the ball. If this does occur and the substance is judged to affect the play of the ball (Example: a

ball coated with rosin) that ball and any others in the table similarly affected shall be cleaned immediately and the team judged to have caused this to occur shall be penalized for delay of game and warned that if this occurs again during the match they will be prohibited from using the substance.

19.2. If a player who uses a substance, such as rosin, to improve his grip leaves a deposit on the handles when switching sides he must clean the handles immediately.

19.2.1. If the time necessary to remove the substance exceeds 90 seconds, the player will be penalized for delay of game, and the player will be prohibited from using the substance again.

19.3. A player may not place a tube or handle on the table exterior that inhibits the motion of the rods (example: for limiting the motion of the goalie rod).

19.4. A player may switch the handles on the exterior of the tables if it can be done within the time limits and without impeding the opponent's ability to change sides between games.

19.5. A request to change balls before the start of the match must be approved by the official present or the Tournament Director. The request will be granted only if the playing characteristics of the existing balls are significantly different from the standard.

19.5.1. New ball - a player may not ask for a new ball while the ball is in play. During a dead ball, however, a player may request a new ball from the rack inside the table. Such a request will generally be granted, unless the official present judges that such a request is made simply for the purpose of stalling play.

19.5.2. A player requesting a new ball while the ball is in play shall be charged with a time out, unless the official present judges the ball to be unplayable, in which case no time out will be charged.

19.6. Unless otherwise specified, penalty for violation of any part of this rule may be grounds for a technical foul.

20. Distraction

Any movement or sound made away from or behind the rod where the ball is in play may be judged as a distraction. No point made as a result of a distraction will count. If a player believes he is being distracted, it is his responsibility to call for an official.

20.1. Banging the five-man rod or any rod prior to, during, or after a shot is considered a distraction. Moving the five man slightly after the shot has started is not considered a distraction, however.

20.2. Talking between team-mates while the ball is in play may be judged a distraction.

20.3. It is not considered a distraction, when passing, to move the catching rod as part of a fake. Excessive motion, however, is grounds for a distraction.

20.4. It is considered a distraction, after setting up a shot, to remove a hand from the handle and then immediately shoot the ball. The ball may only be shot after the hand/wrist has been on the handle for a full second.

20.4.1. In singles, rule 20.4 only applies to a set shot on the three-rod.

20.5. Penalty for distraction. For the first distraction violation, the guilty team may be charged with a warning if the official present judges the distraction to be harmless. If a shot is scored as a result of a distraction by the offensive team, the point will not count and the opposing team will re-serve the ball. In all other cases, the opposing team has the option of continuing play from the current position; continue play from the point of infraction, or re-serving the ball. Subsequent violations may be grounds for a technical foul.

21. Practice

Once a match has begun, no player may practice either his serve or shot on either the table being played or on any other table.

21.1. Practice is defined as moving the ball from one player figure to another or practicing the serve.

21.1.1 Illegal Practice is a judgement call by the official present at the table. Inadvertent movement of the ball does not necessarily constitute Practice.

21.2. The Penalty for illegal practice is a technical foul.

22. Language

Unsportsmanlike comments made directly or indirectly by a player are not allowed. Violations of this rule may be grounds for a technical foul.

22.1. Calling the attention of the opposing team away from the game is not allowed (see 20). Any shouts or sounds made during a match, even if of an enthusiastic nature, may be grounds for a technical foul.

22.2. Cursing by a player shall not be allowed. Continued cursing by a player may be cause for forfeiture of games and/or expulsion from the tournament site.

22.3. The use of a spotter in the audience shall not be allowed. Furthermore, a member of the audience is not allowed to influence a match by distracting a player or official. **Violation of this rule may be grounds for expulsion of the person from the tournament site.**

22.4. Coaching will be allowed, but only during time outs and between games.

23. Passing

23.1. A pinned or stopped ball on the 5 man rod cannot be caught on the 3 man rod of the same team. It must touch at least two player figures as it is put into the motion of a pass (except an accidental stub or squib pass). A pinned ball is one that is pinned to the wall or playfield.

23.1.1. A ball whose motion has clearly stopped may be legally passed if this pass is immediate. If there is any hesitation before the pass, the pass shall be declared illegal. Once a ball has clearly stopped and is not passed immediately it must then touch at least two player figures before it can be legally passed.

23.1.2. An accidental stub or squib pass is legal. However, if a ball is stubbed or squibbed by a player figure, released, and then passed by that player figure before striking another player figure on that same rod, it is illegal.

23.1.3. It is not considered an illegal pass from the five-man rod if a stopped or pinned ball deflects off the same team's three-man rod provided it was not caught and there was no controlled advancement by the three-man rod.

23.2. A player cannot make the ball strike the side walls of the table (or the side strips if present) more than twice before passing or shooting from the five-man rod. Regardless of which wall the ball touches, a total of two times is all that is allowed prior to advancing the ball. If the ball goes to the wall a third time, it may not be struck again by any player figure on the passing rod.

23.2.1. Defensive trap - if an opponent's pass or shot is stopped by trapping it against the side wall, that does not count as one of the two times allowed

to touch the wall by the player who made the trap and is now in possession of the ball on his five-man rod.

23.2.2. Once the ball has touched the wall, it will not be counted as hitting the wall again until the ball has rolled off the side strip (if present on the table).

23.2.3. Following a time-out, any strike the ball makes against the wall prior to touching a second man will not be counted against the allowed two strikes.

23.3. Passing from the two-man (or three-man goalie rod) to the same team's five-man is ruled the same as 23.1 except that if the ball should strike an opposing team's player figures, the ball is no longer considered a pass but a live ball that may be legally caught by any player.

23.4. It is legal to have just one hand on the rods when playing defensive (example: right hand on defensive five-man). It is also legal to use two hands to move a rod (example: defensive five-man). Excessive switching of the hand between the handles may be judged a distraction.

23.5. Penalty for an illegal pass - if a team violates the above rule of passing; the opposing team has the option of continuing play from the current position or re-serving the ball.

24. Time of Possession

Possession is defined as the ball being within reach of a player figure long enough for a controlled pass or shot. Possession of the ball shall be limited to 10 seconds on the five-man rod and 12 seconds on all other rods. Both goalie rods are considered one rod of possession. At the end of the time period the player in possession must advance the ball.

24.1. Advancement defined: A ball is considered to have advanced once it is out of reach of the player figures on that rod whether it went forward or backwards. In the case of the goalie area, a ball is considered advanced once out of reach of the player figures on the two-rod and beyond the goal area.

24.2. A spinning ball that is within reach of a player figure shall be considered to be in that rod's possession and all time limits shall continue. Players must make an honest effort to gain possession of a spinning ball that is within reach; however, if the spinning ball is not within reach, the time limits are not in effect.

24.3. Penalty - penalty for three-man delay is loss of possession to the opposing goalie. The goalie shall put the ball back into play as if it had been declared a dead ball. Penalty for delay at any other rod is loss of possession to the opposing forward for serve.

25. Delay of Game

Play shall be continuous, except during time outs. Continuous shall be defined as no more than 5 seconds duration between a ball scored and a new ball served. A delay of game penalty may only be called by an official.

25.1. After a delay of game infraction play shall resume in at most 10 seconds. At the end of 10 seconds another delay of game call should be made.

25.2. Taking too much time to serve the ball or to put the ball back into play may be grounds for delay of game.

25.3. The first infraction of this rule is a warning. Subsequent infractions will result in the player being charged with a time out. Example: Player charged with delay of game. If still not ready to resume play after 10 seconds - time out charged. If after the time out still not ready, another 10 seconds - second time out charged

26. Recalls and Forfeiture

Once a match has been called, both teams should report immediately to the designated table. If a team has not reported to the table within three minutes, they should be recalled. A team, upon being recalled, must report immediately to the table in order to stop the forfeiture process.

26.1. A recall is made every three minutes. Penalty for second and subsequent recalls is forfeiture of a game.

26.2. If a team has forfeited any games due to recalls, they get the choice of side or serve once play begins.

26.3. Enforcement of this rule is the responsibility of the Tournament Director.

27. Technical Fouls

If, in the judgment of an authorized tournament official, either team competing in a match is at any time in flagrant or intentional violation of these rules of play, a technical foul may be called on the offending team.

27.1. When a technical foul is called, play shall stop and the ball awarded to the opponents of the offending team at its three-man rod. One shot will be taken after which play shall stop. After the shot, play shall continue from where the ball was before the technical foul was called or where specified by rule. If the ball was in motion, it is put back into play as if it had been declared dead at that spot.

27.1.1. A player is considered to have taken a technical foul shot once ball has left the three-man rod. A player is considered to have been blocked the shot once the ball has either stopped in or left the defender's area.

27.2. On a technical foul shot, the ball must be put into play before shooting. Furthermore, all rules, including time limits and resets, still apply.

27.3. A team may switch positions before and/or after the technical foul shot without being charged with a time out

27.4. Time outs may be called during a technical shot, as long as they would otherwise be legal

27.5. A point scored on an illegal technical shot shall not be allowed, and play shall resume at the spot where the ball was when the technical was called.

27.6. If a technical foul shot ends the game, the opposing team gets the first serve of the next game.

27.7. Further violations of a flagrant or intentional nature shall carry additional technical fouls. A third technical foul in any one game shall result in an automatic forfeiture of the game.

27.8. The official may announce at any time after the first technical foul is called on a team that further violation by that team shall be cause for forfeiture of the game or match.

28. Rules Decisions and Appeals

If a controversy involves a question of judgement and the official is present at the time the events in question transpired, his decision is final and no appeal may be made. If the controversy involved an interpretation of the rules, or the official was not present at the time the events in question transpired, the official shall make the most equitable decision possible under the circumstances. Decisions of this nature may be appealed, but it must be done immediately in the manner prescribed below.

28.1. In order to appeal a rule interpretation, a player must file that appeal with the official before the ball being played at the time of the controversy is put back into play. An appeal concerning the loss of a match must be filed before the team that won has begun its next match.

28.2. All rule appeals shall be considered by the Head Official and (if present) at least two members of the officiating staff. All decisions on appeals are final.

28.3. A team making an unsuccessful rules appeal of an obvious nature, or a team that questions a judgment call, will be charged with a time out. In addition, the team may also be penalized for delay of game, at the discretion of the official.

28.4. Arguing with a Certified official during a match will not be allowed. Violation of this rule will be grounds for a delay of game penalty and/or a violation of the code of ethics.

29. Dress Code

Any Player wishing to participate in an official ITSF tournament must wear proper sporting attire. This is comprised of: athletic shoes (i.e. sneakers, running shoes, basketball shoes), athletic shorts or track suit (Bermuda shorts or form fitting Lycra shorts prohibited), tee-shirts or jerseys.

- 29.1 The penalty for breaking the Dress Code may be expulsion from the tournament, and/or a fine. Whether or not the Dress Code has been broken, and what is the appropriate penalty for the infraction will be determined by the ITSF Sport Commission members.

30. Tournament Director

The administration of tournament play shall be the responsibility of the Tournament Director. This includes making the draws, scheduling the events, timing matches, etc. The decision of the Tournament Director in such matters is final.

- 30.1 All matters pertaining to rules of play (appointing officials, handling appeals, etc.) shall be the responsibility of the Head Official. The Tournament Director is responsible for appointing the Head Official.
- 30.2 In every official ITSF tournament the Tournament Director is subordinate to the ITSF Sports Commission.