



## British Dodgeball Adult Rules 2018/19 – Referee Guidance Version

- *The comments in red below are designed in particular to help referees, but also coaches and players, to achieve a consistent and fair interpretation of the rules.*
  - *The British Dodgeball Rules are designed to facilitate an exciting but safe, free-flowing game – and interpretation of the rules should keep this in mind.*
  - *Overall a referee should always be considering the intent of a player or team.*
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### 1. **The Court**

- 1) The official 5 ball dodgeball court size is 17m by 8m. However, court size may be adjusted where necessary to suit the available space. Where a 17m length is not feasible due to the dimensions of a particular hall, lengths of 16m-17.99m are permitted. No change is permitted to the standard width of 8m.
  - a. If the available length is 19m or above, play with a 17m court length with a minimum 1m retriever area at each end.
  - b. If the available length is between 18m and 19m, play with a 1m retriever area at each end plus the remainder as court length.
  - c. If the available length is less than 18m, use the full length as the court length and play wall to wall.
- 2) Unless playing wall-to-wall, the “back line” of the dodgeball court at each end will be a marked line on the court floor, a minimum of 1m away from a wall or solid barrier. “Side lines” will be marked at each side of the 8m court width.
- 3) A “centre line” will be marked across the court at exactly halfway between the back lines (or walls if playing wall to wall).
- 4) A “neutral zone” will be marked with 1.5m total width, by lines that are 0.75m either side of the centre line. These two lines will be called the “neutral zone lines”. Players from both teams are allowed in the neutral zone, but are not allowed on or over the furthest neutral zone line.
- 5) A “player return area” will be marked for each team 1 metre away from the court (both teams’ areas will be on the left side of their half of the court). This area will be 1m by 4m and is reserved for one team coach where applicable, plus any players who are “out”.
- 6) A “ball return line” will be marked on each side of the court, 5.5m away from the centre line.
- 7) For matches not played wall-to-wall, the outside court lines and any back walls or boundaries are not part of the playing court. Therefore, touching these or any surfaces beyond these with any body part at any time during normal play beyond the “opening rush” will result in an “out” for the offending player. When the court is wall-to-wall, the back walls are considered part of the court.



- 8) Where possible a net, barrier, or other hard surface will surround the court, approximately 2.5 metres from the outside court line (back lines and side lines). The space between any court surround and the side and back lines of the court is called the “court boundary area”.
- 9) A player sin bin of 1m by 1m will be marked on both sides of the court between the player return area and the referee.
- 10) Where a court is wall-to-wall, a player return line will be marked with a dash 1m from the back of the court, to signify the point behind which players must enter the court when returning to play.
- 11) During match play, only a team’s 6 designated players for that period, and coach and retrievers where applicable, are allowed inside these nets/ barriers/ surfaces. This is in addition to any referees/ linesmen/ other authorised tournament officials.
- 12) In matches where retrievers are used, the centre line should be extended beyond the side lines and to the other side of the court boundary area, designating the area within which a team’s retrievers may retrieve a ball.

## **2. Coaches**

- 1) Each team is allowed to have one designated coach inside the court surrounds. The coach must remain inside their “player return area” at all times during normal game play, and must not touch anything outside of this area. A coach is allowed to touch any stationary ball that is in the player return area, but must not change the direction of a dodgeball or touch a ball that is outside of the player return area. Questioning the referee, stepping out of the player return area, or handling a ball in a way that is not permitted can all result in the team losing the right to having a coach for the remainder of that match.
- 2) Any designated coach must have a top sufficiently different to the playing top of the team they are coaching. This will ideally be in a different colour to the team playing top. If in the same colour, the top must be approved by the referee before the start of play- otherwise, the coach may be removed and no coach will be permitted for that match.  
*The referee should consider whether they can easily distinguish the coach from any players standing alongside them in the player return area.*

## **3. Equipment and Clothing**

- 1) Five British Dodgeball approved dodgeballs will be used in each match.
- 2) For all competitions, 7 inch diameter cloth dodgeballs will be used, inflated to between 1.6 and 1.8 psi.



- 3) Uniform, hair and protective equipment are considered to be part of the player. Any player hit on any part of their uniform, hair or protective equipment will be considered “out”.
- 4) All players competing on the same team in a competition should wear matching kit. The level to which the kit should match will depend on the event – please see the British Dodgeball Competition Regulations 2018/19.
- 5) All footwear worn should be suitable for dodgeball and should be non-marking. British Dodgeball reserves the right to prevent any player wearing marking footwear from competing. Injuries obtained through the use of ill-suited footwear are the responsibility of the player.
- 6) Gloves or other materials worn on the hands are not permitted unless worn solely for medical reasons (to support injury or to protect the skin). If medical evidence cannot be produced when requested, the player will not be permitted to play whilst wearing these items.
- 7) Taping of hands and fingers is permitted where the taping material does not provide an advantage to that player.
- 8) Unsecured headgear such as ball caps and visors may not be worn during tournament play.
- 9) Prosthetics may be worn. All casts, braces, and splints with exposed hard surfaces must be padded.
- 10) Jewellery is strictly not to be worn by players during competition unless suitably secured with tape. Plastic watches are permitted. Officials will ask players to remove any items they believe contravene these rules or to suitably secure them with tape.
  - *Where a player requests any exemption to the rules on jewellery, the regulations advise them to contact the British Dodgeball rules committee in advance – this should prevent referees from needing to address these scenarios at competitions.*
  - *Where a prohibited item of jewellery is spotted during a match, the individual should be asked to remove the item at the end of the next set. If they are not able to do so in the allotted 20 seconds maximum for re-set, no delay should be granted and therefore a substitute should instead line up for that set or the team must play shorthanded.*
- 11) An official may at any time request that a player changes uniform or equipment or requires an adjustment, if they believe this uniform or equipment poses a significant risk to the safety of other players. Any queries should be sent to [hello@britishdodgeball.com](mailto:hello@britishdodgeball.com).
- 12) It is recommended that spectacles should not be worn by players during competition, unless secured by a strap. Any resulting injuries from the use of spectacles will be the sole responsibility of the player who wears them.



## 4. Match formats and scoring

- 1) A match will comprise of as many sets as will fit within the allotted match time. A set is when the two teams line up behind the back line to start play, and play until either one team is eliminated, or until the time for that set expires. The maximum time allowed for each set is 3 minutes of continuous play.
- 2) All teams should have 6 players on court at the start of each set. Teams playing shorthanded must have a minimum of 4 players on court in order to compete- otherwise the match will be forfeited.
- 3) All teams must nominate either a coach or captain to represent their team to referees and officials during competitive events. This individual should be made clear to the referee.  
*Players other than the captain or coach should not approach the referee unless it is unreasonable or inappropriate for the captain to do so (for instance, the captain is not courtside or is otherwise unaware of the issue).*
- 4) A match will usually consist of two halves of 15 minutes separated by a 3 minute interval. The 15 minutes for each half will be a running clock, i.e. 15 minutes without pausing, with the exception of an optional 1 minute time-out per match for each team. The head referee will only stop play and thus pause the time when they deem it to be absolutely necessary, such as when a health and safety concern arises.
  - *Where at all possible, time should not be stopped in order to make a decision. Time should only be stopped if a decision cannot reasonably be made with play continuing – for instance, where there are multiple plays simultaneously or in quick succession. The head referee should use and listen to any assistant officials but is ultimately entitled to make the final decision; time should not be stopped simply due to disagreement unless the head referee is unsure.*
  - *Where a team asks a referee for the time remaining in a match or set, the referee should do their best to provide this as soon as possible, and as long as requests for the time are not excessive. However, they should do so at a point that will not impair their ability to referee the game.*
- 5) A time-out can only be taken between sets. A team's time-out can only be requested by the team captain or coach and must be requested before the referees call for players to line-up for the next set.
- 6) For some tournament events, matches may consist of two halves of 8 minutes separated by a 2 minute interval. The 8 minutes for each half will be a running clock, i.e. 8 minutes without pausing. The head referee will only stop play and thus pause the time when they deem it to be absolutely necessary, such when a health and safety concern arises. Time-outs will not be permitted in 8 minute half match formats.



- 7) In 15 minute half match formats, if less than 60 seconds remain of a half before a new set is due to start and greater than 0 seconds remain at the conclusion of the previous set, the match officials will announce that a “final set” of 60 seconds will be played. If after the completion of the final set, any time remains on either the match clock or the set clock, no further sets will be played.
  - *The referee should always clarify that a set is the “final” set, or that a half or match has ended.*
- 8) In 8 minute half match formats, if less than 30 seconds remain of a half before a new set is due to start and greater than 0 seconds remain at the conclusion of the previous set, the match officials will announce that a “final set” of 30 seconds will be played. If after the completion of the final set, any time remains on either the match clock or the set clock, no further sets will be played.
  - *The referee should always clarify that a set is the “final” set, or that a half or match has ended.*
- 9) All teams may have a squad of up to a maximum of 12 players at each event. Players may only be substituted between sets.
- 10) Teams will change ends for the start of each new half.
- 11) A team wins a set either by eliminating all of the opposition, or by having more players left on the court when the referee signals the end of the set. If both teams have an equal number of players on court when the set ends, the set is drawn.
- 12) A set ends either when a team is eliminated, or time expires. Teams will then re-set for the next period and must re-set immediately. Match officials will allow a maximum of 20 seconds for teams to re-set.
  - *The referee is entitled to start the next set once 20 seconds has passed, regardless of whether one or both teams are ready. If one team is not ready, all players not ready will be treated as not having stepped onto the court in time and will be called out. Where the full team is called out this results in a set win for the opposing team.*
- 13) The winning team is awarded 2 points towards their match score on completion of a set. Where a set is drawn, both teams are awarded 1 point.
- 14) A team wins a match if they have more points than the opposition at the end of the match.
- 15) In 8 minute half format matches for league tables or group tables, 2 table points will be awarded for a match win, 1 table point for a match draw, and 0 table points for a match loss.



- 16) In 15 minute half format matches for league tables or group tables, 2 table points will be awarded for a match win, 1 table point for a match draw, and 0 table points for any other loss.
- 17) Where teams finish level on table points at the end of all matches in any competition, the team with the greatest set points for-against difference will be placed higher. Where there is still a tie, the following criteria will then be considered in this order:
- The team with the most match wins will be placed higher.
  - The team with the greatest set points for-against difference from all matches will be placed higher.
  - The team with the most table points from any head-to-head matches will be placed higher.
  - The team with the greatest set points for-against difference from any head-to-head matches will be placed higher.
  - The team with the most set points from any head-to-head matches will be placed higher.
  - If two teams are still equally placed, a single set will be played (followed by “overtime” and “sudden death” if necessary), with the winner taking the higher position.
- 18) In knockout or playoff matches, a drawn match is resolved by playing an overtime set which will last for one minute. Teams will start “overtime” with 6 players, and the team with the most players on court at the end of this one minute set will be declared the winner.
- 19) If both teams have the same number of players still in play on court at the end of the one minute overtime set, the referee will not stop the game but will shout “sudden death” to inform both teams that the one minute overtime period has expired. In “sudden death” overtime, the next team to have a player declared “out” for any reason is the losing team.
- *Referees should advise both teams before the overtime set commences that they will not stop the game at sudden death, and the sudden death phase will be marked by “sudden death” being shouted.*
- 20) All standard rules apply in sudden death. Where a player is hit at the end of overtime and the hit results in the teams being level and the match progressing to sudden death, the hit player remains able to attempt to catch the ball that has hit them.



- 21) The team designated as the “Home” team will choose which end of the court they will play the first half. The “Home” team will be decided by a coin toss at the start of each match for leagues and group stages, and for early rounds of knockout play will be the team who progressed to that round as the team with the best record (defined firstly by group stage position, then by number of group stage points if group position is tied). For semi-finals and finals, or where there is no definitive “Home” team, the “Home” team will be decided through a coin toss by the referee with team captains present.
- *A coin toss should only be undertaken upon either team’s request. No coin toss is necessary where both teams are happy to agree their own ends.*

## **5. The start of play**

- 1) A referee will signal the start of a set using a whistle or other pre-specified sound. They will initially call for teams to “line up”, instruct all player to be “ready”, and then signal the start of the set.
- 2) All players must be positioned behind their team’s back line at the start of each set. Players may touch the back line as this is not part of the court.
- 3) Five balls will be placed equally spaced apart in the neutral zone, on the “centre line”, before the start of each set. The balls will be positioned 1m, 2.5m, 4m, 5.5m, 7m along the centre line.
- 4) The period at the beginning of each set or reset is referred to as the “rush”. Upon the official’s signal, both teams rush to the centre of the court and attempt to retrieve the two left-most balls (the balls designated for their team), and also to compete for the one ball in the middle (which is open to either team).
- 5) A maximum of 3 players per team are allowed to rush for the balls – with each player able to rush for up to three balls. Any players who are not rushing must step onto the court at the start of the set before the first rusher from either team reaches the centre line, or they will be called “out”.
  - *Where more than 3 players advance past the return line, this should be considered a retriever error, provided there is no false start.*
- 6) When rushing for either of the two designated balls, only one foot of the rushing player is allowed to cross the centre line. The player’s other foot must remain entirely behind the centre line. Any contraventions to this rule will result in the offending player being called “out”.
- 7) When rushing for the centre, contested ball, neither of the player’s feet, or any other body part or clothing item are allowed to touch or cross the centre line. Any contraventions to this rules will result in the offending players being called “out”.



- 8) Players may not slide or dive head first towards the centre line of the court when rushing to gain possession of a ball on the centre line. Any offending players will be called “out”.
- 9) No deliberate physical contact between players is allowed. This includes pushing, grabbing and leaning on an opposition player, and will result in the offending player being called “out”. Incidental contact when competing for the centre ball will not be penalised.
  - *For example, where one player competing for the centre ball looks to deliberately, or repeatedly, scratch pull or push their opposing competitor, they will be called out and the ball competed for shall be considered won by the non-offending team.*
  - *Where a player chooses to swipe or swing for the ball and does not win it, but makes contact with the opposition runner, this would be out, and can be considered dangerous play.*
- 10) If two players both have hold of the central ball they may choose to both keep hold of it and try to gain possession, as long as they do not initiate intentional physical contact. If either player is pulled over the centre line, this player will be called “out” so long as the pulling player has not initiated intentional and avoidable physical contact.
- 11) No dodgeball may be thrown at an opponent until it had passed behind the ball return line. The ball may pass behind the ball return line by (known as “making a ball live”):
  - a. The player who wins the ball carrying the ball backwards and making contact with the floor behind the ball return line (both feet fully behind the ball return line).
  - b. Another player receiving the ball whilst with two feet in contact with the floor behind the ball return line.
- 12) If a ball that has not passed behind the ball return line is thrown, any hits made with that throw are void as it is a dead ball.
- 13) Balls designated for the opposing team may be collected, if still available, as soon as both of a team’s own designated dodgeballs have been made live.
  - *Collecting an opponent’s designated dodgeballs before a player’s own balls have been made live will be seen as a ‘retrieving error’. It will usually result in no further outs; however, where collecting the balls early is followed by dangerous or unsportsmanlike play (such as throwing a dead ball with power at close range), this will be called out (or further sanctions dependent on the severity) in addition to the retrieving error.*
- 14) Running for an opponents designated balls is not permitted. Clearly running for an opponents’ designated ball or touching an opponents’ designated ball prior to their own allocations both being made live will be seen as a ‘retrieving error’. The non-offending team captain will be able to decide on the distribution of dodgeballs.



## 6. False Starts

- 1) Players should be stationary following the call from the referee to be “ready”. If a player moves towards the centre line before any signal, this is a false start.
- 2) If a player or players commit a false start and continue to compete for the balls during the opening rush (if they advance past the ball return line), the set will be re-started, with the centre ball automatically given to the non-offending team, who will start at the reset with this ball off court in their possession. If officials are unable to determine which team initiated the false start the set will just be re-started.  
*Where the false start was due to an external stimuli (for instance another whistle), the set should be re-started.*
- 3) When a set is re-started following a first false start, the offending team will be allowed a maximum of two runners to rush for their two designated balls.  
*The offending runner is permitted to be one of these two runners.*
- 4) In the event of any additional false starts from either team (where players advance past the player return line), the remaining dodgeballs will be given one at a time to the non-offending team in the order of outside to inside, starting with the non-offending team’s dodgeballs first.  
*Referees should be aware that continually false starting can be seen as unsportsmanlike play and can be punished under those guidelines.*
- 5) Any balls given to a non-offending team in this manner are live from the moment the player in possession of them steps on court.

## 7. Retrieving

- 1) Retrievers are individuals designated to retrieve balls that go out of play. Active players may not go out of bounds during a set, including to collect a ball that has gone out of bounds.
- 2) All matches at British Dodgeball 5 ball events will require the use of retrievers –a minimum of one and maximum of two per team. Teams are encouraged to provide their own retrievers for their matches. These may be substitutes, coaches or supporters.
- 3) Where a team or teams in a match are not able to provide their own retrievers, a total of two players from the team line refereeing that fixture will be available to offer a basic level of retrieving.
  - a. Where one team has provided two of their own retrievers and the opposing team have no retrievers, the team without their own retrievers may use both of the basic retrievers on offer.
  - b. Where one team has provided one of their own retrievers and the opposing team have no retrievers, the team without their own retrievers may use one of the basic retrievers on offer. In this instance both teams will play with one retriever.



- c. Where both teams have provided one of their own retrievers, each team must also use one of the basic retrievers on offer. In this instance both teams will play with two retrievers.
- 4) In matches with retrievers:
- a. Retriever may not enter the court at any time.
  - b. Retriever may not wear jerseys of the same colour as their team uniform.  
*The referee should ask retrievers to change their jerseys if necessary, or for teams to use the basic retrievers available. The referee should consider whether they can easily distinguish the retrievers from any players on their team.*
  - c. Retriever are only allowed to retrieve balls that are out of bounds (they may not touch or retrieve a ball that is on court), and in their own team's retriever area. They may not retrieve balls that are past the off-court centre line and in the opposing team's retrieving area.
  - d. Retriever must not hoard dodgeballs, and should put balls back into play as soon as is possible.  
*Retriever are permitted to ensure that balls are returned to court in a controlled manner in order to avoid retriever errors – however, they must return balls to court promptly and not attempt to set up plays.*
- 5) In order for a ball to be playable on its return to the court, retrievers must put balls back into play by one of the following:
- a. Passing a ball to any active player on their team who has both feet in contact with the ground and fully behind the ball return line.
  - b. Placing the ball on court behind the ball return line.
    - i. Any ball passed to a player who does not have both feet in contact with the ground and fully behind the ball return line will not be live for the purpose of making a hit until it has been in the possession of a player who does have both feet in contact with the ground behind the ball return line. A ball returning to court that has not yet been made live can still be caught if thrown, and can still be used to block.  
*Any ball that is thrown whilst not live is not an invalid attempt.*
- 6) Any unsportsmanlike behaviour or infringements by a team's own retrievers will be classed as a "retrieving error". This will result in the non-offending team captain being able to decide on the distribution of dodgeballs (for instance, they may choose to be passed all five balls). This includes retrieving a ball from outside of that team's retrieving area, touching a ball that is on court or deliberately or repeatedly returning a ball to court such that it passes to the opposition's side of court. Serious or repeated infringements may result in a yellow card or further sanctions for the offending retriever.
- *The referee should consider whether the retriever's actions were deliberate. For instance, where a retriever clearly attempts to gain possession of a dodgeball, it touches them or deflects off them but they do not reach it, this should not be a retrieving error.*



- *Retrievers should take care in how a ball is returned to court. Where they do not do so, and they return it to court in a way that it passes straight to the opposition's side of the court, this is a retrieving error. However, for a ball to be returned to court and result in a retrieving error from this, it needs to have earlier been under the control of a retriever.*
- 7) Individuals from the team or club line refereeing who are providing “basic retrieving” are expected to retrieve out of play balls from their designated team’s retriever area and place these back on court behind the ball return line as quickly as they can, and at at least walking pace. They cannot be required by their designated team to pass balls to particular active players, or to chase down or leave balls that are moving at speed towards the off-court centre line - though may do so if they wish.
  - 8) Any unsportsmanlike behaviour or infringements by a basic retriever will be recorded by the referee. Serious or repeated infringements may result in a yellow card or further sanctions for the offending basic retriever.
  - 9) Where a team has more than two available retrievers, retrievers may be changed during the reset between each set.

## **8. Exiting the Court**

- 1) An exiting player is a player who has been deemed “out” by the referee and is in the process of leaving the court.
- 2) Any player who has been hit and is obviously not attempting to or has failed to catch the deflected ball is also classed as an exiting player.
- 3) An out player should leave the court without interfering with play as quickly as possible and join the back of the queue of out players in the player return area.
  - a. Where an out player was in control of a ball at the time that they were deemed “out”, they are permitted to transfer this ball to a teammate if this does not cause any delay to them leaving the court. An out player is not permitted to interfere with any ball that was not under their control at the time that they were deemed “out”, or delay transferring a ball. Any violations may result in a penalty set for the offending player.

*The referee should be overall looking to minimise any disruption to play caused by a single player being called out. This means stopping teams from being able to use out players to impact the game or to explicitly set up additional plays (e.g. an out player cannot hold onto a ball)*

*Similarly to retrieved balls, the transferred ball must either be received behind the return line, or must be taken behind the return line before thrown.*



- 4) Where a player has been “hit” and is attempting to catch the deflected ball, subsequent plays made against that player are resolved as follows:
  - i. The player may be hit and deemed out by additional throws.
  - ii. Catches made by the player are void, unless the player first catches the deflected ball, saving themselves from being out.
  - iii. A “hit” player is not permitted to do anything to try to eliminate the opposition unless they have first caught the deflection. All plays made by the player between the deflection and catch of the deflected ball are void and the player will be called out, including any catch of another ball made between the initial hit and the catch of the deflected ball.
  - *Where a player is hit by ball A and this ball goes into the air, and the player catches ball B before completing the catch of ball A, the player would be called out and no catch would stand. Once hit by ball A the only action the player is allowed to take is to try to catch ball A. Any other action results in the player being confirmed out.*
- 5) Upon becoming “out”, an exiting player should promptly raise both hands above their heads to signal that they are out and should no longer be a target. Any player who is adjudged to have deliberately thrown at a player who is out and indicating that they should no longer be a target will be called out.
  - *Where a player releases their ball late and it hits or reaches very close to the targeted player after they have signalled that they are out, the referee should consider the player’s throwing motion and whether they had time to stop the throw after becoming aware that the targeted player was out.*
  - *The referee should also consider whether the targeted player is clearly out. Where a targeted player has not raised their hands above their head and has not very explicitly been hit/ otherwise got out in a way that the throwing player cannot have avoided seeing, the throwing player is entitled to throw at the targeted player.*
- 6) Any ball that hits an exiting player is considered to still be a “live” ball. Therefore a ball that has hit an exiting player which hasn’t been intentionally deflected by that player can be caught or hit other players out.
- 7) An exiting player must not intentionally obstruct a live ball that is in flight while leaving the playing area. This includes shielding other players, catching, or otherwise altering the path of a live ball. Where an official determines an exiting player has intentionally attempted to impact play, the non-offending team captain will be able to decide on the distribution of dodgeballs (for instance, they may choose to be passed all five balls). Time will not be stopped.

*Players should not be able to intentionally set up plays, including catches, by interfering with a live ball when already out. Actions that are reflex or due to safety considerations, and only a split second after having become out, should not be penalised (for instance, catching the next ball to hit if that ball does not require movement to catch).*



## **9. Returning to the Court**

- 1) A returning player is a player who was “out” and in the player return area, and is waiting to return to play as a result of a catch.
- 2) Players who are “out” must stand in the player return area in the order in which they were out, with the player who was first out stood nearest to the back line of the court. Failing to stand in the correct order may result in players being denied the right to return to play as a result of a catch.  
*Players are encouraged to check with the referees that they are standing in the correct order.*
- 3) Players must return to play in the order in which they were “out”. Any violation of this rule will result in the player who incorrectly returned to court being called “out”, and the player who should have returned stays at the front of the player return area queue but is not allowed to enter until the next opportunity. Where the violation is considered purposeful and unsporting, the referee may issue a yellow card to the offending player.  
*Where only a few seconds have passed before the violation is noted, and no further outs have occurred, the incorrect player should just be called “out”. Where the match has been affected in any way, a penalty set to the player who returned incorrectly should be issued. Where the violation is considered purposeful (regardless of whether any outs occur before it is noted), a yellow card to at least the incorrect player should be issued.*
- 4) Returning players must have both feet inside the playing area in order to be able to be hit, or to catch.

## **10. Live and Dead Balls**

- 1) A ball thrown by an opposing player only becomes “dead” when it makes contact with the floor (or other external surface), or is caught. The thrown ball is still live on contact with another ball or player, including any ball not in a player’s possession. Multiple hits can therefore be made as a result of one throw.

## **11. Hits and Attempts**

- 1) An “attempt” is the act of throwing the ball at a member of the other team to try to hit them with the ball. The thrown ball must be within 1m of the targeted player at some point in its trajectory to be deemed a “valid attempt”. Failure to make a valid attempt with the thrown ball will result in the throwing player being called out.  
*A throw that is off court but is within 1m of the targeted player at some point in its trajectory is not an invalid attempt.*
- 2) Balls may only be thrown, with the exception of a block attack.
- 3) Players are not allowed to roll a ball to the opposing team, unless instructed to do so by a match official.  
*This would be considered an invalid attempt and called out.*



- 4) A throw may be performed with one or both hands and must involve the ball leaving the throwing player's hands before it makes contact with the opposing player; players may not be "tagged" out.
- 5) Any intentional transfer of a ball to the opponent's half by any means other than a valid attempt or a block can be considered an invalid attempt. The transferring player can be called out at the point at which the ball enters the opponent's half (beyond the far neutral zone line) and no opposition player may be a hit by a ball used in this way.
- 6) Intentionally kicking or spiking a ball will result in an out for the offending player.  
*This is an out regardless of whether the direction is towards the opposition, a player's own team, or elsewhere.*
- 7) A player is hit out the moment that any part of their body, hair or clothing is hit by a live ball. This includes any ball rebounding off another player or ball (both blocked balls and balls lying on the ground on court), not just balls thrown by the opposition.
  - *In accordance with the British Dodgeball code of conduct, all players should leave the court when knowingly hit – without requiring a call to be made by the referee. Any player who does not do so where the referee believes they could not reasonably have believed they were not out, should be sanctioned for unsportsmanlike conduct. For instance, where a player is hit square but does not raise their hands to show that they are out, or look to be leaving the court, until the referee instructs them to do so, this would result in a penalty set.*
  - *The referee should be aware that where a player is being targeted by multiple balls or there are multiple simultaneously players, the player may be less likely to be aware that they have been hit.*
  - *The referee is able to reinstate a player where the player has left the court when they were not in fact out.*
- 8) For a player to be hit out the original attempt must be valid and made by an "in" player.
  - *"Leap of faith" throwing plays are permitted. Where the throwing player releases their throw before they become out (by touching any surface outside of their side of the court - in this case the ground on the opposition's side of the court), the ball they have released is still live and any hit/ catch will still count.*
  - *Where a "leap of faith" results in the throwing player making contact with an opposition player, this will result in a yellow card to the throwing player.*
  - *Where a player who has made a "leap of faith" does not leave the court quickly and obstructs an opposition player's play, this will be considered unsportsmanlike and will result in a penalty set for that player.*
- 9) A player is out at the moment of contact. Although the hitting ball remains "live", the player may no longer make any plays other than to save themselves (and make a catch) by catching the ball that put them out.



- 10) A Head Shot is a valid attempt and a player struck on the head is out unless the referee believes it was intentionally used in an unsportsmanlike fashion. A deliberate dangerous or unsportsmanlike head shot will result in a yellow card or further sanctions for the throwing player.
- *The referee should consider whether they believe the throwing player is acting maliciously, or could have reasonably expected that this attempt might hit the opposing player in the head. For instance, a head shot not entirely as a result of the target player's movement, so where any throw and (big) movement was not simultaneous, would result in a yellow card for the throwing player.*
  - *This particularly applies to instances at close range/ at the front of the court though is not limited to this if the throwing player is still adjudged to be acting maliciously.*

## 12. Catches

- 1) A player is out if a live ball that they have thrown is caught by an opposition player. When this happens, the throwing player is out and the catching player also brings back into play the first of their team's out players. If there are not out players, no one is brought back into play.
- 2) Any catch made on an attempt by the opposition will be deemed a catch. This attempt does not have to be valid, or made by an "in" player- provided it is an attempt made by a player on the opposing team whilst that player has at least one foot on court.
- 3) When a player jumps to make a catch, the catch is complete once the player has control of the ball. Any subsequent actions, such as being hit by another ball or landing out of bounds will be seen as a separate action that happens after the catch. In these instances the catch will stand but the catching player will then be out.
- 4) Where momentum carries a player off court whilst making a catch, the catch will still count providing control of the ball is established before the player makes contact with any ground off court, including the boundary lines.  
*The equivalent rules apply where a player goes out of bound across the far neutral zone line. A player is entitled to enter the opposition's side of the court aerially to make a genuine attempt to catch a ball; however, they should not do so if this would initiate contact with an opposition player.*
- 5) A catch on a ball thrown before it is "live" (for instance, following the opening rush or following a retriever returning a ball to the court) will be considered a valid catch.  
*A ball thrown before it is "live" is catchable but cannot hit. It is not an invalid attempt.*
- 6) A catch made on a player who still continued to throw although already "out" will be considered a valid catch.



- 7) A player is allowed to fumble a ball while catching. Where a live ball initially hits a player and bounces off them, the ball is still live and may still be “caught”, but the hit player is “out” unless they are the player to catch and secure control of the ball – and this must be before the ball touches another player, surface, or object.
  - *Where a player is hit by ball A and this ball goes into the air, and the player catches ball B before completing the catch of ball A, the player would be called out and no catch would stand. Once hit by ball A the only action the player is allowed to take is to try to catch ball A. Any other action results in the player being confirmed out.*
- 8) A catch is only complete when a player has full control of the caught ball – the ball must be stable and in contact with at least one of the player’s hands.
- 9) If a player becomes out during the catching process, before the catcher has full control of the caught ball, the catch does not count.
- 10) A player is allowed to drop a ball that they had control of when they are attempting to catch an incoming ball. However, players who drop a ball in order to try to catch must take reasonable care to ensure the ball does not roll onto the opposition’s side of the court.
  - a. Where a player drops a ball in their control in order to attempt to catch, but does not successfully complete the catch (including not making any contact with the incoming ball), they will be called out if the dropped ball rolls onto the opposition’s side of the court. They are out at the point the ball crosses the far neutral zone line.
  - b. Where a player drops a ball in their control in order to attempt to catch, and successfully completes the catch, if the dropped ball rolls onto the opposition’s side of the court they will only be called out if it is clear that the player could have prevented the ball from rolling across the line and still made the catch.

*A player should always be looking to prevent a ball from rolling onto the opposition’s side. If the successful catch is made at the back of the court and the player is not under any pressure, they should reasonably be expected to move to prevent the ball from rolling onto the opposition’s side – where this scenario applies and they do not attempt to prevent the ball rolling over, they can be called out.*
- 11) Trapping is the act of stopping an in-flight ball by pinning it between a wall, floor, or other object that would otherwise render it a dead ball. Trapping is not considered a valid catch and the player executing the trap is deemed hit out.
- 12) Players are not permitted to use their uniform in a way that assists in the catching of a ball – for instance, pulling out their shirt.



## 13. Blocking

- 1) A player can use any live ball or dead ball in their possession to block another ball. The blocked ball remains live following contact with the blocking ball. If the blocked ball deflects off the blocking ball onto the blocking player, a player on their team, or an opposition player, the hit player will be “out”.
- 2) Any hands holding a ball used to block with will be regarded as part of the ball. Any player hit on the hands by a live ball in these circumstances is therefore “not out”.  
*Any hit on the lower arms or any other part of the body, whilst a player is in possession of a ball, should be called out.*
- 3) When a player uses a ball in their possession to block a thrown ball, the player will be called out if they lose control of the ball that they are holding as a result of the impact of the thrown ball. The thrown ball must still be “live” for this to result in an “out”, and so must not have hit the floor or other surface before touching the impacted dodgeball. Control is lost if the impacted dodgeball is dropped, or is moved such that there is a clear gap/ air between the player’s body and the ball.  
*Rotation of the ball used for blocking is permitted, provided there is no clear gap/ air visible to the referee between the player’s body and the ball.*
- 4) A player may also be called out for “loss of control” if, during the motion of throwing a ball in their possession, the ball is knocked from their hand(s) whilst there is still contact between the throwing player and the ball.  
*This is for the referee to judge whether they believe the player still had control of the ball at the time of contact.*
- 5) A blocked ball can be caught. If the blocked ball is caught by a player not on the blocking player’s team, the blocking player will be out and an out player on the catcher’s team will be brought back into play.
- 6) If the blocked ball is caught by a player on the blocking player’s team, the original thrower of the blocked ball will be out and an out player on the catcher’s team will be brought back into play.
- 7) A player may choose to drop a ball they have just used as a blocking ball in order to catch the blocked ball.  
*This is for the referee to judge that this was a conscious and controlled drop of the ball as opposed to a loss of control. A loss of control would be called out.*
- 8) A player is allowed to drop a second ball that they had control of when they are attempting to block an incoming ball. However, players who drop a ball in order to try to block must take reasonable care to ensure the ball does not roll onto the opposition’s side of the court.
  - a. Where a player drops a ball in their control in order to attempt to block, but does not successfully complete the block (including not making any contact with the



incoming ball), they will be called out if the dropped ball rolls onto the opposition's side of the court. They are out at the point the ball crosses the far neutral zone line.

- b. Where a player drops a ball in their control in order to attempt to block, and successfully completes the block, if the dropped ball rolls onto the opposition's side of the court they will only be called out if it is clear that the player could have prevented the ball from rolling across the line and still made the block.

*A player should always be looking to prevent a ball from rolling onto the opposition's side. If the successful block is made at the back of the court and the player is not under any pressure, they should reasonably be expected to move to prevent the ball from rolling onto the opposition's side – where this scenario applies and they do not attempt to prevent the ball rolling over, they can be called out.*

## 14. Lines

- 1) A player is out if they touch with any part of their person, including clothing and hair, any line marking the boundaries of their team's section of the court, or any surface beyond these boundaries. This includes touching the far neutral zone line or crossing over the other side of the neutral zone.

- i. At least one foot must touch the ground within the court boundary lines, with no part of the player's body touching ground outside of the court boundary lines, for a player to be considered in bounds.

- *Where a player is returning to the court, they should not deliberately delay entry in order to avoid being in bounds for a particular attack; however, a player is permitted to find a safe and suitable space at which to enter the court.*
- *If a team throws at an opposing player who is returning to court and has one foot still touching the floor out of bounds, any hits on or catches by the targeted player do not count.*
- *Where a team appear to be deliberately throwing at a returning player who they know is not likely to be a 'live' target, the validity of the throws should be considered relative to any other players on the returning players team – and will be considered invalid attempts if they meet this criteria. However, an attempt such as this should not be invalid if a player has deliberately delayed re-entry.*

- 2) A player will be called "out" if they step out of bounds to attempt to make a catch or to avoid being hit.

*A player may not use a ball that is out of bounds to prevent themselves from falling out of bounds, for instance by leaning on the ball. This would be called out.*



## 15. Neutral Zone

- 1) Players from both teams may enter the neutral zone, but may not touch the opposition's neutral zone line or any ground over the opposition's neutral zone line with any part of their body or clothing, or the offending player will be called "out".
- 2) Players may reach across the neutral zone into the opponent's court to retrieve a ball, but may not make contact with the ground on the neutral zone line or on the opposition's side of the court.

*A player may not use a ball that is out of bounds to prevent themselves from falling out of bounds, for instance by leaning on the ball. This would be called out. This 'out of bounds' includes over the far neutral zone line.*

- 3) No physical contact should be made between opposing players. Any intentional and avoidable physical contact will result in an immediate "out" and a yellow card for any player initiating contact. The sanctions committee will review whether further sanctions for dangerous play are appropriate.
  - *In general a player is entitled to stand their ground within the space they are already in, either in the neutral zone or elsewhere on the court. Any contact resulting from a player having stood their ground is unlikely to be adjudged to have been initiated by the player who stood their ground.*
  - *It is possible for contact to occur where this is not adjudged to have been intentionally and avoidably initiated by either player – for instance, if two players make a simultaneous movement that is likely to have been unexpected by the other player. In this scenario neither player would be out from the contact alone.*

## 16. Behaviour

- 1) It is a requirement that all players competing at British Dodgeball leagues and events abide by the British Dodgeball Code of Conduct.
- 2) A player will be called out if they display poor behaviour (for instance, swearing or abusive language) towards an opposing player, volunteer, spectator, or match official. This includes any undirected swearing that is within earshot of the referee.
- 3) Referees may call out or if necessary further sanction any player who shows unsportsmanlike conduct. This includes but is not limited to feigning being out or feigning injury or any other form of deceit.
  - *For example, where a player puts their hands up to signify that they are "out" but no play occurred that might have feasibly got them out, the player should still be called out for unsportsmanlike conduct. In particular if this action then impacts on the opposition's play – for instance, pulling out of a counter attack or changing target, the player should be called out.*



## 17. Stalling

- 1) Players are not allowed to intentionally stall the game. Once a team has or can have possession of three or more of (the majority of) the balls in play, they should look to make an attempt with at least one of those balls. The match officials will allow them up to approximately 5 seconds in which to initiate an attack on the other team before instructing them to “play n of” those balls if the official believes they are still intentionally stalling.
  - *The “play ball” rule is designed to ensure the game flows and is a team no-stalling rule. Where, having allowed up to approximately five seconds, the team with majority possession do not look like at least one player is about to make an attacking play in the next 1-2 seconds (such that the referee would not be calling “play n balls” just as a team were about to release throws as this should be avoided), then “play n balls” should be called. For instance, if at least one player is advancing to the front of the court in a way that looks like they are about to throw, play ball should not be called unless all players actively show they are stalling (e.g. all players dummy).*
  - *Making an attempt with fewer than n balls, such that a team still has possession of three or more balls, is not stalling and fulfils a team’s obligation to ensure the game flows. Following this attempt with fewer than n balls, the team would then again have up to approximately 5 seconds in which to initiate an attack.*
  - *The approximately 5 seconds a team has to initiate an attack before “play n balls” is called is not meant as a prescriptive and definitive time. Referees should be mindful of the match situation and whether it is in a team’s interest to stall.*
  - *An obvious stall that might be called in under 5 seconds would be where a team in the lead in either a set or overall are stood at the back of the court, all with possession of the balls and are making no attempt to orchestrate an attacking play.*
  - *Where a play occurs during the approximately 5 seconds a team has to initiate an attack, that alters the number of balls the team due to initiate has on their side of the court, the referee should judge how many balls the team is in possession of at the point at which they are about to call “play n balls”, regardless of how many balls were in possession when the team first begun a phase of having the majority of balls. (For instance, where a team initially has possession of 3 balls and does not initiate an attack, but gains 2 further balls a second before play ball is called and they are clearly in the team’s possession and able to be played, the referee may call “play 4 balls”).*
- 2) When a team has possession of three or more balls, they will be regarded as the team who must be active, and will have five seconds to make an attempt with at least n of the balls in their possession from the moment the match official has called on them to “play” “n” of those balls.
- 3) A dodgeball is considered to be in a player’s possession if it is in hand or it is within a reachable distance of the player. This includes any dodgeball which is off the court but can be reached by an on-court player or a retriever.



- 4) A minimum of 3 balls must be on court (on any side of the court) before an official will call for either team to “play” balls.
- 5) If “play n balls” is called, teams are allowed to retain possession of only one of the balls that was in their possession at the time that they were called to “play ball”. Where “play n balls” has not been called, teams may retain as many or as few balls as they choose.
- 6) If “play n balls” is called and any players still have possession of a dodgeball or could have possession but have declined to pick up the ball when the five seconds expires (where possession is only lost if the dodgeballs are thrown through valid attempts), they will be called “out”.
- 7) Where a ball has to be retrieved from off court, the ball will be considered to be in the team’s possession as soon as a player or retriever touches the ball (where the ball is within the 1m area around the court boundaries).

*The approximately five seconds in order to make an attempt therefore begins from the point a player or retriever is touching three or more balls.*

- 8) The referee may call “play n balls” at any point when a team has possession of three or more balls and the referee considers the team to be intentionally stalling the game. The referee is not required to notify teams of how many seconds have passed once they have called “play n balls”.
- 9) When “play n balls” has been called by an official, the team with the majority of the balls must make attempts which can get a member of the opposing team out. Their attempts must be seen as “valid attempts” by the officials.
- 10) Teams must gain possession of a dodgeball that is considered to be on their team’s side of the court as soon as they are able to do so. Where the referee believes a player has deliberately delayed or declined gaining possession of a dodgeball that was already on their side of the court, such as a dodgeball rolling or bouncing across the width of the court that is not picked up but is within reachable distance of a player, or an off court ball on their side of the court that has not been retrieved in a reasonable timeframe, the referee may consider this ball to be in possession of that player for the purposes of the no stalling rule.
- 11) Where a player’s deliberate actions cause a ball to move towards the opposition’s side of the court, the ball is considered to be on this player’s side of the court and they must gain possession of the ball as quickly as possible. Where there is no deliberate action affecting the movement of the ball towards the opposition’s side (including deflections or bouncing back off solid surfaces) the player’s team is not expected to gain possession of this ball.
- 12) Passing a ball to a team-mate will not pause or re-start the five seconds.



- 13) Players do not have to be holding a dodgeball to be called “out” for possessing a dodgeball in violation of the no stalling rule. Where a dodgeball is not being held at the end of the five seconds, the last player on that team to have made contact with the ball within those five seconds will be called “out”. Where no players were in contact with a ball, the player that the referee considers to be the closest player to that dodgeball is considered to have possession of it, and will be the player to be called out.
- 14) In situations where there are more dodgeballs on a player’s side of the court than there are players and play ball is called, all players must make an attempt within 5 seconds, and this will continue until the opposing team has the majority of the balls. For example, if a team has 2 players left on court and all 5 balls in their possession, those players must between them throw two balls within the first set of five seconds. The players would still have the majority of balls, so providing both players were still “in”, they would have to throw two more balls within another set of five seconds.
- 15) If each team has 2 balls and a ball is stationary in the neutral zone, the side with the majority of the balls is the side with the player nearest to the stationary ball.
- 16) Where a player in possession of a ball on a team that has been told to “play ball” becomes hit “out” during the play ball count, the number of balls needed to be “played” by that team is reduced by one as that player’s ball is discounted.
- 17) Where a player in possession of a ball on a team that has been told to “play ball” makes a catch or tries to make a catch (generally by dropping their ball) during the play ball count, the number of balls needed to be “played” by that team within the 5 seconds does not reduce – trying to catch is not an attempt.

## **18. Simultaneous Plays**

- 1) Simultaneous play occurs when two or more opposing players are hit and/ or catch balls at the same time, such that the match officials cannot determine which play was completed first. All results are resolved simultaneously; each player hit is deemed “out”, and each catch results in one player returning from the player return area.  
*Referees should make every effort to adjudge whether something wasn’t simultaneous; a call of simultaneous play should not become the default option.*
- 2) Should a simultaneous play result in all players being eliminated, the set will be concluded and the set result will be declared a draw. Both teams will then take up their positions for the next set.
- 3) When a player is in the act of catching a ball and is hit by another ball simultaneously, such that the referee cannot determine which action was completed first, this is classified as a simultaneous catch and hit. This means that the thrower of the caught ball is deemed “out”, the catching player is deemed “out” for being hit, and one player from the catching player’s team is allowed to return to the court from the player out area for the catch.



## 19. Injury

- 1) Where feasible, an injured player is expected to make their way off court as soon as possible. Referees will only stop time where a player is unable to do so. If time has been stopped for an injured player, they must be substituted for at least the remainder of the set. Where a team has no substitute they must play short-handed.

*A referee will look to stop time either where they believe a player will be unable to make their own way off court quickly; where the player themselves or their captain/ coach has instructed the referee that time should be stopped because they are unable to leave the court or rejoin play quickly (also see point 3 below about head/ blood injuries); or where a player takes in excess of 10 seconds to leave the court or rejoin play. If time is stopped for the latter two cases, as an injury precaution and to prevent injury stoppages that are not genuine, the player must sit out the rest of the set and therefore must leave the court boundaries, to be replaced by a substitute either in the injured player's place on court if the injured player was still in, or in the place the injured player would have taken in the player return area if the player was out. Where the referee wrongly adjudges an injury to be serious and a player did or clearly would have been able to make their way off court/ rejoin play quickly.*

- 2) An injured player who is unable to carry on playing and is still "in" may be replaced by a substitute who will take the injured player's place directly by coming straight into play. Where the injured player is "out" the substitute will take the injured player's place in the out queue in the player return area. The injured player is not permitted to participate for at least the remainder of the set.

*Referees should show compassion with regards to injuries whilst also looking to ensure the match and event can continue with minimal delays. Injured players should be asked if they are able to leave the court area in order for the match to resume, but should not be pressured into doing so particularly where there is any risk of shock or further injury.*

- 3) Any player suffering from a blood injury must be replaced, or must leave court for at least the remainder of that set if there are no substitutes. The flow of blood from the injury must have stopped before the player may return to court in any new set.