



Rules Guidance

WDBF Rules Implementation Guidance - 2nd September 2026

Rule 4 Team (no. of ball retrievers allowed)

British Dodgeball Regulations cover ball retrievers amounts:

III. Retrievers

1. Teams are responsible for providing their own retrievers. These can be anyone not playing on court, including substitutes.
2. Teams must have a minimum of 2 retrievers at all times. Teams must play shorthanded, using players as retrievers if necessary, to meet this requirement.
3. Should team captains both agree in advance of the match and inform a main referee, each team may use 3 retrievers.
 - 3.1. This agreement lasts for the duration of the entire match once this agreement has been made. A team may reduce their own retriever numbers back to 2, but may not request that opponents reduce their retriever numbers from 3.

Rule 5 Team Leaders

British Dodgeball Regulations cover Team Leaders:

II. Coaches & Team Leaders

1. Anyone standing in the player return area who is not a live player is classed as a coach.
2. Each playing team can have a maximum of two coaches during each match they play in. Only one of these may be classed as the team leader.
 - 2.1. If no coach is present, a captain will fulfil the role of a team leader.
3. The coach must remain inside their player return area or penalty box at all times during live sets.
4. Should the team leader leave the court boundary area, or receive a blue, yellow or red card, the team must identify a new team representative to fulfil this responsibility until the original team representative returns or sanction is fulfilled.

The only exception to coaches leaving their player area is if this is authorised by a match official. *Example: Coaches are called in to explain a rules decision or to assist with first aid. They can leave their area between sets and timeouts.*

Rule 14 - False Starts

If there is a false start, time is paused, the set is restarted with a turnover against the offending team. Any time lost between starting a set, the false start being declared and then pausing the match clock is not restored.

False Start Procedure:

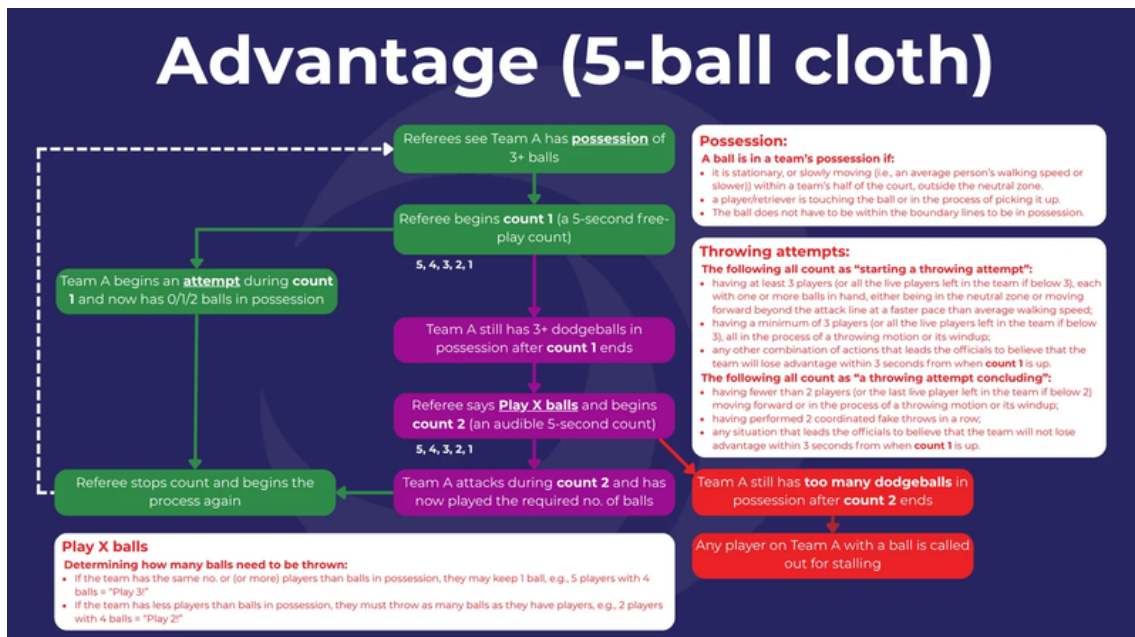
1. Team A false starts;
2. Pause the match clock
3. Team B are given all 5 balls
4. The set timer is reset to 3 minutes.
5. Announce time left in the half.
6. Start both clocks with a blow of the whistle

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Rule 18 - Play Ball

See this [diagram](#) containing rules references and additional guidance:



In summary:

- Begin count 1 (the first count of 5 seconds) when a team has possession - this may be earlier than last season as possession counts when balls are with retrievers rather than waiting for them to be put onto court;
- Pause the count if a team initiates an attack (e.g. by proceeding up court/in a throwing motion/makes the referee think they will throw in next 3 seconds); and finally
- Say 'play ball' if:
 - count 1 is finished
 - the team performs 2+ fake throws
 - the team makes you think they will not attack in next 3 seconds

Rule 20 - Blocking

A non-activated ball cannot be used to block and will result in the player being called out, including during opening rush.



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Rule 23 - Exiting Players

When a player is hit (in front of the activation line), they place the balls on the court, stationary, where they have been hit. *If a player is backtracking and gets called out by an official, the ball(s) carried by the player must be returned to the position the official has determined the player was hit. If a player is unsure where to place the ball, they should ask the referee.* If a player does not place the ball down, then the penalty is a blue card. Factors to consider for the blue card:

- *If a ball is flicked back (old habits) = Blue Card.*
- *If the ball is placed down but rolls, benefiting their team or preventing the other team from taking possession = Blue Card*

Rule 28 - Sacrifice Play

Under WDBF, during a sacrifice (suicide) play, if the player successfully hits the player (with the ball) before landing, the attacking player is not out. The jumping player must remain within the court boundaries while travelling back to their half of the court (crossing the centre line).

When travelling back, no active plays may be made by this player or the player is deemed out: No catching, no dodging, no blocking, no picking up of balls, no intentional change of speed, no throwing.

Only 1 sacrifice may happen at a time; the 1st sacrifice player must return across the centre line before the 2nd player can make a sacrifice play. If multiple sacrifice plays happen, then all players making these attempts are out. Example:

1. Player 1 makes a sacrifice play
2. Hits other team
3. Starts running back (has not crossed the centre line)
4. Player 2 starts their attack.
5. Both players are out; the hit player is also still out. (Player 1 was not out before hit was made)

Rule 31 - Ball Retrievers

Balls must be put back into play as soon as possible, either:

- passed to an active player behind the return line, or
- placed on court behind the return line

Rule 34 - Yellow Card

A yellow card is only 5 minutes



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Rule 37 - Challenges

Challenges are only for applications of the rules by an official; this is limited to 2 attempts per game by a captain or coach. A challenge must be made as immediately as possible following an incorrect application, but after an active play. Resolution of challenges should be completed quickly (no longer than 1 minute where possible). The onus is on the challenging team to explain to the referee what rule was given wrong and what it should be, with evidence. Examples include:

- "You refereed rule X this way. It should actually be this. Read this rule here."
- "You refereed rule X this way. Actually, this is a WDBF rule which is superseded in the British Dodgeball Regulations. Read this regulation here."
- "You refereed rule X this way. It should actually be refereed this way as per BD's WDBF Rules Guidance document."

The only acceptable documents that can be evidenced are:

- WDBF Cloth Rules 2026
- the British Dodgeball Regulations 26-27 season, and
- the Rules Guidance September 2026 (this document).

If this no such evidence can be produced by the team, then the challenge is rejected automatically. Referees should also have a copy of the rules and regulations to hand in case this is needed.

Sorting out challenges can not last longer than one minute or so; if it cannot be cleared up by then, the challenge must be rejected for the current game and the referee must seek clarification after the game - referees must not spend 3 minutes+ trying to find other referees etc to ask to get to the bottom of the answer as this risks putting a whole event behind schedule.

If a team is not satisfied with the outcome of a challenge, then please complete the [referee feedback form](#) in order to report this.

Further Guidance

Please be proactive in learning the new ruleset. If unsure after reading the rules & regulations, or want to check that your application of a rule is correct, contact the British dodgeball Technical Committee via disciplinary@britishdodgeball.com or Caitlin Zealley (British Dodgeball & WDBF Rules & Technical Liaison) directly. This should be, where possible, with the specific rule number e.g. Rule 24.2 - "Insert question on rule"