GAA Handball Playing Rules

Note:

The Playing Rules published in this booklet are those, which apply to GAA Handball as it is played in the All-Ireland Championships & Tournaments, in the four codes: 4-Wall, Softball, Hardball & Wallball.

Some Competitions may be played using the International 4-Wall Playing Rules, of which there are slight modifications in a few areas of the rulebook.

Sunday 9th Feb 2025

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Section 1 - The Game

Rule 1.1 Types

There are various codes of Handball played worldwide. In Ireland we play four codes of Handball: 4-Wall, Wallball, 60x30 (Softball & Hardball). The 4-Wall & Wallball codes are played internationally, whilst both the Softball & Hardball codes are played only in Ireland.

(See www.gaahandball.ie/videos for video explaining the different codes of Handball)In any code of Handball, the game can be played competitively in both a Singles (2 players) & Doubles (4 players) format.

Rule 1.2 Description

Handball, as the name implies, is essentially a competitive game in which the ball is struck against the front wall with any part of the hand from the wrist line down. As mentioned above, there are variations of the game played all over the world, with GAA Handball the governing body for the sport in Ireland.

Rule 1.3 Objective

The primary objective is to return the ball, using any part of the hand from the wrist line down to the front wall before the ball bounces twice.

Rule 1.4 Scoring

To earn a point, a player must serve the ball and win the pursuing rally, unless its rally scoring where a point is scored on each rally by the player winning that rally.

A rally is won when one player is unable to return the opponent's shot to the front wall before it touches the floor twice, or when a player returns the ball so that it hits the floor before striking the front wall. Points can also be scored directly from the serve, if the receiver cannot return the served ball legally. A point scored directly from the serve is called an "Ace". When the serving side loses one rally in singles (or two consecutive rallies in doubles), it loses the serve.

Losing the serve is called a "Hand-Out". In Doubles, two consecutive Hand-Outs is referred to as a "Side-Out".

Rule 1.5 The Match

a. In Irish Championships, matches are played as the best of 3 sets. Adults and Minor play to 21 points. Juveniles (U16 & U17) play sets to 21 points with a tiebreak to 11 points, while Juveniles (U15 and younger) play sets to 15 points.
b. If the first two sets are split between both players/sides, then a "tiebreaker" is played to determine the winner. Side with most points over the first two games serves first in the tiebreaker (See Rule 4.1).
c. International rules (used at various Nationals & Open Club Tournaments) see all tiebreakers played to 11 points, as opposed to the Irish tradition of 21 points.
d. In the case of a match played on a time basis, the player or side with the highest score at the end of the specified time is the winner.

Section 2 - Courts and Equipment

Rule 2.1 Courts

A. Wallball

The specifications for the standard Wallball Handball court are:

i. **Dimensions.**

a. **Wall**. 20ft wide (from the outside edge of one side line to the outside edge of the other side line), and 16ft high including any top line. Courts should be numbered.

b. **Floor**. The floor shall be 20ft wide from the outside edges of the side lines. It shall be 34ft from the wall to the back edge of the long line. The side lines should extend at least 10ft. beyond the long line. There also should be a minimum border of at least 10ft (but ideally 20ft of floor beyond each sideline, as well as 16ft beyond the long line) to allow for playing space.

ii. **Lines and Zones. (Wallball)**

Handball courts shall be divided and marked on the floors with 2-inch-wide lines. Recommended colours are white, yellow, red **or at least the colour should contrast the existing floor colouring.**

The lines shall be marked as follows:

a. **Short Line.** The short line runs parallel to the wall, between the sidelines, with its back edge 16ft from the wall.

b. **Long Line.** The long line runs parallel to the wall, between the sidelines, with its back edge 34ft from the wall.

c. **Top Line.** The top line runs parallel to the floor, between the sidelines, with its top edge 16 feet from the floor. (See court diagram below)

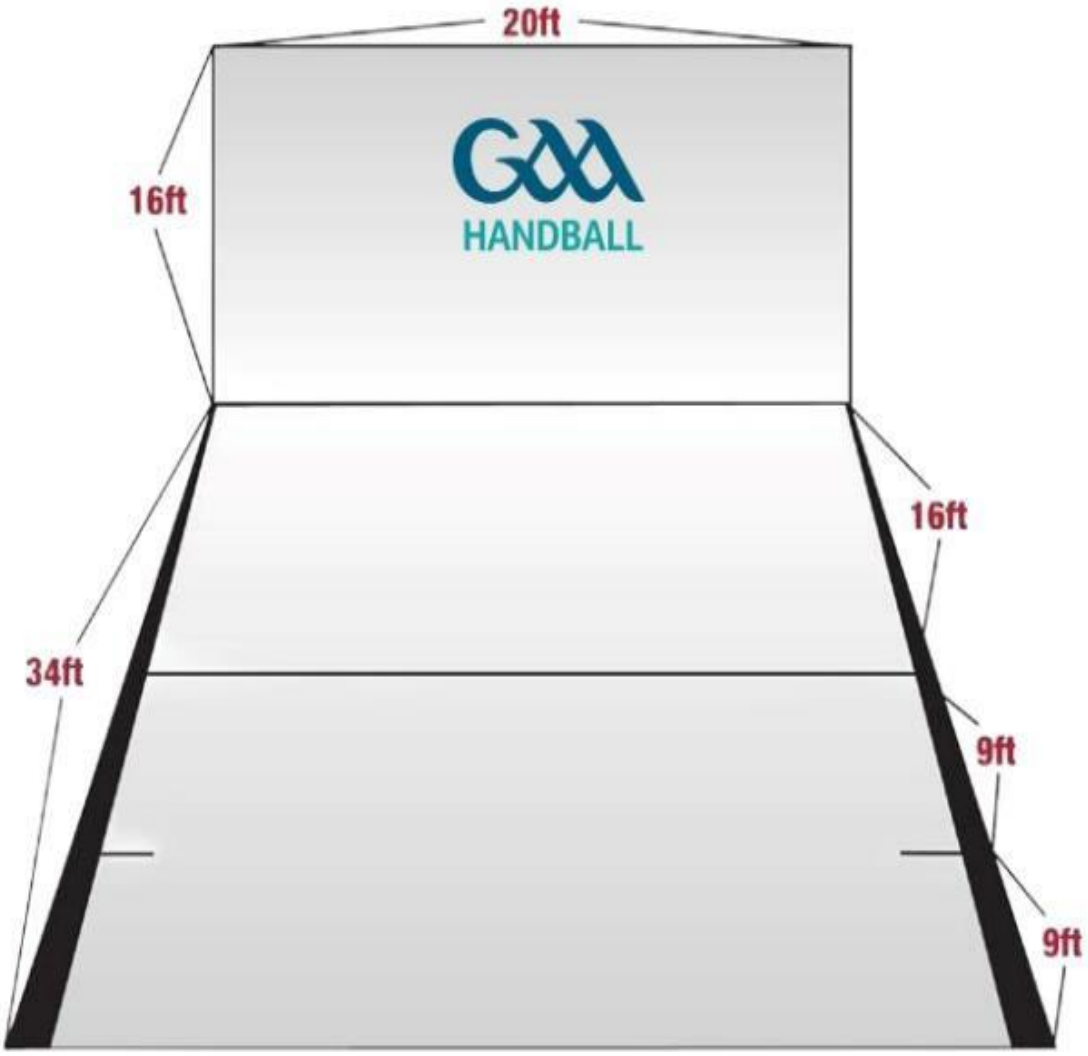
d. **Receivers Restraining Lines.** There shall be service markers, lines of at least 6 inches in length extending inward from the side lines, parallel to the short and long lines and located midway between them. The imaginary extension of these lines across the court indicates the service line.

e. **Service Zone.** The service zone is the floor inside and includes the short, service, and sidelines.

f. **Receiving Zone.** The receiving zone is the floor area behind the short line, inside and including the side and long lines.

g. **Playing Zone.** The playing zone is the floor area between the wall and the outside edges of the side and long lines.

h. **Wall Edge.** The top edge of the wall, if any, is not part of the court. A ball striking the top edge is an out.



(Diagram 1: Wallball Court Dimensions)

B. International 4-Wall (40x20)

i. Dimensions.

a. **Front Wall:** 20ft wide, 20ft high.

b. **Floor:** 20ft wide and 40ft long.

c. **Back Wall:** A full glass back wall is recommended for spectator purposes, with back wall minimum height of 12ft.

d. **Ceiling:** Finished surface should be 20ft from the Court surface and constructed using wood, with lights recessed level with the playing surface.

ii. Lines and Zones 4-Wall

Handball courts shall be divided and marked on the floors with 2-inch-wide lines. Recommended colours are white, yellow, red **or least the colour should contrast the existing floor colouring.**

The lines shall be marked as follows:

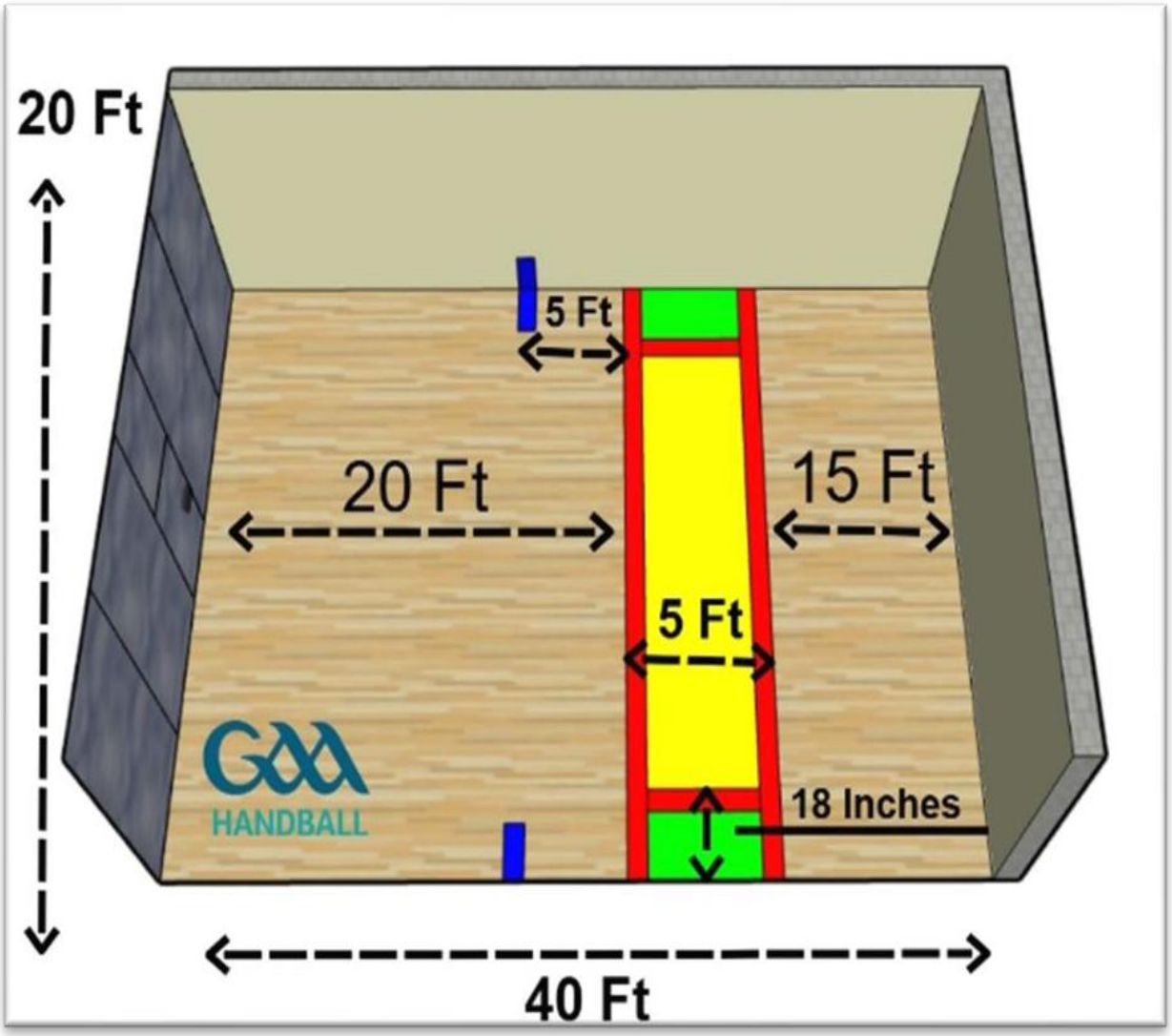
a. **Short line:** The short line is parallel to the front and back walls. Its outside edge is 20 feet from the front wall in the 4-Wall court.

b. **Service line:** The service line is parallel to the short line, and its outside edge is 5 feet in front of the outside edge of the short line.

c. **Service zone:** The service zone is the area between the outer edges of the short and service lines.

d. **Service boxes:** A service box is located at each end of the service zone by lines which have outside measurements of 18 inches from, and parallel to, each side wall.

e. **Receiver's restraining lines:** Five feet back of the outside edge of the short line, lines should be marked on the floor extending at least 6 inches from the side wall. These lines, parallel to the short line, may also be marked as a broken line extending from side wall to side wall.



(Diagram 2: 4-Wall Court Dimensions)

C. Irish 60x30 Court:

i. Dimensions

a. **Front Wall:** 30ft wide & 27ft high.

b. **Floor:** 30ft wide & 60ft long.

c. **Back Wall:** A full glass back wall is recommended for spectator purposes, with minimum height of 10ft.

d. **Under Roof:** No light fixtures or obstructions should be installed below 27ft high.

ii. Lines and Zones (60x30)

Handball courts shall be divided and marked on the floors with 2-inch-wide lines. Recommended colours are white, yellow, red or **at least the colour should contrast the existing floor colouring.**

The lines shall be marked as follows:

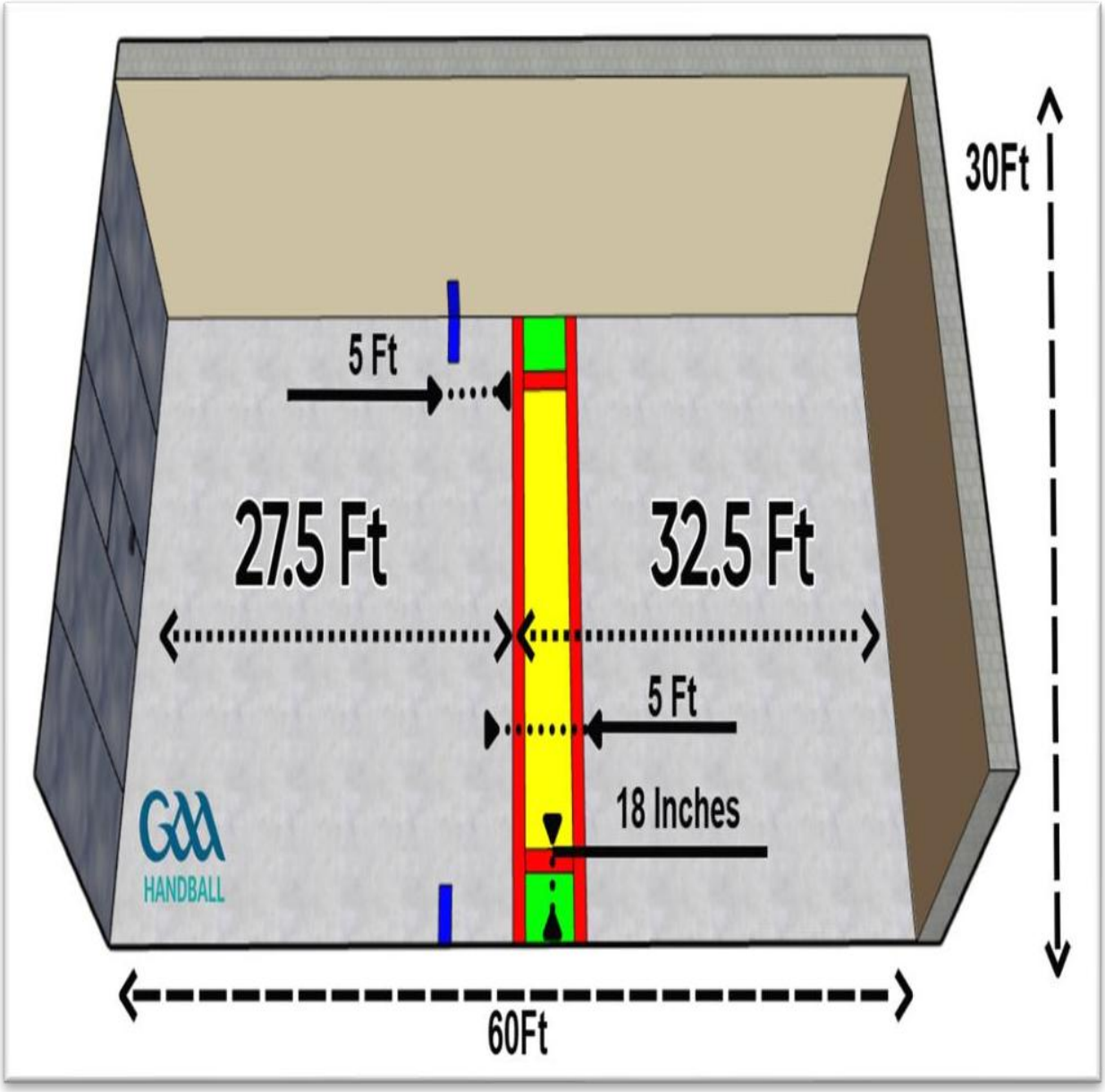
a. **Short line:** The short line is parallel to the front and back walls. Its outside edge is 32.5 feet from the front wall in the 60x30 court.

b. **Service line:** The service line is parallel to the short line, and its outside edge is 5 feet in front of the outside edge of the short line.

c. **Service zone:** The service zone is the area between the outer edges of the short and service lines.

d. **Service boxes:** A service box is located at each end of the service zone by lines which have outside measurements of 18 inches from, and parallel to, each side wall.

e. **Receiver's restraining lines:** Five feet back of the outside edge of the short line, lines should be marked on the floor extending at least 6 inches from the side wall. These lines, parallel to the short line, may also be marked as a broken line extending from side wall to side wall. (See Rule 4. 4.A)



(Diagram 3: 60x30 Court Dimensions)

Rule 2.2 Equipment.

Only official balls by the sanctioned body shall be used in all GAA Handball events.

A. Ball

i. Big Blue Wallball Specifications.

a. **Material.** The material should be rubber or synthetic material.
b. **Colour.** Colour is optional.
c. **Size.** 1 and 7/8-inch diameter, with a variation of 1/32-inch, +/-
d. **Weight.** The ball shall be 61g, with a variation of 3g, +/-
e. **Rebound.** Rebound from free fall, 70-inch drop to a hardwood floor is 48 to 52 inches Temperature of 68°F.

Other Specifications. A lighter and/or larger ball may be used for any division provided it is approved and is specified on the entry blank.

ii. Penn Wallball Specifications.

a. **Material.** The material should be rubber or synthetic material. SiO2, TiO2
b. **Colour.** Blue
c. **Size. 2.180 – 2.220 Inches** (Diameter)
d. **Weight.** 39.5 – 42.5g
e. **Rebound.** 65 – 69 Inches (from 200 inches height)

Other Specifications. A lighter and/or larger ball may be used for any division provided it is approved and is specified on the entry form blank.

iii. 4-Wall Adult Handball Specifications:

a. **Material.** The material should be rubber or synthetic material.
b. **Colour.** Colour is optional. Typically, Blue.
c. **Size.** 1.8-inch (46mm) diameter, with a variation of 0.04 inch (1mm), plus or minus.
d. **Weight.** The ball shall be 1.96oz (56g), with a variation of 0.07 ounces (2 grams), plus or minus.
e. **Rebound.** Rebound height of 70 inches (1.78m) dropped to a concrete floor, with the top of the ball to 52 inches (1.3m).

iv. 4-Wall Dark Blue Specifications:

a. **Material.** The material should be rubber or synthetic material.
b. **Colour.** Colour is optional. Typically, Dark Blue.
c. **Size.** 1.85-inch (47mm) diameter, with a variation of 0.02 inches (0.5mm), plus or minus.
d. **Weight.** 1.48 – 1.55oz (42 – 44g)
e. **Rebound.** It shall have a rebound of not less than 98.4 inches (2.5m) nor more than 104.3 inches (2.65m) when dropped from a height of 118 inches (3m) to steel.

v. 4-Wall/60x30 Challenger 2 Specifications:

a. **Material.** The material should be rubber or synthetic material.
b. **Colour.** Colour is optional. Typically, Blue.
c. **Size.** 1.83-inch (46.5mm) diameter, with variation of 0.02 inches (0.5mm), + or -.
d. **Weight.** It shall be not less than 1.38oz (39g) nor more than 1.45oz (41g).
e. **Rebound.** It shall have a rebound of not less than 90.6 inches (2.3m) nor more than 94.5

inches (2.4m) when dropped from a height of 118 inches (3m) to steel.

vi. **Challenger 1 Specifications:**
   a. **Material.** The material should be rubber or synthetic material.
   b. **Colour.** Colour is optional. Typically, Blue.
   c. **Size.** 2.09-inch (53mm) diameter, with a variation of 0.04 inches (1mm), + or -
   d. **Weight.** It shall be not less than 1.23oz (35g) nor more than 1.3oz (37g).
   e. **Rebound.** It shall have a rebound of not less than 76.8 inches (1.95m) nor more than 80.7 inches (2.05m) when dropped from a height of 118 inches (3m) to steel.

vii. **60x30 Juvenile Softball (Challenger 3) Specifications:**
   a. **Material:** The material shall be made of the best grade rubber.
   b. **Colour.** Green.
   c. **Size.** It shall not be less than 1.94 inches (49.2mm) and not more than 1.95 inches (49.6mm) in diameter.
   d. **Weight.** It shall be not less than 2.01oz (57g) nor more than 2.05oz (58g).
   e. **Rebound.** It shall have a rebound of not less than 100.4 inches (2.55m) nor more than 104.3 inches (2.65m) when dropped from a height of 118 inches (3m) to steel.

viii. **60x30 Softball (Adult Ball) Specifications:**
   a. **Softball:** The standard softball shall be made of the best grade rubber.
   b. **Colour.** Red.
   c. **Size.** It shall not be less than 2.2 inches (55.9mm) and not more than 2.25 inches (57.1mm) in diameter.
   d. **Weight.** It shall be not less than 2.05oz (58g) nor more than 2.12oz (60g)
   e. **Rebound.** It shall have a rebound of not less than 106.3 inches (2.7m) nor more than 110.2 inches (2.8m) when dropped from a height of 118 inches (3m) to steel.

ix. **60x30 Hardball Specifications:**
   a. **Hardball:** The standard hardball shall be made of suitable windings of rubber and yarn covered with goatskin or another suitable hide. It shall have a center of lancewood or cork.
   b. **Colour.** Colour is optional.
   c. **Size**. It shall not be less than 1.8 inches (47.5mm) and not more than 1.95 inches (49.5mm) in diameter.
   d. **Weight.** It shall be not less than 1.5oz (42. 5g) nor more than 1.75 oz (49.6g) in weight.
   e. **Rebound.** It shall have a rebound of not less than 2.5ft (0.76m) nor more than 3.5ft (1.067m) when dropped from a height of 8ft (2.438m) to a concrete floor.

x. **Ball Selection**

A ball should be approved by the referee for use in each match in all tournaments. During a game the referee has the authority to change balls if he deems it necessary. Though it is the referee's decision, he/she should honour requests when made by both sides or when he/she detects erratic bounces.

B. Shoes

Shoes must have soles that do not mark or damage the floor.

C. Headbands

Players must have access to a headband. They will not be required to wear it unless the referee deems it necessary to help keep the floor from getting wet.

D. Gloves

i. Gloves must be worn in all 4-Wall (40x20) competitions.

ii. Gloves are optional for softball, Wallball and Hardball. Players must have access to an adequate supply in the event of the referee requiring a player to wear them or change them, if the referee deems it necessary to keep the floor and/or ball from getting wet.

iii. **Style:**

The usual hitting surfaces of the glove must be light in colour and made of a soft material or leather. The fingers may not be webbed, connected, or removed. Any gloves which provide an unfair advantage are not allowed and must be replaced at the referee's direction.

iv. **Foreign Substances:**

No foreign substance, tape, or rubber bands shall be used on the fingers or on the palms on the outside of the gloves. Metal or hard substances may not be worn under the glove if, in the opinion of the referee, such creates an unfair advantage. On safety grounds, it is recommended to remove rings/wedding bands.

v. **Wet Gloves:**

Gloves must be changed when they become sufficiently wet to moisten the ball. This is the referee's decision. Gloves with holes that expose the skin may not be worn. It is the player's responsibility to have an ample supply of dry gloves.

E. Eye-Guards.

i. **4-Wall**

Protective eyewear is compulsory in the 4-Wall court, across all grades, to improve player safety and reduce risk of injury. (Failure to wear eye-guards will result in a technical)

ii. **60x30 Softball**

Protective eyewear is compulsory in the 60x30 court up until and including U18. (Failure to wear eye-guards will result in a technical)

iii. **60x30 Hardball**

Protective eyewear is compulsory, across all grades, to improve player safety and reduce risk of injury. (Failure to wear eye-guards will result in a technical)

iv. **Wallball**

Protective eyewear is compulsory, across all grades, to improve player safety and reduce risk of injury. (Failure to wear eye-guards will result in a technical)

Rule 2.3 Playing Attire

A. General

All components of the playing attire, including a t-shirt/jersey, shorts/leggings, socks and shoes must be clean at the start of a match.

B. Championships

i. Players are not permitted to play without shirts or play wearing singlets in inter-county or inter-club competitions.
ii. In all inter-county championships players are required to continuously wear a jersey and shorts displaying the colour of the county as registered with GAA Handball.
iii. In all inter-club championships, players are required to continuously wear a jersey and shorts displaying the colours of the club as registered with GAA Handball.
iv. In doubles matches, partners must be similarly attired, meaning both jerseys and shorts must match.
v. Failure to comply with any of these rules will result in a fine of €70 that must be paid before the county may continue to compete in official competitions or championships.

C. Tournaments

i. **Colour:**
Optional, unusual patterns that affect the opposing player's view of the ball or cause a distraction may not be worn.
ii. **Lettering & Graphics:**
Lettering/graphics of poor taste are not allowed.

D. Wet Shirts

Referee may demand that a wet shirt be changed. Players must have an ample supply of dry shirts.

Section 3 - Officials & Officiating

Rule 3.1 Tournament Director.

All fixtures/tournaments under the control of GAA Handball shall be managed by an appointed tournament director, who shall designate the officials. Whenever possible, the officials should include a chief of referees, a floor manager, match referees, and line judges.

i. **Responsibilities:**
The tournament director is responsible for overseeing the entire tournament. The tournament director, or his/her delegated representative, shall be present at all times.

ii. **Rules Briefing:**
The current official GAA Handball rules as posted on the www.gaahandball.ie will apply and be made available. Any modifications made by the tournament director must be approved by GAA Handball and stated on the entry form, and/or be available to all players at registration.

iii. **Tournaments:**
In all Irish handball tournaments, a player over the age of seventeen who loses a match shall referee the next match on the same court. Failure to do so may result in a player not being allowed to enter such competitions in the future. Players are reminded that by entering any competition, they are agreeing to all its rules and regulations.

Rule 3.2 Chief of Referees.

The chief of referees is in charge of assigning referees to all tournament matches.

Rule 3.3 Removal of Referee.

Any official may be removed from a match upon the agreement of both singles players or both doubles teams providing there is agreement by the chief of referees or the tournament director. In the event that an official's removal is requested by one player or team and not agreed to by the other, the chief of referees or the tournament director may accept or reject the request. It is recommended that the match be observed before determining what, if any, action is to be taken. If the request for change is not upheld, the player or team making the request shall be charged with a timeout. If the player or team is out of timeouts, a technical shall be assessed. This is not applicable in the case where both singles players or both doubles teams are in agreement in the request for change.

Rule 3.4 Referee.

A. Pre-Match Duties.

The referee's authority regarding a match begins once the players are called to the court. Before each match begins, it shall be the duty of the referee to:

i. **Time:**
The assigned referee should be present 15 minutes before match time**.**

ii. **Playability:**
Check on adequacy of preparation of the handball court with respect to playability.

iii. **Equipment:**
Check the availability and suitability of all materials necessary for the match such as handballs, towels, scorecards, pencils and a timepiece.

iv. **Assisting Officials:**
Check readiness and provide instructions to assisting officials.

v. **Court Hinders:**
Explain court hinders, if any, to players.

vi. **Inspect gloves, uniforms and eye protection:**
Remind players to have an adequate supply of extra gloves and shirts and access to headbands. Inspect compliance of gloves and hands with rules. Remind players that failure to wear eye protection properly will result in a technical, and a second violation in a forfeit.

vii. **Headband:**
Players must have access to a headband. They will not be required to wear it unless the referee deems it necessary to help keep the floor from getting wet.

viii. **Two-minute warning:**
Give a two-minute warning before the match and before each game.

ix. **Start game:**
Introduce players, toss a coin to determine order of serve and signal start of game.

x. **Scoring:**
Announce the scores before each rally.

xi. **Blood Injury:**
The referee shall instruct a player with a blood injury to leave the court for medical and/or other attention and ensure that any blood-stained playing attire is replaced, and that any blood-stained playing equipment is fully cleaned before play resumes.

B. Decisions.

The referee shall make all decisions with regard to the rules, and the referee has the authority to change his/her call. Where line judges are used, the referee shall announce all final judgments. In the absence of line judges, if both players in singles or three out of four in a doubles match disagree with a call made by the referee, the referee should consider reversing his/her call.

i. **Spectators:**
The referee shall have jurisdiction over the spectators, as well as the players, while the match is in progress. If deemed required by the referee, spectators may be asked to leave the premises and can be reported and reprimanded by the CCCC.

ii. **Stoppages:**
Should a match be stopped during the course of play because of weather conditions, failing light, or any other unforeseen circumstances, it must be resumed from the point of stoppage with the same players and, if possible, the same officials. A wet or partially wet court shall be considered unplayable.

C. Forfeitures.

A match may be forfeited by the referee when:

i. **Flagrant Unsportsmanlike Conduct:**
Any player refuses to abide by the referee's decision or engages in flagrant unsportsmanlike conduct.
ii. **Three Technicals:**
A player or side receives three technicals in a match, or two technicals for failure to properly wear eye protection.
iii. **Leaving the Court:**
A player leaving the court and refusing to continue a match shall be suspended until such time as the committee in charge meets to review the referee's report. In the case of doubles matches the referee shall endeavour to find out if the player's partner is willing to continue and report accordingly.
iv. **Failure to Report:**
A player must report on time for a match start time/calculated start time. Failure to do so will result in a point deduction for every minute they are late. After 30 minutes the match will be forfeited.
v. **Player Forfeiture:**
A match must be played in its entirety with both players/teams on the court. Partial forfeits, such as any player forfeiting the second game and progressing directly to a tiebreaker, are not allowed. A forfeit of any part of a match shall result in the forfeit of the entire match. A player or team may be forfeited by the tournament director or official in charge for failure to comply with the tournament or host facility's rules while on the tournament premises, for failure to referee or for any other improper conduct on the tournament premises.
vi. **Concussion:**
If the referee feels that any player is clearly experiencing the effects of concussion.
vii. **Removal of Spectators:**
A game will be stopped if a spectator is abusive, obnoxiously rooting, or coaching a player from the gallery in a distractive manner, they will be asked to stop. If they don't stop, they can be asked to leave. If the offender will not leave, then the game will be abandoned.

D. Other Rulings

The referee shall rule on all matters not covered in the GAA Handball Official Rules. However, the referee may be overruled by the chief of referees or tournament director, the latter of whom shall have final authority.

Rule 3.5 Players Code

i. All players agree to the GAA code of conduct on entry to any competition under the jurisdiction of GAA Handball.
ii. The GAA Handball rules of handball place a presumptive code of integrity and honesty on each player. It is expected that players will always self-enforce violations not detectable by a referee. Such instances would include, but are not limited to, double bounces, wrist balls, and injuries.

Rule 3.6 Line Judges

A. Line Judges.

A minimum of two-line judges should be used in all matches if utilised, if two-line judges are not available then none should be used. Line judges should be positioned at the most advantageous viewpoints, at an alternate position to the referee. A line judge's opinion is based on his/her agreement or disagreement with the referee's call. If a line judge is uncertain, he/she should abstain from expressing an opinion.

i. **Wallball**
A minimum of two lines judges is required, one for the short line and one for a sideline, the referee looks after the back line and the other side line.

ii. **4-Wall, Softball/Hardball**
A minimum of two lines judges is required. They should be located in positions to view short line faults. In the case of glass sidewall courts, one should be positioned in line with the short line

B. Duties and Responsibilities.

Line judges are designated to help decide appealable calls. In the event of an appeal, and after a very brief explanation of the appeal by the referee, the line judges must indicate their opinions on the referee's call. The signal to show agreement with the referee is arm extended with thumbs up, disagreement is shown by thumb pointing down. The signal to show no opinion or that the line judge is unsure, or his/her view was blocked, is arm extended with an open hand and palm down. Line judges shall not signal until the referee acknowledges the appeal and asks for a ruling.

C. Result of Response.

If all line judges abstain from giving an opinion, the referee's call stands. Otherwise, the call shall follow the opinion of the majority (line judges and referee). If the majority disagrees with the call, the call must be reversed. However, if this is a tie, the referee may let the call stand, reverse the call, or call for a replay.

Rule 3.7 Appeals

A. Appealable Calls.

A player can only appeal ~~a~~ line faults, (**in 4-Wall, Softball, Hardball short balls only**), no other calls can be appealed including blocks, skids, two bounce balls, court hinders, and whether kill shots are up or down, or a referee's discretionary call.

B. Appeals Process

i. Each player or doubles team will have two appeals in each game to 21 or 15 points. Each player or doubles team will have one appeal in each game to 11 points. A successful appeal by a player or doubles team will result in the player or doubles team retaining that appeal. An unsuccessful appeal means the loss of that appeal for the player or doubles team.
ii. If on the first serve, the server/receiver appeals a non-call line fault, and the appeal is upheld then the server is awarded a second serve, and they retain that appeal.
iii. If on the second serve, the server receiver appeals a non-call line fault, carrying a short from the first serve and the appeal is upheld. If in the opinion of the referee, the ball could not have been returned, a point shall be awarded the server. If the appeal is not upheld, the call would be a second short and a side out.
iv. If on the first serve, the server/receiver appeals a line fault, and the appeal is upheld. If in the opinion of the referee, the ball could not have been returned, a point shall be awarded the server. If the appeal is not upheld, the call would be short. If on the second serve, the server/receiver appeals a line fault, carrying a short from the first serve and the appeal is upheld. If in the opinion of the referee, the ball could not have been returned, a point shall be awarded the server. If the appeal is not upheld, the call would be a second short and a side out.
v. If the majority of line judges disagree with the referee's call or non-call, the call is reversed or replayed. If the appeal is upheld, the player is awarded the appropriate call and retains their appeal.
vi. After the rally has ended, either player may appeal line call not called. If the appeal is upheld, the player is awarded the appropriate call, at no time may a player appeal a referee's discretionary call.

C. How to Appeal

A player must make an appeal directly to the referee before the referee announces the score. The referee will then request the opinion of the line judges if he or she deems necessary. The referee may also appeal to the line judges if he/she is uncertain of his/her own call, and may then maintain, reverse or nullify the call in question. A replay shall be called if the referee believes it is necessary in the interest of fairness.

Rule 3.8 Marker

The Marker, when utilised, shall keep a record of the progress of the game in the manner prescribed by the tournament director. As a minimum, the progress record shall include the order of serves, outs, points, and total points scored.

Section 4. Play Rules

Rule 4.1 Serve

A. Order

i. **Singles**:
The player winning the toss of a coin or choice of a number (Under three year trial from 2026), serves first in the first game. The other player serves first in the second game. If a tiebreaker is necessary, the player who scored the higher total of points in the first two games serves first. If both players score an equal number of points in the first two games, another coin toss or choice of a number (Under three year trial from 2026), will be made to determine which player serves first.

ii. **Doubles**:
The side winning the toss of a coin or choice of a number (Under three year trial from 2026), chooses to serve or receive in the first game. The other side shall choose for the second game. If a tiebreaker is necessary, the team scoring the higher total of points in the first two games serves first. If both teams score an equal number of points in the first two games, another coin toss or choice of a number (Under three year trial from 2026), will be made to determine which team has the choice to serve or receive.

B. Start

Games are started by the referee announcing, “play ball,” and then the score, “0 serves 0.”

C. Place

The server may serve from any place in the service zone. No part of either foot may touch the floor beyond the outer edge of either line of the service zone. The server must remain in the service zone until the served ball passes the short line. Violations are called “foot faults. (See Rule 4.3 B.(i)).

D. Manner (Legal Serve)

The server must come to a complete stop in the service zone before beginning the serve. The serve begins by bouncing the ball to the floor in the service zone. The ball must be hit by the server’s hand or fist so that it contacts the front wall first and on the rebound contacts the floor in the receiving zone, unless played on the fly. (See Rule 4.3 B and 4.3 C).

E. Time

A serve may not be made until the referee has announced the score. The referee shall call point or side out as soon as a rally ends. The receiver then has up to 10 seconds to assume a receiving position. When the receiver has assumed a receiving position or 10 seconds have elapsed, whichever occurs first, and the server has had reasonable time to get to his/her serving position, the referee shall announce the score, and the server must serve (hit the ball) within 10 seconds.

If the first serve results in a fault or hinder serve, the referee shall give the receiver a reasonable time to take a receiving position and the server reasonable time to get to his/her serving position. The referee shall then announce "second serve" if the serve was a fault, or “first/second serve, one hinder serve” if a hinder serve, after which the server must serve within 10 seconds.

> *Part 4, Rule 4.1 E: Interpretation*
> *After the rally is over, the referee should immediately call "point" or "side out." The receiver then has 10 seconds to assume his/her ready position, but the server should only have "reasonable time" to get set. The server should not be allowed to stall by slowly retrieving the ball. As soon as the receiver is "ready" and the server has had reasonable time to retrieve the ball, the referee should call the score, at which time the server has 10 seconds in which to hit the ball. If the receiver is in his/her ready position and the referee believes that the server is taking too much time retrieving the ball and assuming the serving position, the referee should call the score. The server will then have 10 seconds in which to serve. If the receiver is not in his/her ready position after 10 seconds have elapsed from the time the referee calls “point” or “side out,” the referee should call the score and the server may serve immediately or may take up to 10 seconds, whether or not the receiver is ready.*

Rule 4.2 Doubles

A. Server

At the beginning of each game in doubles, each side informs the referee of the order of service, which must be followed throughout the game. Only the first server on the first serving team may serve the first time up. This player must continue to serve first throughout the game.

When the games first server is put out on his/her initial serve, the side is out. Thereafter, both players on each side shall serve until an out for each occurs. It is not necessary for the server to alternate serves to the opponents.

When the first partner loses their serve, a “Hand-Out” is called. When the second partner loses their serve, a “Side-Out” is called.

B. Partner's Position

i. **1-Wall**
   In doubles, the server's partner must stand outside the side lines, astraddle the indicated service line, and may not enter the playing zone until the served ball passes him. A violation is called a "foot fault."

ii. **4-Wall & 60x30**
   On each serve, the server’s partner shall stand erect with his/her back to the nearer side wall and with both feet on the floor within the service box until the served ball passes the short line. Violations are called “foot faults.

Rule 4.3 Defective Serves

There are three types of defective serves that result in the following:

A. Dead Ball Serves (Replay)

A dead ball serve, results in no penalty and the server is given another serve without cancelling a prior defective serve or hinder fault. This occurs in the following situations:

i. **Court Hinders:**
   If a served ball takes an erratic bounce due to a court obstruction or wetness a court hinder is called and the serve is replayed.
ii. **Broken Ball:**
   If the ball is determined to have broken before the serve has become a legal serve, an approved ball must be put into play, and the serve shall be replayed. (See Rule 4. 6.J)
iii. **Straddle balls (4-Wall Softball/Hardball & Wallball):**
   A legally served ball that travels between the legs of the server is an automatic hinder serve.
iv. **Hinder Ball (4-Wall & Softball/Hardball only):**
   The ball hits the server's partner on the rebound from the front wall while the server's partner is in the service box. Any serve that touches the floor before hitting the partner in the box is a short.
v. **Screen Serve (4-Wall & Softball/Hardball only):**
   The ball passes so close to the server or the server's partner that the view of the returning side is obstructed. Any serve passing between the server's partner and the sidewall is an automatic screen. (Note: In International 4-Wall rules a combination of two consecutive screen or straddle serves results in a fault. **This does not apply to Irish rules**.)
vi. **Wallball Moving on Service:**
   The server or his partner moves out of the way of a legally served ball from the wall, hinder may be called not voiding any previous faults. This call, like any other hinder, is based on interference affecting the play. If there is initial interference, but the receiver still has time to get into good position, a hinder should not be called. In such a case the referee should not make the call too quickly. He/she should watch the reaction of the receiver. The receiver should be given the benefit of any doubt, as long as he/she is properly positioned.

> *Part 4, Rule 4.3 A. (vi): Interpretation*
> *This is a difficult call because there will be instances in which the receiver will be hindered, but the ball has been hit so high that it is going to result in a setup and the receiver will have time to get into a good position to attempt his/her shot. The hinder serve, like any other hinder, is based on interference affecting the play. In the case just mentioned, there is initial interference, but the receiver still has time to get into a good position so that the momentary hinder will not affect the play. In such a case, the referee should not make the call too quickly but should watch the reaction of the receiver. If the referee feels that the receiver hesitates to get into position, a hinder should be called. If, however, the receiver moves quickly and obviously is going to have time to get into a good position for a shot, the hinder should not be called.*
> *The receiver should be given the benefit of any doubt so long as his/her receiving position is in the center of the court. However, if the receiver positions himself/herself*

to one side of center or anticipates the serve is going to be hit to one side and moves in that direction too quickly, and the serve is hit to the opposite side, a hinder should not be called. It is also important that the referee attempts to position himself/herself so that he/she will have the same angle of view as the receiver. The best answer to this dilemma is: When in doubt, call a hinder serve.

B. Fault Serves

The following serves are fault serves, and any two that are hit consecutively before a legal serve is executed results in an out:

i. Foot Fault.

a. The server begins the service motion with one or both feet touching the floor outside the service zone
b. The server's foot touches the floor outside the service zone before the served ball passes through the plane of the back edge of the short line
c. **4-Wall, Softball/Hardball:**
In doubles, when the server's partner is not in the service box with both feet on the floor and his/her back to the nearer side wall from the time the serve is begun until the ball passes through the plane of the back edge of the short line.
d. **Wallball:**
In doubles, when the server's partner is not outside the side lines, astraddle the indicated service line, or enters the playing zone before the served ball passes him/her.

Part 4, Rule 4.3 B (i): Interpretation
Even though the foot fault occurs before the out serve, the out serve penalty takes precedence and shall be enforced. Another example: A server foot faults when contacting the ball and the ball does not hit the wall first. Again, the out serve penalty should be enforced. For this reason, a referee should wait until after the ball is served to call a foot fault

ii. Short Serve:

Any serve that first hits the front wall and on the rebound hits the floor in front of, or on, the short line, on or between the side lines.

iii. Long Serve:

Any serve that first hits the front wall and rebounds to the back wall before touching the floor.

a. **Wallball Long/Wide Serve:**
Any serve that first hits the wall and on the rebound hits the floor and does not make any contact with the back of the long line and on or between the side lines. During tournament play, receiver(s) must not catch a serve that is assumed will be long. The referee shall award a point for failure to return.

iv. **Bouncing ball outside service zone.**

Any serve that is struck on a bounce that was made outside the service zone

v. **Not hitting ball on first bounce from a single drop**.

vi. **Not coming to a complete stop** in the service zone before beginning the serve.

vii. **Two consecutive hinder serves.** (International Rules Only)

viii. **Three-Wall Serve:** Any serve that first hits the front wall and then hits any two other walls before hitting the floor.

ix. **Out-of-Court Serve** Any serve that first strikes the front wall and then rebounds out of the court without touching the floor.

x. **Ceiling Serve** Any serve that hits the front wall first and then touches the ceiling (4- Wall Only).

C. Hand-Out Serves:

Any of the following results in an out.

i. **Missed Serve:**
Any attempt to hit the ball that results in a total miss, or in the ball touching any part of the server's body other than the hitting hand.

ii. **Non-front wall serves:**
Any served ball that does not strike the front wall first.

iii. **Touched Serve:**
Any served ball on the rebound from the front wall, before bouncing on the floor that touches the server, or touches the server's partner when both of the partner's feet are not touching the floor inside the service box. This includes a serve that is intentionally caught before the second bounce, regardless if the ball was served short. When the partner is hit by the serve when he/she is not in the legal position, the out serve penalty supersedes the partner's foot fault.

iv. **Two Consecutive Fault Serves**.

v. **Crotch Serve:**
Any serve that hits a crotch in the front wall is an out. All balls hitting the crotch of a wall and the floor shall be considered to have hit the floor first. A serve that rebounds on the fly from the front wall into the crotch of the back wall and the floor is a legal serve, as is a three-wall crotch serve.

vi. **Out-of-Order Serve.**

a. In doubles, when either partner serves out of order, or one player serves both serves.

b. If the number two player in order of service serves first, he automatically disqualifies his partner.

vii. Service Delay:

The server fails to hit the ball within 10 seconds after the referee has announced the score.

viii. Time Games:

In the case where matches are played on a time basis, one fault serve shall count as a "hand-out" serve.

ix. Wall Edge:

The top edge of the wall, if any, is not part of the court. A ball striking the top edge is an out.

x. Wide Serve (Wallball Only):

Any serve that, on the rebound from the wall, hits the floor outside of the sidelines is an out against the serving side. During tournament play, receivers must not catch serves that they assume to be out. Referee will award point for failure to return.

Rule 4.4 Return of Serve

A. Receiving Position

The receiver or receivers must stand behind the receivers restraining lines until the ball is struck by the server and must not cross the plane of the short line when making the return. Once the returned ball hits the front wall the rally is deemed open play, and the receiver may cross the short line. Any violation of this rule results in a point for the server.

B. Fly Return

In making a fly return, the receiver may hit the ball any time after it passes completely through the plane of the back edge of the short line and no part of his/her body may extend on or over the plane of the back edge of the short line until after contacting the ball. In doubles, this also applies to the receiver's partner (A violation results in a point for the server). After contacting the ball, the receiver and his/her partner may step on or over the short line without penalty.

C. Legal Return

After the ball is legally served, one of the players on the receiving side must strike the ball either on the fly or after the first bounce, and before the ball touches the floor a second time, to return the ball to the front, wall on or between the lines first and make it rebound into the playing zone.

A returned ball may not touch the floor before touching the front wall. A ball may be played off the back wall as well as the front wall, provided the ball does not touch the floor a second time. Failure to make a legal return results in a point for the server.

Rule 4.5. Changes of Serve

A server continues serving until he/she or his/her side makes an out. When the server or the side loses the serve, they become the receiver or receiving side, and the receiving side becomes the serving side, and so alternately in all subsequent services of the game.

Hand-Outs are made by:

i. **Hand-Out Serve**. The server makes an out serve.
ii. **Wide Serve.** The server makes an out serve under Rule 4.3, C, x.
iii. **Fault Serves.** The server makes two fault serves before executing a legal serve.
iv. **Hits Partner.** The server hits his/her partner with an attempted return.
v. **Return Failure.** The server or his/her partner fails to keep the ball in play by returning it as required by Rule 4.4 C
vi. **Avoidable Hinder.** The server or his/her partner commits an avoidable hinder (See Rule 4.8).
Note: In doubles, the side is retired (side-out) when both partners have been put out.

Rule 4.6 Rally

A rally is defined as when the ball is legally returned and kept in play after a legal serve is executed. Play during rallies must be in accord with the following rules:

A. One Hand:

Only one hand may be used from the wrist line down to return the ball. Using two hands together or any portion of the body other than the hand to hit a ball is an out.

B. Wrist Ball:

The use of any other part of the body to return the ball, including any part of the arm above the player's wrist line, is a violation, even though the wrist or arm may be covered by a glove.

C. One Touch:

In attempting returns, the ball may be touched only once by one player. In doubles, both partners may swing at the ball, but only one may actually hit it.

D. Failure to Return:

Any of the following constitutes a failure to make a legal return during the rally:

i. The ball bounces on the floor twice before being hit.
ii. After contact, the ball fails to reach the front wall and rebounds into the playing zone.
iii. The ball goes off a player's hand or fist into the gallery.
iv. A ball that obviously did not have the velocity or direction to be returned legally
v. In doubles, a ball struck by one player hits that player's partner.
vi. Committing an avoidable hinder (See Rule 4.8).

E. Effect of Failure to Return:

Each violation results in an out or point. Any violation not detected by the referee must be called by the offending player (See Rule 3.5 B).

F. Return Attempts:

i. **Singles.** If a player swings at but misses the ball in play, the player may repeat attempts to return the ball until it touches the floor the second time.
ii. **Doubles.** Both players on one side are entitled to attempt to return the ball. If one player swings at but misses the ball, both he/she and his/her partner may make further attempts to return the ball until it touches the floor the second time.

G. Hinders.

In singles or doubles, if a player swings at but misses the ball in play, and, in he/she or his/her partner's continuing attempt to play the ball before it touches the floor a second time, an opponent commits unavoidable interference, a hinder is called (See Rule 4.7).

H. Touching the Ball.

Except as provided in (See Rule 4.7 A.2), any touching of a ball before it touches the floor the second time by a player other than the one making a return is a point or out against the offending player.

I. Out Ball:

Any ball in play after service, striking outside the side lines or past the long line, is an out or point. During play, a player must not catch a ball they assume to be out. In such circumstances a player catching a ball before the referee makes the call will have an out or point awarded against them.

J. Dry Ball and Gloves:

Every effort must be made to keep the ball dry. Deliberately wetting the ball results in an out or point. The ball may be inspected by the referee at any time. If a player's gloves are wet to the extent that they leave wet marks on the ball, the player must change to dry gloves on a referee's timeout. This is strictly a referee's judgment. If a player wishes to change to dry gloves, he/she must hold his/her gloves up to the referee and obtain the referee's permission to change. He/she may not leave the court without the referee's permission. Two minutes are allowed for glove changes. The referee should give a one-minute warning, but the player is still responsible for being back on the court and ready to play within two minutes.

K. Broken Ball:

If there is any suspicion that a ball has broken on the serve or during a rally, play continues until the end of the rally. An official or any player may request that the ball be examined by the referee. If the referee decides the ball is broken, an approved ball must be put into play and the point replayed. Once a succeeding serve is attempted, the previous rally stands. The ball does not have to be completely broken to warrant a replay. The referee should call for a replay only if he/she determines that a ball has cracked sufficiently to cause an erratic bounce. If the ball is not

evidently broken, but all players are in agreement to switch the ball, then the referee may, at his/her discretion, allow a change of ball. No player shall make any physical effort to determine if the ball is cracked or otherwise unplayable without the express consent of the referee.

L. Play Stoppage:

If a foreign object enters the court or any other outside interference occurs, or if a player loses a shoe or other properly worn equipment, the referee shall stop the game if it interferes with the continuance of play or poses an immediate danger. However, safety permitting, one rally-ending attempt should be allowed.

> *Part 4, Rule 4.6 K: Interpretation*
> *In most cases, if a foreign object (such as a ball from an adjacent court) enters the court, the referee should immediately stop play and call a hinder because of the distraction and for safety reasons.*
>
> *However, it might happen that a player would lose a shoe, headband or even a glove. In these cases, the referee should allow the opposing player one opportunity to hit a rally-ending shot if all of the following conditions are met:*
>
> - *The referee believes the opposing player is in no danger of stepping on the lost object.*
> - *The opposing player does not appear to be distracted by the lost object.*
> - *And the opposing player apparently has an opportunity to hit an offensive, rally-ending shot.*
>
> *If the player is allowed the one offensive shot, one of the following calls should be made immediately afterward: If the player skips the ball in, that player loses the rally. If the player hits a kill shot or pass shot that cannot be retrieved, that player should be awarded the rally. If the player who lost the equipment is able to retrieve the shot, a hinder should be called.*

M. Replays:

Whenever a rally is replayed for any reason, the server is awarded two serves. All previous defective serves are voided.

Rule 4.7 Dead-Ball Hinders

Dead ball hinders as described in this rule result in the point being replayed. When called by the referee, the following are dead ball hinders.

A. Dead Ball Hinders:

i. **Court Hinders**:
If, after the ball has been legally served, in the referee's opinion, an erratic bounce is caused by a court obstruction or irregularity, a court hinder should be called. The player should not stop play at any time in anticipation of a call. Included in court hinders is the ball that hits a wet spot on the floor, causing it to skid. This is the referee's call, not the players.

> *Part 4, Rule 4.7 A.(i): Interpretation*
> *Balls that skid on wet floors are court hinders, assuming that the player was in position to make a return had the ball bounced truly.*

ii. **Ball hits Opponent.** When a returned ball touches an opponent on the fly before hitting the wall.

Note if the shot obviously would not have reached the front wall on the fly, in the referee's opinion, the player who is hit by the shot will be awarded the rally.

iii. **Body Contact.** If body contact occurs and the referee believes it was sufficient to stop the rally, either to prevent injury or because the contact distracted or prevented a player from being able to make a reasonable return, a hinder will be called. Except for the offensive player stopping play during his/her back-swing, physical contact is not an automatic hinder. Any other time an offensive player may immediately stop play and call contact, however, this is not an automatic hinder and the player stops play at his/her own risk. It is the judgment of the referee as to whether the contact impeded the play.

iv. **Moving on Service.** If the server or his/her partner moves out of the way of a legally served ball. (See Rule 4.3 A 5) Unless it applies to Wallball (See Rule 4.3 A 5 i)

v. **Back-Swing Hinder.** A player may not stop play, except on physical contact during his/her back-swing. He/she may immediately say "Contact" if he/she wants a contact hinder. If he/she elects to hit the ball, no contact call will be permitted The defensive player may not stop play if contact occurs during his/her opponent's back-swing.

vi. **Safety Holdup.** Any player about to execute a return who believes he/she will strike his/her opponent with his/her hand, arm, or ball may immediately stop play and request a dead-ball hinder. This call must be made immediately and is subject to approval by the referee. The referee must grant the hinder if he/she believes the holdup was reasonable and the player otherwise might have been able to return the shot. The referee might also call an avoidable hinder if warranted. (See Rule 4.8) This does not affect the rules on legal hinders. (See Rule 4.7 B,(i), a)

Part 4, Rule 4.7 A.7: Interpretation
This situation comes about when the offensive player finds himself/herself unable to execute a swing without immediately hitting the opponent with his/her hand, arm or the ball. This rule is designed to increase the safety of all players and is not meant to create additional opportunities for players to stop play. Players who call for a safety hold-up and stop play may find the referee in disagreement; in which case the referee's call prevails.

vii. **Other Interference.** Any other unavoidable interference that prevents a player from having a fair chance to see or return the ball.

B. Yielding Fair Access

i. 4-Wall & Softball/Hardball

a. While attempting to return the ball, the offensive player is entitled to fair access to see and return the ball. It is the duty of the defensive side that has just served or returned the ball to yield position so the offensive side will not be required to go around an opponent. In the judgment of the referee, however, the offensive player must make a reasonable effort to move toward the ball and have a reasonable chance to return the ball before a hinder is called. The referee should be liberal in calling hinders to discourage playing the ball in such a way that an opponent cannot see it or swing at it until it is too late. When a player attempts a kill shot in front of himself/herself and his/her position interferes with his/her opponent's attempt to retrieve the ball, the

referee should give the benefit of any doubt as to whether the ball was retrievable to the defensive player. It is not a hinder when a player hinders his/her partner.

Part 4, Rule 4.7.B: Interpretation
If the ball is judged to be un-retrievable, a hinder should not be called no matter what kind of interference takes place. However, if the referee is in doubt, the benefit of that doubt should go to the player attempting to retrieve the ball and the hinder should be called.

b. **Doubles.** Both players on one side are entitled to a fair and unobstructed chance at the ball. Either one could have been entitled to a hinder even though it naturally would be his/her partner's ball and even though the partner may have attempted to play the ball and has already missed (not touched) it.

c. **Effect.** A hinder call stops the play and usually avoids any situation that follows, such as the ball hitting a player who stopped playing because of the call. However, if, in the opinion of the referee, his/her call was not responsible for the player being hit by the ball, the referee may overrule the hinder call and declare either a point or side-out. The only hinders a player may call are specified in Rules 4.7 A. 6., and 4.7. A.7. and are subject to approval by the referee. Whenever a dead-ball hinder is called, the rally is replayed and any previous fault on the server is voided.

ii. Wallball

a. **Legal Block**
After the attacking player takes his/her shot, they must remain still in front of or aside their opponent. This is not a hinder but a "Legal Block"

b. **Legal Block Hinder**
While attempting a "Legal Block" if the attacker moves away from the opposing player, not affecting his/her opponent's line of sight or obstructing them from striking the ball, then this is a hinder. The referee has the option to let play continue, giving the attacking player the shot, if they wish to take it. If they decide to take the shot, the rally continues to a natural conclusion and no hinder is called.

c. **Legal Block Avoidable**
While blocking if the blocking player moves in the direction of the opposing player, causing an obstruction to the line of sight, or obstructing the player from striking the ball, then this is an illegal block and an avoidable hinder is called.

d. **Blocking On Backswing**
All the above only applies to holding ground in front or to the side of your opponent's position. Play always favours the player closest to the front wall and as such, you cannot take up a blocking position behind your opponent. Intentional blocking from behind is an avoidable hinder.

Part 4, Rule 4.7 B.1 & 2: Interpretation The referee must remember that if the ball is judged to be un-retrievable, a hinder should not be called no matter what kind of interference takes place. However, if the referee is in doubt, the benefit of that doubt should go to the player attempting to retrieve the ball and the hinder should be called.

Rule 4.8 Avoidable Hinders

An avoidable hinder result in an out or a point (See Rule 4.5), depending on whether the offender was serving or receiving. Player intent has no bearing on an avoidable call. An avoidable hinder should be called only when a hinder could have been avoided with reasonable effort. A player moving as late as possible to avoid being hit by the ball is not creating an avoidable hinder in Wallball Only. (See Rule 4.7,B,(ii))

Avoidable hinders, which should not be confused with “legal blocks” (See Rule 4.7,B,(ii)), are called when:

A. Failure to Move:

A player does not move sufficiently to allow his/her opponent his/her shot.

> *Part 4, Rule 4.8 A: Interpretation*
> *The player standing further from the wall must move out of the way of his opponent even though it may mean moving to an undesirable court position. If a player assumes such a position and there is a collision, or there is interference with the stroke of the player trying to strike the ball, the hinder is avoidable*

B. Blocking:

A player moves into a position that effects a block or crowds his/her opponent about to return the ball; or, in doubles, one partner creates a hinder by moving in front of an opponent as his/her partner is returning the ball.

> *Part 4, Rule 4.8 B: Interpretation*
> *This call is just the opposite of the "failure to move" avoidable hinder. When a player "creates" a hinder by his/her movement, it is also avoidable. Sometimes a player, in the effort to get into a better court position, will cause contact with an opponent who is about to hit the ball, or a player will move in so close to an opponent who is hitting the ball as to cause a possibility of body contact. In either case, an avoidable hinder should be called. It is also an avoidable hinder if one player, just as his/her partner is hitting the ball, moves directly in front of an opponent creating a hinder, not to be confused with a “legal “hinder.*

C. Moving into Ball:

A player moves into the path of and is struck by the ball just played by his/her opponent.

> *Part 4, Rule 4.8 C: Interpretation*
> *This avoidable hinder may occur almost anywhere on the court. A player has an offensive setup; in his/her effort to get into a more favourable position, the defensive player moves into the path of the ball and is hit. This is avoidable. In this case, the referee must use judgment and not call an avoidable if he/she feels the ball was “mishit” and that the defensive player was moving into a non-hindering position in which he/she would not have been hit if the ball had been hit truly.*

D. Pushing:

A player forcibly pushes an opponent during a rally.

> *Part 4, Rule 4.8 D: Interpretation*
> *This avoidable hinder may occur when a player pushes a player, no matter how slightly, who is about to hit the ball, or when a player forcefully pushes a player in the attempt to get into position for his/her shot An accidental push of a slight nature by an offensive player should not be called avoidable.*

E. View Obstruction:

Moving across an opponent's line of vision just before he/she strikes the ball.

> *Part 4, Rule 4.8 E: Interpretation*
> *Generally, this type of avoidable hinder occurs after a player has hit the ball and finds himself/herself out of position. In the effort to move into a better court position, he/she crosses the eventual path of the ball just before the ball reaches the opponent, thereby obstructing the opponent's view of the ball.*

F. Distraction:

Any avoidable distraction or intimidation that would interfere with the offensive player or team.

> *Part 4, Rule 4.8 F: Interpretation*
> *This avoidable hinder should be called against a player who attempts to move in very close to an opponent in an attempt to cause a distraction.*

G. Talking During the Rally:

Aside from appeals and rally ending calls, there is no need for talking during a rally except in doubles, when the team on the offense is allowed to briefly communicate which partner is to hit, or not to hit, the ball. Under no circumstances may a player say anything while an opponent is playing the ball.

H. Stroke Interference:

Any positioning that would not allow the opponent to use a normal stroke. This especially applies to a player moving in too close and being hit by, or restricting the follow-through of, the player hitting the ball.

> *Part 4, Rule 4.8 H: Interpretation*
> *The stroke includes the backswing as well as the follow-through of the arm. If a player is contacted during any part of the stroke by the player hitting the ball, an avoidable hinder should be called, assuming the player who was hit could have avoided the interference with reasonable effort. This interference might not have affected the shot, but it doesn't matter if the ball reaches the wall or not. This avoidable hinder must be called for safety reasons.*

I. Improper Equipment:

The loss of any improperly worn equipment, or equipment not required on court, that interferes with the play, or the safety of the players constitutes an avoidable hinder.

> *Part 4, Rule 4.8 I: Interpretation*
> *Improperly worn equipment includes eye protection that requires some type of strap in order to stay on the head. Failure to wear such a strap could be considered improperly worn equipment. Gloves that are not snugly attached might also be improperly worn equipment. Equipment not required could be items such as a baseball cap or jewellery.*

Rule 4.9 Technical's

A technical is assessed for unsportsmanlike conduct or for improperly wearing eye protection. If a referee issues a technical, one point shall be deducted from the offender's score. The technical has no effect on service changes or side out the technical occurs between games or when the offender has no points, the result will be that the offender's score will be a negative one. Three technical's in a match, or two for eye protection infractions, on a singles player or a doubles team will result in a forfeiture.

A. Types

i. Some examples of actions that may result in technical's are: Too frequent complaints made against the referee's judgment.
ii. Profanity.
iii. Excessive arguing.
iv. Threat of any nature to the opponent or referee.
v. Excessive or hard striking, throwing or kicking of ball between rallies.
vi. Spitting on the Court.
vii. Failure to wear eye protection properly.
viii. Protests were lost after all timeouts have been used.
ix. Anything considered unsportsmanlike behaviour.
x. Three avoidable hinders in one game result in an automatic Technical.

> *Part 4, Rule 4.9 A (v): Interpretation If the opponent is hit or narrowly missed by the ball, a technical should be called. On the other hand, if it is the first offense, and the opponent was in no danger of being hit, a technical warning should be issued.*

B. Warnings

If a player's behaviour is not so severe as to warrant a technical, a technical warning may be issued without a point deduction and should be accompanied by a brief explanation of the reason for a warning. A technical warning may precede the penalty of a technical but is not necessary.

Rule 4.10 Timeouts & Rest Periods

A. Timeouts:

Any player may request a timeout, but not after the referee has announced the score, called "second serve" after a fault serve, or called "first/second serve, one hinder serve" after a hinder serve.

i. Timeouts must not exceed one minute.
ii. Three timeouts are allowed for each side per 21-point game.
iii. Two timeouts are allowed for each side per 15 or 11-point game.
iv. Timeouts may be called consecutively.
v. No time outs allowed in a timed game.
vi. Players may leave the court during a timeout, but must stay in the vicinity of the court, and return to the court within the allotted time.
vii. Timeouts are not permitted in the 60x30 code, except in the Golden Masters grade (50+) and above.

B. Equipment Timeout:

At the discretion of the referee, equipment timeouts may be granted for shoes that come off during play, broken shoelaces, torn equipment, wet gloves, wet shirts, wet floor, or other reasons. Players are not charged for such timeouts. Two minutes is the maximum time allowed.

C. Injury

i. No timeout shall be charged to a player who is injured during the match. An injured player shall not be allowed more than a cumulative total of 15 minutes of injury timeout during a match. If the injured player is unable to resume play after a period totaling 15 minutes, the match may be awarded to the opponent. Pre-existing conditions (including but not limited to injury and illness), do not warrant injury timeouts. For any injury, if the referee or tournament director determines the player cannot continue play, the match may be terminated at that time, regardless of cumulative injury timeout minutes, still available. **Cramp is deemed an injury.**

D. Between Games

A rest period of two minutes is allowed between games 1 & 2, and a five-minute rest period between games 2 & 3. International rules mandate a five-minute rest period is allowed between all games. Players may leave the court.

E. Blood Borne Pathogen.

When a player is bleeding, or when blood is detected on the court or on a player, play must be stopped, the player must be removed from the court, and play cannot resume until:

i. The bleeding has stopped.
ii. The open wound is covered with a dressing, strong enough to withstand the demands of continued play.

iii. Any player whose uniform is soiled with blood changes the part of the uniform affected.

iv. Any surface contaminated with blood is cleaned. Cleaning, including disposal, shall be performed by the host facility. The occurrence of bleeding, by itself, shall not constitute an injury for the purpose of application of the injury timeout provisions of this rule.

Rule 4.11 Key International 4-Wall Variations

A. International Playing Rule apply for.

i. Irish Trials for International events.
ii. World Championships.

B. The key points of difference to note are:

i. A 5-minute break is allowed between all games.
ii. Two consecutive screen serves, result in a Fault.
iii. A player who is late for their game or not on court after a time-out or break between games is charged a point for each minute, he is late. After 10 minutes he forfeits the game.