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# Welcome to the world of dodgeball!

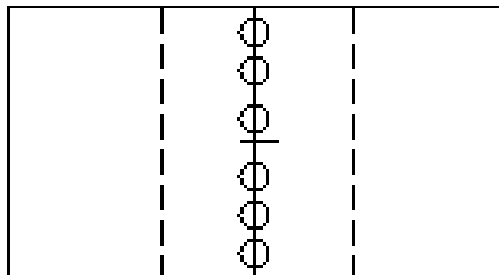
These rules will help you learn how to play this classic sport in a way that is safe, competitive, and (most importantly) fun.

## WHERE TO PLAY AND WHAT TO USE

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### The Court

Dodgeball can be played anywhere that there are clear boundaries, a center line to divide the playing area, and no breakable items within throwing range. For purposes of tournament play, matches will be held indoors on a standard volleyball court. The court has an outer boundary line that is 60' long and 30' wide with a center line that divides the court into two 30' squares. Additionally, there is a line on either side of the court 10' from the center line (running parallel to the center line) that serves as the "attack line." Rectangular tables may be turned on their side and placed along the sidelines to help keep the balls in play (and keep players from stepping out of bounds).



### The Ball

There are a variety of balls available for use in dodgeball matches that are made by a variety of companies. For purposes of tournament play, two balls will be authorized for use:

1. 8.25" rubber-coated foam balls sold and approved by the National Amateur Dodgeball Association (NADA) or 8.5" balls of similar composition that utilize a "Rhinoskin" coating.
2. 8.5" polyester-covered, inflatable balls approved by the International Dodge-ball Federation.

Any balls used in a tournament or official games should be designed for injury-free play. Rubber playground balls will NOT be used (and are not recommended for informal games, either).

## **Attire**

All players should wear shirt and shorts or pants with athletic shoes. No revealing clothing, flip-flops, or bare feet are allowed on the court. Any article of clothing worn by is considered part of the player during gameplay. (If a ball hits a shirt sleeve, it's the same as hitting the player's arm.)

## **HOW TO PLAY**

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### **Set up**

Each team will field six players, each of whom will line up behind the end line on their team's side of the court. Six dodgeballs (identical except for color) will be placed on the center line, evenly spaced between the sidelines so that three are on one half of the line and three are on the other. The referee will stand out of bounds at the center line, and ask each team if they are ready.

### **Starting the game**

After the referee has determined that each team is ready, he or she will begin the game by blowing the whistle. Upon hearing the whistle each team may run onto the court and grab the three balls on the RIGHT side of the center line. Before a ball is thrown, it must be taken behind the "attack line." The player may carry the ball behind the line or toss the ball to a player who is behind the line. After the first 30 seconds of the game, any ball that has not been retrieved from the center line may be taken by either team (and must be taken behind the attack line before thrown).

### **Object of the game**

The goal of each team is to eliminate every member of the other team within a 5 minute time limit. A player may eliminate an opponent by:

1. throwing a ball and hitting the opposing player before the ball hits the floor, wall, etc.
2. catching a ball thrown by the opposing player before the ball hits the floor, wall, etc.

Once an entire team has been eliminated, the referee will blow the whistle to end the game. The teams will then switch sides to begin a new game. A match consists of a best-of 3, 5, or 7 games.

## “Live” balls, catches, and deflections

A “live” ball is any ball that has been thrown by a player to the other team’s side of the court. Once the ball strikes a player, the floor, the wall, or a ball \*not\* currently held by a player it becomes a “dead” ball.

If the ball strikes a player, that player still has an opportunity to catch the ball while it is still in the air. However, if the ball hits a player, then hits the ground, wall, another ball, or another player it becomes a dead ball and the player who was struck is out. If the player who was struck manages to catch the ball before it hits another object or player, it counts as a catch and the thrower is out. Note: If a ball strikes a player and is then caught by a teammate, the ball is dead and the player who was struck is still out.

If a live ball strikes a ball that is held by a player and bounces off (a “deflection”), the ball is still live. Therefore, if a player **is struck** by a ball deflected by a teammate, that player is out. If a player **catches** a ball that was deflected by a teammate, it counts as a catch and the thrower is out. For officiating purposes, the key is to treat a deflected ball as if it never struck any object at all.

If a player attempts to deflect a live ball and **drops** the ball they are holding, the player is out. A player **may** deflect a live ball, then intentionally drop their ball in order to catch the deflected ball.

## Returns on a catch

When a player catches a live ball, one member of that player’s team who has been eliminated returns to the game. Players re-enter the game in the same order they were eliminated (first out, first in). A player must re-enter the game at half court, and may not be struck by a ball until he or she has moved behind the attack line.

## Boundary lines and ball retrieval

Players may not cross the boundary lines (end line, sidelines, or center line) **unless** they are retrieving a ball that has gone out of bounds. Players may **only** exit and re-enter the court via the end line on their side to retrieve a ball. This is the only time a player may cross a boundary line without being called out. The player may carry the ball back onto the court or may toss the ball to a teammate, then return to the court immediately.

While out of bounds, a player may not throw the ball at the other team (there is no penalty, but the throw is considered invalid). However, a player will be eliminated if struck by a “live” ball while out-of-bounds. The player may catch a live ball while out-of-bounds without consequence, but the thrower is not out. If a player crosses the end line in order to catch a live ball, this is treated the same as retrieving an out-of-bounds ball and the thrower is not out.

A player may reach across any boundary line (including the center line) to retrieve a ball as long as the player’s body does not touch the ground across the line. The referee will also allow for players to step across the center line (within reason) immediately after the opening whistle.

### **Time-outs, substitutions, injuries, and other stoppages of play**

After the opening whistle, the timekeeper (who may also be the referee) starts the clock. The clock runs continuously unless:

1. There is an apparent injury on the court. Play will stop as soon as the player is injured, and the referee will blow the whistle to signify the stoppage of play. If a player is struck by a live ball after the injury occurs but before the whistle, the referee may choose not to call that player out.
2. There is a play that requires clarification. The referee will blow the whistle and stop the clock to consult with another official.
3. Either team calls a time-out. Each team will be allowed one 30-second time out per game, which can be signaled by any player currently on the court or the team’s coach using the universal “T” hand gesture. During the time out, each team may substitute players. Any player who did not start the game is eligible to be substituted for a player who is still in the game. Players who started the game and have been eliminated are **not** eligible to enter as substitutes.

### **Infractions, penalties, and other violations**

There are a number of actions by individuals and teams that may result in a penalty:

1. Interference: If a player is eliminated and fails to immediately drop a ball they are holding or interferes with a live ball, the opposing team will be awarded a free throw.

2. Five-second violation: A team that is leading (has more players on the court) may not have all six balls on their side of the court for more than five seconds. When the leading team has all of the balls, the referee begins the count using a hand gesture to count off each second. The team must return at least one of the balls to the other team's side of the court by rolling or throwing before the referee reaches five. The team may not throw the ball **over** the opponent's side or send the ball out-of-bounds. A five-second violation results in a free throw and a redistribution of the balls so that each team has an even number on their side.

3. Head shot: A player may not throw a ball at an opponent's head. If a thrown ball strikes an opponent's head, the thrower is called out and the struck player remains in the game. If the ball strikes a player in the head who is ducking, the struck player is out. The referee must determine if a throw is high enough to be considered an illegal head shot or is a reasonable throw.

4. Unsportsmanlike conduct: Any player who uses foul language, acts in a way that is destructive toward property or other players, or treats other players with disrespect (beyond a reasonable amount of friendly "trash talk") may be penalized for unsportsmanlike conduct. The referee will determine if the player should be called out, if a free throw should be awarded, or if the player should be ejected from the game.

## OFFICIALS AND SPECTATORS

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### Officials

A game has a number of possible officials, each of whom has a different responsibility:

1. Referee (1): Starts and stops the game, recognizes time-outs, calls players out, recognizes line infractions and other penalties.
2. Field judge (2-4): Rules when a player has legally been eliminated or when a line infraction has occurred. Does not have the ability to stop play, recognize time-outs, or call other penalties (unless the referee asks for clarification).
3. Timekeeper (1): Keeps track of the clock, and starts or stops the clock in accordance with the referee's whistle.

4. Scorekeeper (1-2): Keeps track of the winner of each game and the number of players each team had left on the court at the end of the game (to help break ties in tournament brackets or season standings). May also track statistics such as catches, eliminations by throw, etc.

## Spectators

Fans and players who are not on the court during play may throw balls back onto the court when they go out-of-bounds, but must throw them to the side where the ball left the playing area.

## RESOURCES

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### Where to find dodgeballs

There are a number of places to order dodgeballs that meet the specifications listed previously for tournament and regulation game play. Three recommended places are:

**1. International Dodge-Ball Federation:** Sells a sting-free, polyester-coated inflatable ball that was specifically designed for safe dodgeball play in their tournaments. Order them directly from their website: <http://officialdodgeball.com>

**2. National Dodgeball Association:** Has an online store that sells the IDBF balls listed above (though they're more expensive once shipping is added), as well as 8.5" foam balls with an extremely durable "RhinoSkin" rubber coating.

Order from their website at: <http://store.n-d-a.com>

**3. National Amateur Dodgeball Association:** Sells rubber-coated foam balls with the NADA logo, as well as mesh equipment bags, rulebooks, videos, banners, and more.

Order from their website: <http://www.dodgeballusa.com/gear.html>

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# Disciple Dodgeball Rulebook

Last updated January 18, 2007

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