

USAPA/IFP Rule Revisions

Section 2 - Court and Equipment

New/Revised Rule	Old Rule
<p>2.C.6. Center Strap. A center strap is recommended for permanent nets, and should be placed at the center of the net to enable easy adjustment to the 34-inch (86.36-cm) requirement at center.</p>	<p>2.C.6. Center Strap. A center strap should be placed at the center of the net to enable easy adjustment to the 34-inch (86.36-cm) requirement at center.</p>
<p>2.E.5. Alterations. Altered paddles must meet all specifications.</p>	<p>This sentence was the last sentence in the old rule (2.E.5.) which was moved to the beginning of the rule.</p>
<p>2.E.5.a. The only alterations or additions that can be made to a commercially made paddle are edge guard tape, lead tape, changes to the grip size or grip wrap, and adding name decals and/or other identification markings on the paddle face.</p>	<p>2.E.5. The only alterations or additions that can be made to a commercially made paddle are edge guard tape, lead tape, changes to the grip size or grip wrap, and adding name decals and/or other identification markings on the paddle face. Decals and tape can extend no farther than 1.0 inch (2.54 cm) above the top of the grip nor more than 0.5 inch (1.27 cm) inside the outer edge of a paddle or, if an edge guard is in place, 0.5 inch inside the edge guard. Altered paddles must meet all specifications.</p>
<p>2.E.5.b. Decals and tape can extend no farther than 1.0 inch (2.54 cm) above the top of the grip nor more than 0.5 inch (1.27 cm) inside the outer edge of a paddle or, if an edge guard is in place, 0.5 inch inside the edge guard.</p>	<p>2.E.5. The only alterations or additions that can be made to a commercially made paddle are edge guard tape, lead tape, changes to the grip size or grip wrap, and adding name decals and/or other identification markings on the paddle face. Decals and tape can extend no farther than 1.0 inch (2.54 cm) above the top of the grip nor more than 0.5 inch (1.27 cm) inside the outer edge of a paddle or, if an edge guard is in place, 0.5 inch inside the edge guard. Altered paddles must meet all specifications.</p>

New/Revised Rule	Old Rule
2.E.5.c Pen or sharpie type markings are allowed on the paddle playing surface so long as they do not impact the surface roughness and are in good taste.	There was no previous rule.
2.F.3.a. Violation. - If the violation is identified after the match has started, the player or team forfeits only the match being played. - If the violation is discovered after the match has concluded, the match results stand.	2.F.3.a. Violation. - If the violation is identified after the match has started, the player or team forfeits the match. - There was no previous rule.

Section 3 - Definitions

New/Revised Rule	Old Rule
Definition for Underhand was removed.	3.A.36. Underhand - The player's arm must be moving in a forward and upward arc with the palm turned upward or downward.
3.A.30 - Serve. Hitting the ball to start the rally.	Added the definition of serve.
3.A.31 - Server. The person holding the ball at the time the score is called.	Added the definition of server.

Section 4 - The Serve, Service Sequence, and Scoring Rules

New/Revised Rule	Old Rule
4.A.3. At the beginning of the serve, both feet must be behind the baseline, and the imaginary extensions of the baseline. At the time the ball is struck, at least one foot must be on the playing surface or ground behind the baseline, and the server's feet may not touch the playing surface in an area outside the confines of the serving area.	4.A.3. At the beginning of the serve, both feet must be behind the baseline. At the time the ball is struck, at least one foot must be on the playing surface or ground behind the baseline, and the server's feet may not touch the playing surface in an area outside the confines of the serving area.
4.A.4. The ball must be struck without bouncing it. A person with a physical disability, such as having the use of only one arm, may bounce the ball before making the service motion.	4.A.4. The ball must be struck without bouncing it. A person with a disability, such as having the use of only one arm, may bounce the ball before making the service motion.
4.A.5. The server's arm must be moving in an upward arc at the time the ball is struck and may be made with either a forehand or backhand motion (see Figure 4-3).	4.A.5. The serve must be made with an underhand stroke whereby the server's arm must be moving in an upward arc (see Figure 4-1).
4.D.2. Any player may call a time-out before the service motion has begun. See 4.A.2.	4.D.2. Any player may call a time-out once the score has been called but not after the service motion has begun. See 4.A.2.

Section 5 - Service and Side Selection Rules

New/Revised Rule	Old Rule
5.A.1. Any fair method can be used to determine which player or team has first choice of side, service, or receive. (Example: Write a 1 or 2 on the back of the score sheet.) If the winner chooses to serve or receive first, the loser picks the starting side. If the winner chooses starting side, the loser chooses to serve or receive. The winner can defer first choice to opponent(s).	5.A.1. Any fair method can be used to determine which player or team has first choice of side, service, or receive. (Example: Write a 1 or 2 on the back of the score sheet.) If the winner chooses to serve or receive first, the loser picks the starting side. If the winner chooses starting side, the loser chooses to serve or receive.

New/Revised Rule	Old Rule
<p>5.B.6. The maximum time allowed to switch sides during a game is one minute. During this time, players may communicate with each other, but no third-party coaching is allowed. The referee will announce a 15-second warning, then call the score after the full one minute and apply the 10-Second Rule even if all players are not on the court and/or not ready to play. See Rule 4.E.</p>	<p>5.B.6. The maximum time allowed to switch sides during a game is 60 seconds. The referee will announce a 15-second warning, then call the score after the full 60 seconds and apply the 10-Second Rule even if all players are not on the court and/or not ready to play. See Rule 4.E.</p>

Section 6 - Line Call Rules

New/Revised Rule	Old Rule
<p>6.D.5. A player should not question an opponent's call, although any player may appeal a call to a referee before the score is called to start the next point.</p>	<p>6.D.5. A player should not question an opponent's call, although any player may appeal a call to a referee.</p>
<p>6.D.9. In doubles play, if one player calls the ball "out" and the partner calls it "in", then doubt exists and the team's call will be "in". Any player may appeal a call to the referee. If the referee did not see the ball, the ball is considered in.</p>	<p>6.D.9. In doubles play, if one player calls the ball "out" and the partner calls it "in", then doubt exists and the team's call will be "in".</p>
<p>6.D.10. "Out" line calls should be promptly signaled by voice and may include a hand signal (see 13.E.2.), regardless of how obvious they may seem.</p>	<p>6.D.10. "Out" line calls should be promptly signaled by voice and/or hand signals (see 13.E.2.), regardless of how obvious they may seem.</p>

Section 7 - Fault Rules

New/Revised Rule	Old Rule
<p>7.C Hitting the ball under the net or between the net and the net post.</p>	<p>There was no previous rule.</p>

New/Revised Rule	Old Rule
7.G. A player, a player's apparel, or a player's paddle touches the net system or the net posts when the ball is in play.	7.F. A player, a player's apparel, or a player's paddle touches the net system when the ball is in play.
7.P. The player deliberately carries or catches the ball in play on the paddle.	Clarification of rule 11.A.
7.Q. The player deliberately touches the ball with the paddle more than once (double hit). See 11.A.	Clarification of rule 11.A.

Section 8 - Dead Ball Rules

New/Revised Rule	Old Rule
8.D. A service let called by the referee or player will result in a dead ball.	There was no previous rule.

Section 10 - Time-Out Rules

New/Revised Rule	Old Rule
10.A.5. There is no penalty for calling a time-out when none is available if all other time-out rules are complied with. Play will immediately resume.	10.A.5. There is no penalty for calling a time-out when none is available if all other time-out rules are complied with.

New/Revised Rule	Old Rule
<p>10.B. Medical Time-Out. If a player is accidentally injured during a match, that player may take a medical timeout. On-site medical staff should be summoned to assess the situation and render appropriate first aid. There are no medical timeouts for muscle cramping unless deemed necessary by the on-site medical team or the tournament director.</p>	<p>10.B. Medical Time-Out. If a player is accidentally injured during a match, that player may take a medical timeout. On-site medical staff should be summoned to assess the situation and render appropriate first aid.</p>
<p>10.B.1.b. If medical personnel, or the tournament director if no medical personnel are present, determine that there is not a valid medical condition, the player or team will be assessed a regular time out, if available, and issued a technical warning. If a technical warning has already been issued, then a technical foul will be called. The medical time-out is no longer available to that player for that match.</p>	<p>10.B.1.b. If medical personnel, or the tournament director if no medical personnel are present, determine that there is not a valid medical condition, the player or team will be issued a technical warning. If a technical warning has already been issued, then a technical foul will be called. The medical time-out is still available.</p>
<p>10.B.4. If blood is present, play may not resume until the bleeding has been controlled and any blood on clothing and the court has been cleaned up.</p>	<p>10.B.4. The tournament director may authorize referees to allow players to quickly drink water or other hydration as long as it does not impact the flow of the game. During this time, partner communication is not allowed.</p>
<p>10.B.4.a. All issues relating to blood cleanup or control will be considered a referee timeout, unless the injury is intentionally self-inflicted.</p>	<p>There was no previous rule.</p>
<p>10.C. Hydration Break. The tournament director may authorize referees to allow players to quickly drink water or other hydration as long as it does not impact the flow of the game. During this time, partner communication is not allowed.</p>	<p>Was Rule 10.B.4 which was renamed Rule 10.C. and "Hydration Break".</p>

New/Revised Rule	Old Rule
10.D.1. Apparel and equipment adjustments that can be accomplished quickly are allowed between points (e.g., tying shoe laces, cleaning glasses, adjusting hat).	There was no previous rule.
10.H.1. A timeout may be called at the start of the second or third game in a two-out-of-three game match.	There was no previous rule.

Section 11 - Other Rules

New/Revised Rule	Old Rule
11.A. Double Hits. Balls can be hit twice but this must occur during an unintentional , continuous, single-direction stroke. If the stroke is not continuous or not in a single direction, the hit is not allowed and a fault will be declared.	11.A. Double Hits. Balls can be hit twice but this must occur during a continuous, single-direction stroke. If the stroke is not continuous or not in a single direction, the hit is not allowed and a fault will be declared.
11.I.1. Exception. If the ball bounces into a player's non-volley zone with enough backspin as to cause it to return over the net, the player may reach over or around the net to hit the ball but may not touch the net system or the opponent's court. If the player does not touch the ball, the team that last struck the ball wins the rally.	11.I.1. Exception. If the ball bounces into a player's non-volley zone with enough backspin as to cause it to return over the net, the player may reach over or around the net to hit the ball but may not touch the net system or the opponent's court.
11.J. Distractions. Players may not distract an opponent when the opponent is about to play the ball (Examples: making loud noises, stomping feet, intentionally waving the paddle around in a distracting manner, physically interfering with your opponent's ability to hit the ball).	11.J. Distractions. Players may not distract an opponent when the opponent is about to play the ball (Examples: making loud noises, stomping feet, intentionally waving the paddle around in a distracting manner.

New/Revised Rule	Old Rule
<p>11.K. The Net Posts. The net posts (including connected wheels, arms or other support construction) are positioned out of bounds. If a ball or player contacts the net post, it is a fault and a dead ball is declared.</p>	<p>11.K. The Net Posts. The net posts are positioned out of bounds. If a ball or player contacts the net post, it is a fault and a dead ball is declared.</p>
<p>11.L.5. When net systems have a horizontal bar that includes a center base:</p>	<p>11.L.5. When net systems have a horizontal bar that includes a center base: If the ball hits the horizontal bar or the center base before going over the net, it is a fault. If the ball goes over the net and hits the center base or the horizontal bar or the ball gets caught between the net and the horizontal bar before touching the court, it is a let and will be replayed.</p>
<p>11.L.5.a. If the ball hits the horizontal bar or the center base before going over the net, it is a fault.</p>	<p>11.L.5. When net systems have a horizontal bar that includes a center base: If the ball hits the horizontal bar or the center base before going over the net, it is a fault. If the ball goes over the net and hits the center base or the horizontal bar or the ball gets caught between the net and the horizontal bar before touching the court, it is a let and will be replayed.</p>
<p>11.L.5.b. If the ball goes over the net and hits the center base or any part of the horizontal bar or the ball gets caught between the net and the horizontal bar before touching the court, it is a let and will be replayed. Exception see 11.L.5.c.</p>	<p>11.L.5. When net systems have a horizontal bar that includes a center base: If the ball hits the horizontal bar or the center base before going over the net, it is a fault. If the ball goes over the net and hits the center base or the horizontal bar or the ball gets caught between the net and the horizontal bar before touching the court, it is a let and will be replayed.</p>
<p>11.L.5.c. On the serve, if the ball hits the horizontal bar or the center base after going over the net, it is a fault.</p>	<p>There was no previous rule.</p>

Section 12 - Sanctioned Tournament Policies

New/Revised Rule	Old Rule
No change.	12.C.3. Round Robin. All players or teams play each other. Games may use any of the approved tournament scoring options (see 12.B.). The winner is determined based on number of matches won. If two or more teams are tied:
<input type="checkbox"/> First tie-breaker; head to head matches won.	<input type="checkbox"/> First tie-breaker; head to head
No change.	<input type="checkbox"/> Second tie-breaker: point differential of all games played (Example: Team A won Match 1 11-8, 11-4, so they would have a point differential of +10. Team A then wins the second match 11-9, 2-11, 11-6. For this round, they would have a point differential of -2. This would give them a total for the day of +8.)
<input type="checkbox"/> Third tie-breaker: head to head point differential.	There was no previous rule.
<input type="checkbox"/> Fourth tie-breaker: point differential against next highest team. (Example: If the teams are tied for 2nd, use point differentials against the 1st place team).	There was no previous rule.

Section 13 - Tournament Management and Officiating

New/Revised Rule	Old Rule
13.E.2.c. Blocked/blinded – use hands to cover eyes. Note: If the line judge is blinded, the referee can make the call immediately.	13.E.2.c. Blocked/blinded – use hands to cover eyes.

New/Revised Rule	Old Rule
<p>13.F. Appeals. Appeals to the referee regarding judgment calls (line calls, double bounce, etc.) will be decided by the referee. The referee may consult players or line judges to decide the outcome of the appeal. (Ex: If all 4 players agree to a replay, the referee should accommodate).</p>	<p>13.F. Appeals. Appeals to the referee regarding judgment calls (line calls, double bounce, etc.) will be decided by the referee. The referee may consult players or line judges to decide the outcome of the appeal.</p>
<p>13.G.1. Technical Warning. A referee will impose a technical warning when a player refuses to abide by the referee's decision or engages in unsportsmanlike conduct.</p>	<p>13.G.1. Technical Warning. A referee will impose a technical warning when a player refuses to abide by the referee's decision or engages in unsportsmanlike conduct. Once a technical warning has been issued, a second technical warning for any reason, given to the same layer or team during the match, will result in a technical foul being issued to the player or team.</p>
<p>13.G.2. Actions or behavior that will result in a technical warning:</p> <p>13.G.2.a. A player using objectionable or demeaning language directed at another person will incur a technical warning or a technical foul, depending upon its severity. Excessive profanity used for any reason will incur similar action. The referee will determine the severity of any violation.</p> <p>13.G.2.b. Excessive arguing.</p> <p>13.G.2.c. Purposely breaking the ball or striking the ball between rallies.</p> <p>13.G.2.d. Delay of game, either in the form of taking too much time during time-outs or between rallies or games.</p> <p>13.G.2.e. Excessive questioning of the referee on the rules.</p> <p>13.G.2.f. Excessive or unnecessary appeals.</p> <p>13.G.2.g. Challenging the referee's interpretation of a rule and losing the challenge (i.e., referee's ruling was correct) and a time-out is assessed.</p> <p>13.G.2.h. Requesting a medical time-out without a valid medical condition.</p> <p>13.G.2.i. Any other actions that are considered unsportsmanlike behavior.</p>	<p>Some of these were listed in 13.G.3.a-k. However, only the actions or behaviors that will result in a technical warning are now listed.</p>

New/Revised Rule	Old Rule
<p>13.G.3. Technical Fouls. The referee is empowered to call technical fouls. When a technical foul is called, one point shall be added to the score of the opposing side.</p>	<p>13.G.2. Technical Fouls. The referee is empowered to call technical fouls. When a technical foul is called, one point shall be added to the score of the opposing side. A second technical foul will result in a forfeit of the match.</p>
<p>13.G.4. Actions or behavior that will result in a technical foul (without a technical warning being issued beforehand):</p> <p>13.G.4.a. Intentionally throwing a paddle.</p> <p>13.G.4.b. A player using extremely objectionable or demeaning language directed at another person or extremely excessive profanity will incur a technical foul.</p> <p>13.G.4.c. Threats of any nature to any person.</p> <p>13.G.4.d. Challenging the referee's interpretation of a rule and losing the challenge (i.e., referee's ruling was correct) and no time-out is available.</p> <p>13.G.4.e. Any other actions that are considered extreme unsportsmanlike behavior warranting a one-point award to the opposing side.</p>	<p>Some of these were listed in 13.G.3.a-k. However, only the actions or behaviors that will result in a technical foul are now listed.</p>

New/Revised Rule	Old Rule
<p>13.G.5. Effect of Technical Fouls and Technical Warnings. The assessment of a technical warning or technical foul shall be accompanied by a brief explanation of the reason.</p> <p>13.G.5.a. A technical warning shall not result in a loss of rally or point awarded.</p> <p>13.G.5.b. Once a technical warning has been issued, a second technical warning for any reason, given to the same player or team during the match, will result in a technical foul being issued to the player or team.</p> <p>13.G.5.c. If a referee issues a technical foul, one point shall be added to the non-offending player's or team's score. After the point is awarded, the player or team awarded the point must move on their own to the correct position(s) that reflects their score.</p> <p>13.G.5.d. A called technical warning or technical foul shall have no effect on server change or side out.</p> <p>13.G.5.e. After assessing a technical warning or a technical foul, the referee will call a 15-second warning for the players to become ready. At the end of 15 seconds, the referee will announce the score to begin the 10-Second Rule even if the server and receiver are not on the court and/or not ready to play. See Rule 4.E.</p>	<p>13.G.4. Effect of Technical Fouls and Technical Warnings. The assessment of a technical warning or technical foul shall be accompanied by a brief explanation of the reason.</p> <p>13.G.4.a. A technical warning shall not result in a loss of rally or point awarded.</p> <p>13.G.4.b. Once a technical warning has been issued, a second technical warning for any reason, given to the same player or team during the match, will result in a technical foul being issued to the player or team.</p> <p>13.G.4.c. If a referee issues a technical foul, one point shall be added to the non-offending player's or team's score. After the point is awarded, the player or team awarded the point must move on their own to the correct position(s) that reflects their score.</p> <p>13.G.4.d. A called technical warning or technical foul shall have no effect on server change or side out.</p> <p>13.G.4.e. After assessing a technical warning or a technical foul, the referee will call a 15-second warning for the players to become ready. At the end of 15 seconds, the referee will announce the score to begin the 10-Second Rule even if the server and receiver are not on the court and/or not ready to play. See Rule 4.E.</p> <p>13.G.4.f. The referee will call a forfeiture of the match if a player or team receives two technical fouls during the match.</p>

New/Revised Rule	Old Rule
<p>13.H.1. The referee will impose a match forfeiture when either of the following occurs:</p> <p>13.H.1.a. After one technical warning has been assessed and subsequent issuance of a technical foul listed in Rule 13.G.4.</p> <p>13.H.1.b. After one technical foul has been assessed in accordance with Rule 13.G.5.b. or Rule 13.G.4. and subsequent issuance of another technical warning or technical foul for any reason.</p>	<p>Added for clarification as to when the referee can impose a match forfeiture.</p>
<p>13.H.2. The tournament director may impose a match forfeiture for failure to comply with the tournament or host facility's rules while on the premises, or for improper conduct on the premises between matches, or for abuse of hospitality, locker room, or other rules and procedures.</p>	<p>Was 13.H.1. in the 2018 Rulebook.</p>
<p>13.H.3. A referee may impose a match forfeiture when a player fails to report to play 10 minutes after the match has been called to play. The tournament director may permit a longer delay if circumstances warrant such a decision.</p>	<p>Was 13.H.2. in the 2018 Rulebook.</p>