



Columbus, OH | Est. 2019

Winter 2020 Rule Book

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Updates for Winter 2020

Check here for the biggest changes coming to Season II! Be sure to refresh your knowledge of the rules in the following pages or use the Glossary section for quick definitions of the key terms.

Sportsmanship and player safety will continue to be our number one priority. When in doubt, just go out! Remember to always hold your teammates accountable and continue to create a space that is welcoming for all our players. Let's have some fun!

Updates & Changes

- Key terms first mentioned in the subsequent sections of this rulebook referenced in the Glossary can now be recognized by their underlined text.
- For the Winter 2020 season, we will be replacing the attack line with a new buffer line. The buffer line acts similarly to the attack line, but it is only applicable during the initial rush. Players who run to the center line to retrieve a ball(s) during the initial rush must bring the ball(s) back beyond the buffer line. Once a ball from the center line has crossed over the buffer line, the ball may be thrown from anywhere within the court. Throwing a ball across the center line before a player brings the ball back over the buffer line results in an invalid throw and the throwing player immediately being out.

Why These Changes?

- Because we were limited in Season I with our court setup, we had to use the volleyball court lines already in place, and since we do not yet have access to custom court sizes, we will be using the same lines available to us for Season II. We noticed the distance of the attack line from the center line in Season I didn't provide to use with what the mechanic was meant to originally perform. The attack line was to ensure there was enough space between throwing players and the opposing team, but because the distance was so short from the center line and the minimum distance between players was already rather large, the attack line was not serving its intended purpose. With removing the attack line, we were concerned with players being too close to each other during the initial rush. We did not want players who ran up to the center line to be penalized if they weren't quick enough to avoid the opposing players who were also running up to the center line. The new buffer line provides all players enough time and safety to retrieve their respective balls to their teammates.

As a disclaimer for these changes and those to come, these updates may or may not carry over from season to season as we try new things. Our league will constantly evolve from feedback provided by our community. If you have any suggestions that could make our league even better, we want to hear from you!

What to Wear?

All players must be wearing *the current season's* official shirt with a number unique (within their team) to play.

Every player must have an integer number between 1 and 99, unique within their team, clearly written in black bold permanent marker in the designated area on the front of the shirt. It must be clear, bold, large (touching or nearly touching at least the top and bottom of the designated area), and proportionally shaped.

Do not make any extraneous marks or decorations inside the area for your number. "00" is not an acceptable number, nor is any 3-digit number. If you violate these rules, you will **NOT BE ALLOWED TO PLAY**.

Gloves, knee pads, protective goggles, and taped fingers are allowed.



Game Basics

Games

- Matches are 40 minutes long, composed of a number of games, and teams switch sides approximately halfway through (~20 minutes).
 - After 40 minutes of play (i.e. when the match clock expires to zero minutes), the current game will enter sudden death until one team wins that game, then the match is complete. During sudden death, blocking will not be allowed. The blocking player is immediately out and blocking a ball immediately makes it dead.
- Before the first game, captains will rock, paper, scissors to determine initial ball control.
- Officials may **NOT** start a game with two minutes or less remaining. They will announce when only five minutes remain in the match and will call last game when a game begins after the five minute warning but before two minutes remaining in the match.
- The team that wins the most games in the match **WINS!**

Mercy Rule

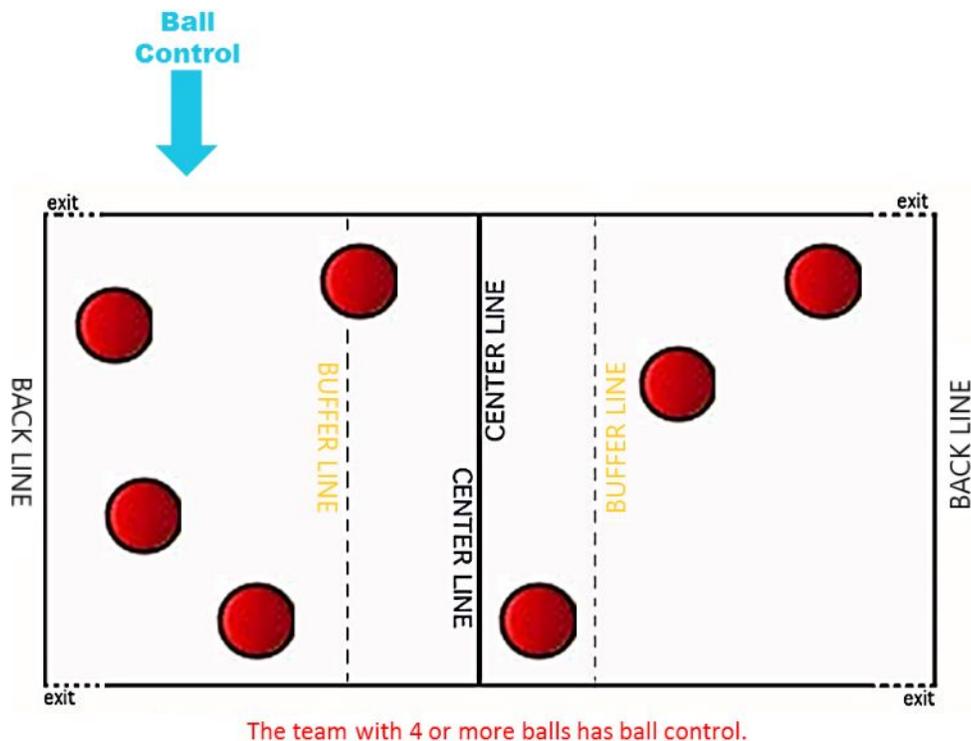
- When a team achieves a 10-point game differential, the match is over and that team wins.
- Officials will then mix up teams and start open gym play for the remainder of the allotted match time.

Tie Breakers

Ties are allowed during regular season/round-robin matches. For playoff/tournament style matches, ties are broken by playing 1 final game to completion using the rules of sudden death.

Court Setup

The figure below represents the dodgeball court setup including placement of the center line, buffer line and a high-level overview of ball control. Details regarding terminology are in the sections that follow.



Teams

- A minimum of eight players is required to play. A team has five minutes to find a rostered player from when the game is scheduled to start. Any less than eight after five minutes results in a forfeit.
- No more than 12 active players may play per game. 16 players per team.
 - Remaining players are benched and do NOT come in on catches.
 - **Rotation:** Each player must play at least every other game. No player is allowed to sit out twice in a row.
- Teams are allowed a maximum of two substitutes (officially registered players from a different team) to reach a maximum of 12 players when they have less than 12 rostered players, during the regular season. Substitutes can not be the final player(s) remaining on the court. If so, the game will immediately end.

Captains/Co-Captains

- 1 captain and 1 co-captain will be recognized by the league.
- Captains are responsible for ensuring that their team is aware of the game schedule and/or schedule changes.
- Captains are also responsible for ensuring that their team is honest and adhere to the Stonewall Sports Columbus Code of Conduct and Official Rules.

Interaction with Head Officials and Line Referees

- Only captains and co-captains may interact with the head official.

- All other players interacting with the head official or line referees about on-court issues/disputes will be ignored and arguing with the head official may result in a penalty. (*See Penalties*)
- Each team will be required to provide 4 players to act as line referees for games assigned by the league. For each line referee NOT provided by the assigned team, the team will be penalized -2 in their next match AND will be responsible for finding replacement line referees.
- All calls made by the head official are final. If the head official and line referees cannot unanimously agree on a play (i.e. conflicting information), no call is made and gameplay resumes as normal.

Time Outs

- Time outs can only be called by captains or co-captains.
- Only one time out is allowed per team per match.
- The time out is not to exceed 30 seconds and does not pause the match clock.
- Timeouts cannot be called after an official has issued the five-minute end-of-match warning or during a game that has been announced as the last game.
- All live balls are immediately dead when the official begins the timeout, and all players should not touch any balls.

Injuries

Injured players may remove themselves from play for up to two minutes and then return to play if the same game is in session.

Penalties

All players are expected to maintain an honor code while playing!

Officials may issue penalties if a player is:

- Not abiding by the rules
- Not adhering to calls made by officials
- Arguing with or yelling at officials
- Blatantly cheating
- Any reason otherwise listed in the official rules as a justifiable offense.

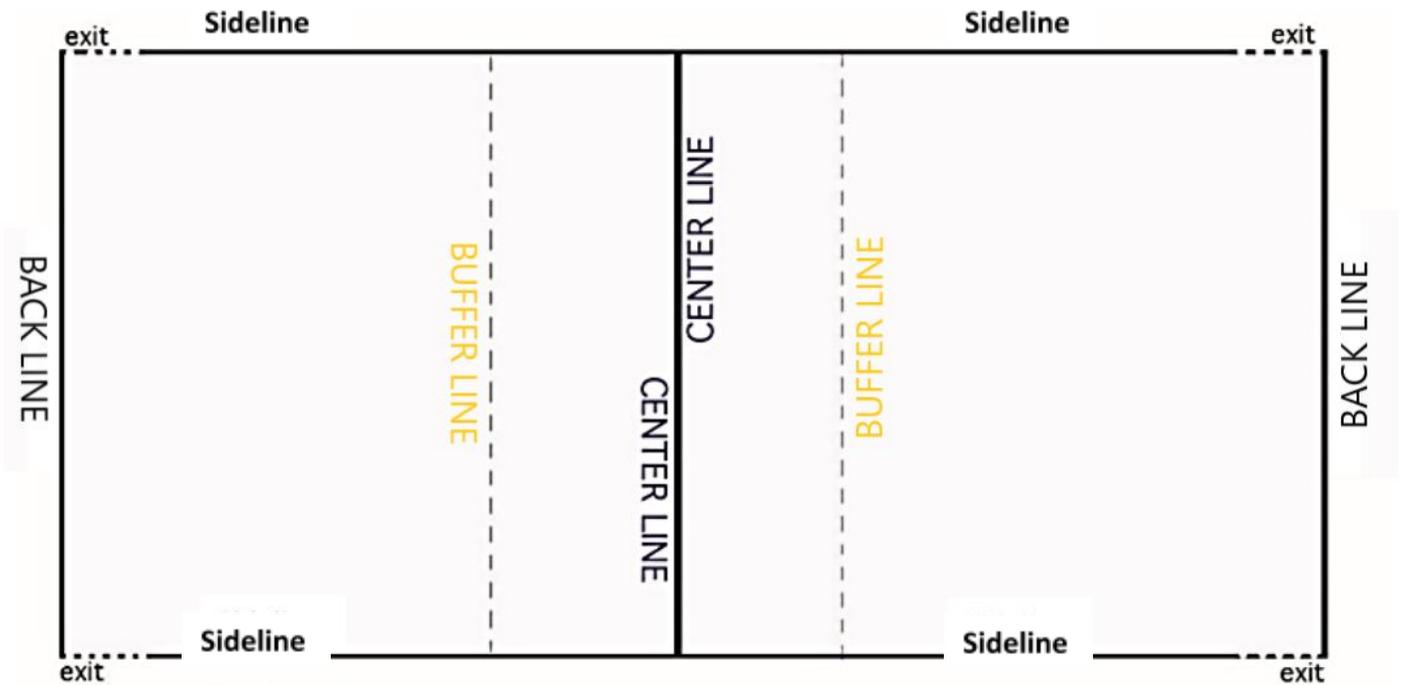


Yellow Card: issued for not abiding by the rules, not following the officials' instructions, arguing, yelling, and cheating. Players issued a yellow card are out and must sit the next game out too. They cannot be replaced (the team must play with one fewer player for each yellow card issued.).

Red Card: issued for 2 yellow cards, grossly poor conduct, threats, discriminatory language, violence, or rude/insulting online communications. Crossing the center line in an aggressive manner is grounds for a red card. Players are out for the entire match, cannot be replaced, and are subject to suspension or expulsion.

Purposefully violating or encouraging other players to violate any rules will result in a red card.

The Court



Back Line

At the start of all games, all active players must be completely behind the back line.

The Center Line

Players can, within reason of the official's discretion, step over the center line only during the initial rush, but doing so any time thereafter means they are out. Any balls unclaimed from the initial rush (after a reasonable time has passed) are allowed to be claimed by either team during the game.

The Buffer Line

- Runs parallel to the center line and all balls taken from the center line during the initial rush must first be brought back behind this line before they can be thrown. Once a ball has crossed back across the buffer line it can be thrown from anywhere on the court.
- Throws made with a ball that has not yet crossed back across the buffer line are considered an invalid throw: the throwing player is out, the ball can't get anyone on the other team out, but catches will count. We don't yellow-card for this.

Invalid Throws

- Invalid throws cannot get players out, but can be caught and count as a valid catch.
- Invalid throws include:
 - Throws made in front of the buffer line before the ball has initially crossed the buffer line.
 - Throws made from out-of-bounds.
 - Kicking or spiking the ball.
 - Pinching the ball.

Boundaries & Exiting the Court

- Players are out if their body/clothes touch the floor beyond the center line (unless it's during the initial rush) or across the sidelines and back line.
- A player may not exit to dodge a ball.
 - Dodging over the sidelines results in an out.
- Players may step out-of-bounds *only* to get a ball that is out-of-bounds. They *must exit and re-enter at the back of the court* (see exit on the diagram).
-
- Once both feet are out-of-bounds for a valid reason, they're safe until they return (one foot back in).
- The last active player left may not exit the court. Teammates are encouraged to help the last player retrieve balls outside of the court. **If at any time there are no active players on the court due to shagging, all active players are immediately out.**
- Returning to the court:
 - Players cannot step in or out of the court just anywhere: it must be at the very back by the back line; imagine a doorway 4 feet wide extending off the back wall that players need to exit and enter through. This is for safety.
 - Returning players are active upon having 1 foot in bounds.
- **Plays are only valid if the player has 2 feet in bounds when the play occurs (catches, throws, etc.)**
 - If a player makes a catch then falls out-of-bounds due to momentum, they're not out and their catch counts. The player must immediately re-enter the court and not stop to shag.
- Violating any of these sideline/boundary rules results in an out.



The Out-Line

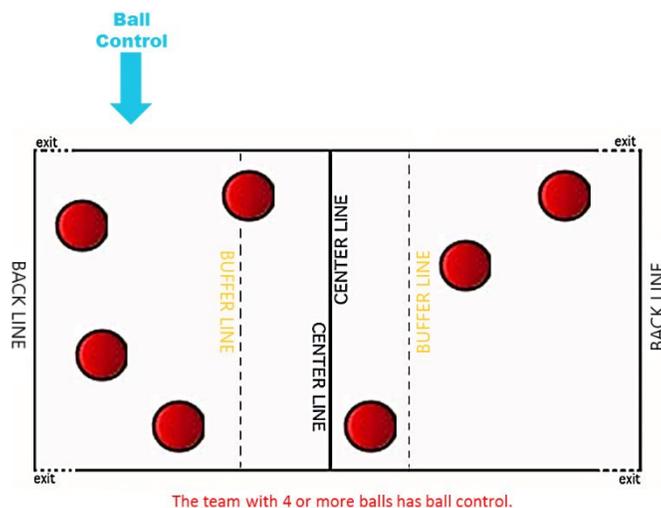
- When a player is out, they should line up on the side of the court in the order in which they are out, known as the out-line.
- Players come in on catches in the same order they arrived to the line (players on their way to the out-line cannot come in on catches, and the line order is determined by when players arrives at the line rather than the order in which they got out).
- Any team purposefully violating the out-line order will be subject to penalties by the officials.

Ball Control

When a team has majority control of the balls on the court.

Ball Control Explained

- Games are played with 7 balls.
- A team has ball control when they have 4 or more of these balls.
- A team has 15 seconds to give up ball control.
- Officials will silently count down from 15 to 10. At 10 seconds, the officials will loudly call “Ball Control!” to the offending team and countdown from 10 to 0.
- Balls outside the realm of the court are not used for determining ball control.
- A team with more than 4 balls on their side still has ball control even if another ball is outside the realm of the court.
- Rolling or placing balls over the center line does not count as relinquishing ball control. Players must make valid throws to relinquish ball control.
- **Failure to give up ball control:**
 - Officials will stop the game and the team will give ALL the balls to the opposing team.
- **If during the ball control countdown:**
 - Additional balls come onto the side with ball control, they do not count for the timer; they’re new balls so they aren’t a part of the original timer.
 - Players bring a ball with them outside the realm of the court to shag another ball, the ball(s) that they left the court with continue to count toward their team’s ball control timer.
- **Ball Control for singles (Last man standing):**
 - When a team is down to 1 player and that player has ball control, the timer resets to 10 seconds each time the player throws until they lose ball control.
 - If officials deem the player is deliberately stalling, they may announce “Stalling! Last countdown!” and the timer will no longer reset with each throw until the player loses ball control.



Mechanics

Stalling

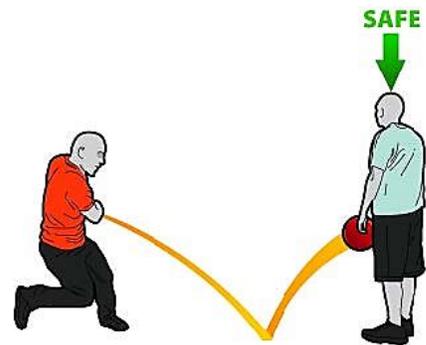
- Placing balls just over the center line doesn't count as giving up control of them
- Deliberately throwing balls so they return without giving the other team a chance to take control of them is stalling
- Officials will issue a warning for stalling and award all the balls to the other after a 10 second timer

Tagging

- The act of marking an active player with a ball (known as "tagged" or "tagging") to be out once that ball becomes dead is known as tagging.
- A ball must touch any part of a player's body/clothes for a tag to be applied (*see also, dropped ball*).
- An active player can have multiple tags applied to them from multiple balls.
- A single ball can only tag the first player it interacted with.

Live Ball/Dead Ball

- A ball becomes a live ball when it is thrown from anywhere within the court after it is brought back beyond the buffer line during the initial rush. Live balls can tag players or be caught, resulting in outs.
- A ball becomes a dead ball when it does any of the following:
 - Touches the floor, wall, ceiling, net, or any other part of the building
 - Touches another ball not being held by an active player
 - Touches a player **not** on the court
 - Is caught
 - Comes back across the center line
- A dead ball cannot tag players and catching a dead ball is not a valid catch.
- **Note:** A player isn't technically out the moment they are hit; they are out the moment when the ball that tagged them becomes dead.



A thrown ball hits the ground before an opponent

Shagging

- Active players, out players, and/or non-players may return balls from out-of-bounds to the court as long as the players stay on their side of the court relative to the center line. The balls must be promptly returned to play.
- ***Out players or non-players may not reach into the court or the other team's out-line area for any reason.***
- When a ball exits the realm of the court (i.e., it's in the rafters or on another court), players from either side may shag the ball regardless of their position relative to the center line.
- Disrupting a game in play to shag a ball will result in a yellow card.
- ***If a player gets out, while exiting the court they should not touch any balls that are in play.***
- Any ball that is shagged violating these rules will be awarded to the opposing team and the official may issue a yellow card.

Distraction(s)

- Players may use distraction techniques such as stomping, fake throws, noise, etc. as a means of distracting the opposing team's players, within reason.
- If distractions are considered aggressive or overly disruptive, the officials may issue a warning and/or a yellow card, if not stopped.

Gameplay

Basic Rule

Hit an opponent with a ball to tag them. If that ball becomes dead, they're out. But if they catch it, the player that threw the ball is out and they get a player back in. Simple!

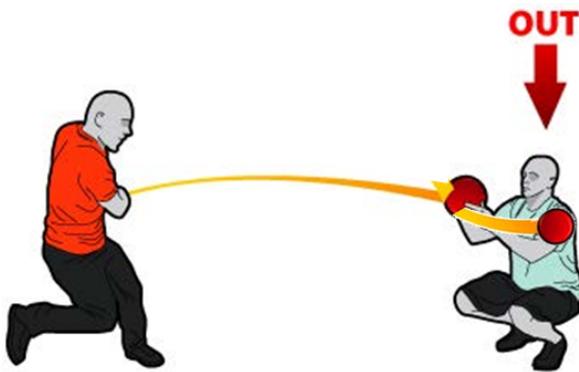
Catches

A catch is valid as long as the player had both feet in the court when they caught the ball **and** the ball had not touched any part of the building (net, wall, floor, light fixtures, ceiling, etc).

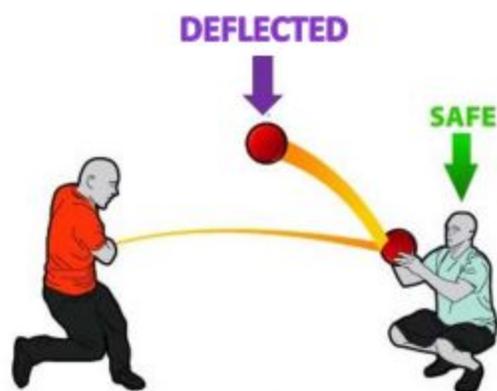
- Traps are not catches.
- A player must show adequate ball control in order for the catch to be valid. A player cannot *fumble* a catch. In other words, the player must show voluntary and intentional control of the ball they caught.

Deflections Explained

- A player deflecting a ball into themselves results in a tag to themselves (including a deflection into their own head).



A player uses a ball as a shield and deflects the ball into themselves.



A player uses a ball as a shield.

- Deflecting a ball into someone else does not tag them. A **deflected ball** can only tag the person who deflected it.
- A ball that is deflected can be caught until it becomes dead (touches any part of the building, the net, a player not on the court, another ball that is not being held by a player, crosses back across the center line, or is caught.)
- Deflecting a ball that is then caught is treated as a regular catch: anyone hit/tagged by the ball prior to the catch is safe, the thrower is out, and the catching team gets a player back in.

Maintaining Ball Control during Deflections and Catches

If a player loses control of any ball(s) in their possession while deflecting, they are tagged with the ball(s) they dropped. If any active player catches the deflected ball this is a valid catch, but the player that lost control of the ball is out once it becomes dead. A player must maintain or show intentional, voluntary control of all balls they are holding during all catches and deflections.



Headshots

Shots **directly** to the head do not result in a tag.

Exceptions to this rule include:

- If a player is on the ground (defined as 3 points of contact with the floor):
 - Any part of their body counts as a point of contact.
 - If a ball is in contact with them and the floor, it counts as a point of contact.
- If a player's head is at or below waist level (including as a result of squatting or crouching).
 - A player is considered to have assumed the risk by reducing their surface area.
- A player may not deliberately block with their head.
- If they deflect a ball into their own head.

Note: If they are hit directly in the head and then they or a teammate catches the ball, the catch counts.

Calculating Weekly Rankings and Playoff Bracket

Weekly Standings

During the regular season, Teams will be ranked within their assigned division. The League's protocol used for calculating weekly rankings is as follows:

- Standing Point Differential: sum of points awarded after each Match based on Matches outcome
 - (Win = 1.0; Tie = 0.5; Loss or Game Forfeit = 0.0)
- If two or more teams are tied (same Standing Point Differential), then tie is broken in this order:
 - 1. Team with more wins. 2. If not resolved, then by "head-to-head" play. 3. If not resolved, then by team with less games scored against ("games lost"). 4. If not resolved, then by team with great game differential ("games won" minus "games lost" = game differential). 5. If still not resolved, then by Leadership coin toss.

Playoff Bracket

For playoffs, Teams will be ranked on the playoff bracket within the League as a whole – with no preference given towards a division. The League's protocol used for calculating the playoff bracket ranking is as follows:

1. Win Percentage (%): $\text{Standings Point Differential} \div \text{Total Games Played}$
2. If two or more teams are tied (same Win Percentage), then tie is broken in this order:
 - a. Team with more wins.
 - b. If not resolved, then by "head-to-head" play.
 - c. If not resolved, then by team with less games scored against ("games lost").
 - d. If not resolved, then by team with great game differential ("games won" minus "games lost" = game differential).
 - e. If still not resolved, then by Leadership coin toss.

Glossary

Match

A collection of games within a set amount of time. The team that wins the most games in the allotted time wins the match.

Game

An individual round to a match. A game ends when one team has no more active players left to make plays; the opposing team wins that game.

Court

The area enclosed by the center line, sidelines and back line in which games are played. All plays must be made with two feet in the court for the play to be valid.

Plays

The act of an active player throwing, catching, dodging, deflecting, and/or blocking during a game. A play is only valid if the active player has two feet in the court when the play is made.

Center Line

Boundary line in the center of the whole court to divide the court into the teams' individual sides. All balls are lined up along the center line before each game. Majority ball control is determined before the first game, and majority switches between each team at the start of each new game. The center line may only be crossed during the initial rush, within reason.

Back Line

Boundary line that runs parallel to the center line at the back of the team's side of the court. Before each game, all active players must start completely behind the back line.

Sidelines

Boundary lines that run perpendicular to the center line and back line to enclose the team's side of the court.

Exit

A 4-foot doorway along the sidelines towards the back line of each team's side of the court that all players must use to enter and exit the court. Active players may leave the court with any number of balls in hand only to shag other balls. The last active player on the court cannot leave the court to shag.

Initial Rush

Occurs at the start of each game. All active players start from behind the back line and once the head official counts down and blows their whistle, any number of active players may run to the center line to retrieve the court balls on the right-hand side only. Interfering with the other team's balls during the initial rush results in the offending team to forfeit all balls that were interfered with to the opposing team as well as one additional ball from the offending team. Any balls unclaimed from the initial rush (after a reasonable time has passed) are allowed to be claimed by either team during the game.

False Start

When an active player crosses the back line before the initial rush has started. The offending team forfeits one ball to the other team and the game restarts.

Buffer Line

Runs parallel to the center line and back line. All balls retrieved from the center line from the initial rush must first be brought back beyond the buffer line. Any throws made before a ball crosses the buffer line result in an invalid throw.

Valid Throw

A throw made by an active player within the court. The thrown ball must have been brought back beyond the buffer line from the initial rush to be considered a valid throw. A valid throw creates a live ball.

Invalid Throw

Results in the throwing player immediately being out, the thrown ball cannot tag players but catching an invalid throw still counts as a catch. An invalid throw includes intentional kicking, pinching or spiking the ball, throwing in front of the buffer line before the ball is brought back beyond the buffer line from the initial rush, or from out-of-bounds.

Live Ball

A thrown ball from a valid throw. A live ball can tag an active player on the court of the opposing team when it touches any part of their body/clothes and/or it can be caught, blocked, deflected or dodged.

Tag

The act of marking an active player with a ball (known as "tagged" or "tagging") to be out once that ball becomes dead. An active player can have multiple tags applied to them from multiple balls. Out players still on the court who are hit with a live ball are not tagged, but if the ball ricochets off their body it creates a deflected ball. A single ball can only tag the first player it interacted with.

Active Player

A non-out player that can make plays and/or be tagged. Active players can be tagged once one foot is back on the court (i.e. returning through the exit from shagging or coming in from a catch). A player is still considered an active player even if they leave the court to shag.

Out Player

A player that was tagged by a ball that then became dead or their body/clothes touched the area out-of-bounds. Out players cannot make plays until they become active again from a catch. Out players cannot purposely interfere with the current game. Out players must use the exit to immediately leave the court and line up at the out-line in the order in which they arrive to the out-line.

Dead Ball

*A once live ball, deflected ball or dropped ball that then hit any part of the building, the floor, a player **not on the court**, any ball not being held by a player, crossed back across the center line or was caught. A dead ball cannot tag players and catching a dead ball is not a valid catch.*

Deflected Ball

*A live ball that bounces off another ball a player is holding on the court and/or bounces off the body/clothes of **any** player on the court. A deflected ball can only tag the first player who deflected it by touching any part of their body/clothes and that player will be out once the deflected ball that tagged them becomes dead.*

Dropped Ball

Results when an active player involuntarily loses control of the ball(s) they are already holding while attempting to catch or block. A dropped ball will tag that player with the ball they dropped, and that player will be out once the dropped ball that tagged them becomes dead.

Save

*The act of catching a deflected ball or dropped ball that previously tagged an active player before it became dead, thus removing the tag from that player. The active player (before they are out due to any other reason) that was originally tagged is not out and remains in the game. Saves to a dropped ball **do not** bring in an out player but saves to a deflected ball do (see catch).*

Blocking

Using a ball a player is holding to deflect a live ball, thus creating a deflected ball. Blocking into oneself (touching any part of one's body/clothes) creates a tag for that player with the deflected ball.

Catch

When an active player catches a live ball, deflected ball or dropped ball before it becomes dead. All catches must be made with two feet in the court for the play to be valid and the active player shows voluntary and intentional control of the ball(s) they just caught or are already holding. The throwing player from a valid catch is immediately out. Each successful catch of a live ball and deflected ball brings back in one out player from the out-line of the catching player's team. Catching a dropped ball does not bring in an out player, but results in a save for the player that was previously tagged.

Momentum Rule

When an active player makes a catch, if momentum then immediately carries that player out-of-bounds, they are safe from being out. The player must immediately re-enter the court through the exit and not stop to shag any balls.

Out-of-Bounds

The area not enclosed by the center line, sidelines or back line. All plays are nullified out-of-bounds and active players cannot be tagged. Active players are immediately out when any part of their body/clothes touches the floor out-of-bounds unless the momentum rule is in effect.

Shagging

The act of rolling or carrying balls back into the court from out-of-bounds. Shagging can be performed by out players, non-players, or active players who use the exit. Shagged balls must be returned to the side of the court they are on relative to the center line. Balls outside the realm of the court can be shagged to either side of the court. Shagged balls must be promptly returned to the court.

Out-Line

The area in which out players line up once they are out. The order is determined by when players arrive to the out-line.

Headshot

Shots directly to the head. Headshots never tag a player but do create a deflected ball. Headshots do not apply to a player whose head is at or below their waist level, if the player has three points of contact to the floor or if they deflect a ball into their own head due to blocking.

Sudden Death

*An overtime situation during a game when the match clock expires to zero minutes. Blocking results in the active player immediately being out and deflecting a live ball **with another ball** immediately makes it dead.*

Deflection

When a ball bounces off a player on the court or a ball a player is holding.

Trap

When a ball hits a player and a gym surface (e.g. the floor) at the exact same time. When traps occur, everyone is safe. The same applies to trap catches, in which a player catches a ball using the gym surface, nobody is out.

Pinching

When rubber touches rubber inside the ball due to players' grip. Pinching the ball is not allowed. Continuous pinching may be subject to penalty at the officials' discretion.