

# The New and Official United States Handball Association One-Wall Rules With Interpretations last updated August 20th 2002

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## Part 1. The Game

**Rule 1.1 Types of Games.** One-wall handball may be played by two, three or four players. When played by two, it is called singles; when played by three, cutthroat ([See Interpretation No. 1](#)); and when played by four, doubles.

**Rule 1.2 Description.** Handball is a competitive game in which either hand or either fist may be used to serve and return the ball.

**Rule 1.3 Objective.** The objective is to win each rally by serving or returning the ball so the opponent is unable to keep the ball in play. A rally is won when one player is unable to return the opponent's shot legally ([See Rule 4.4C](#)).

**Rule 1.4 Points and Outs.** Points are scored only by the serving side, either when it serves an ace (unreturnable serve) or wins a rally. When the serving side loses one rally in singles or two rallies in doubles, it loses the serve. Losing the serve is called an "out."

**Rule 1.5 Game, Match, Tie Breaker.** A match is won by the first side to win two games. The first two games of a match are played to 21 points. In the event each side wins a game, a tie-breaker is played to 11 points ([See Rule 4.1A](#)).

## Part 2. Courts and Equipment

### Rule 2.1 Courts.

A. Dimensions. Drawings of standard one-wall courts and their surroundings are on file with the U.S.H.A.. The dimensions of a standard one-wall handball court are:

1) Wall. The wall shall be 20 feet wide (from the outside edge of one side line to the outside edge of the other side line) and 16 feet high including any top line.

Courts should be numbered.

2) Floor. The floor shall be 20 feet wide from the outside edges of the sidelines. It shall be 34 feet from the wall to the back edge of the long line. The side lines should extend at least 6 feet beyond the long line. There also should be a minimum border of at least 6 feet (but ideally 20 feet of floor beyond each side line, as well as 16 feet beyond the long line) to allow for playing space. In addition, to keep from losing the ball, outdoor courts should be surrounded by an 12-16 foot high 1-inch chain link fence.

B. Lines and zones. Handball courts shall be divided and marked on the floors with 2-inch wide lines. Recommended colors are white, yellow, or red. The lines shall be marked as follows:

1) Short line. The short line runs parallel to the wall, between the side lines, with its back edge 16 feet from the wall.

2) Long line. The long line runs parallel to the wall, between the side lines, with its back edge 34 feet from the wall.

3) Top line. The top line runs parallel to the floor, between the side lines, with its top edge 16 feet from the floor (See 2.1B8).

4) Service markers. 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 (See Rule 4.4A).

5) Service zone. The service zone is the floor inside and including the short, service, and side lines.

6) Receiving zone. The receiving zone is the floor area behind the short line, inside and including the side and long lines.

7) Playing zone. The playing zone is the floor area between the wall and the outside edges of the side and long lines.

8) 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.

## **Rule 2.2 Ball.**

A. Specifications.

1) Material. The material should be rubber or synthetic material.

2) Color. Color is optional.

3) Size. 1 & 7/8-inch diameter, with 1/32-inch variation.

4) Weight. 62 grams, with a variation of 2 grams. A lighter ball may be used for any division provided it is USHA approved and is specified on the entry blank.

5) Rebound. The rebound from freefall, 70-inch drop to a hardwood floor should be between 48 and 52 inches at a temperature of 68 degrees F.

B. Selection. A new ball must be selected 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 should honor requests when made by both sides or when he detects erratic bounces.

### **Rule 2.3 Gloves.**

A. General. Gloves must be worn.

B. Style. Gloves must be light in color and made of a soft material or leather. The fingers may not be webbed, connected or removed.

C. 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, it creates an unfair advantage ([See Interpretation No. 2](#)).

D. 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.

### **Rule 2.4 Uniform.**

A. General. All parts of the uniform, consisting of a shirt, shorts, socks and shoes, must be clean at the beginning of a match. Only customary handball attire, in the referee's judgment, can be worn. Shirts must be full length, not cut off in the torso. Shirts are not required for outdoor play unless requested by opponent.

B. Color. Colors are optional. Unusual patterns that affect the opposing player's view of the ball or distract him may not be worn.

C. Wet shirts. Referee may demand that a wet shirt be changed. Players must

have an ample supply of dry shirts.

D. Lettering and insignia. Lettering or insignia in poor taste is not allowed.

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

F. Headband (Sweatband). 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.

### **Rule 2.5 Eye Protection.**

A. General. Protective eyewear must be properly worn at all times during play. The USHA recommends that players select lensed eye protection designed for court sports, with polycarbonate lenses of at least 3 mm. center thickness.

B. Violations. Failure to wear appropriate protective eyewear properly will result in a technical (See Rule 4.9), and the player will be charged a time-out to secure eyewear. The second violation in the same match will result in a forfeit ([See Interpretation No. 3](#)).

## **Part 3. Officials and Officiating**

**Rule 3.1 Tournament Director.** All tournaments shall be managed by a tournament director, who shall delegate the officials. The officials shall include a chief of referees, a floor manager, match referees, and linesmen.

A. Responsibilities. The director is responsible for overseeing the entire tournament. He, or his delegated representative, shall be present at all times.

B. Rules Briefing. Before all tournaments, all officials and players should be briefed on rules and on local court hindrances or other regulations. This briefing should also be in writing. The current USHA rules will apply and be made available. Any modifications made by the tournament director should be stated on the entry form, and be available to all players at registration. It is also recommended that referee clinics be held before all USHA-sanctioned tournaments.

**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.** One or more players may request that a referee be replaced. The decision to do so is at the sole discretion of the tournament director or chief of referees. Special consideration should be given

to such a request if all players are in agreement.

**Rule 3.4 Referee.**

A. Pre-match duties. Before each match begins, it shall be the duty of the referee to:

- 1) Playability. Check on adequacy of preparation of the handball court with respect to playability.
- 2) Equipment. Check on availability and suitability of all materials necessary for the match, such as handballs, towels, scorecards, pencils and a timepiece.
- 3) Assisting officials. Check readiness of and provide instructions to assisting officials.
- 4) Court hinders. Explain court hinders, if any, to players (See Rule 4.7A1).
- 5) Inspect gloves, uniforms and eye protection. Remind players to have an adequate supply of extra gloves and shirts. 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.
- 6) Start game. Introduce players, toss coin to determine order of serve and signal start of game.
- 7) Time. Be present 15 minutes before match time.
- 8) Two-minute warning. Give a two-minute warning before the match and before each game.
- 9) Scoring. Announce the score before each rally (See Rule 3.7).

B. Decisions. The referee will be positioned behind the receiving side and shall make all decisions with regard to the rules and the referee has the authority to change his 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 call.

- 1) Spectators. The referee shall have jurisdiction over the spectators, as well as the players, while the match is in progress (See Rule 5.6). A ball that hits an official or spectator before hitting the wall shall be judged as if it had hit an opponent (See Rule 4.7A2). If a "non-seated" spectator or official interferes with

a player in his attempt to play a ball, it is a hinder. In the interest of safety, when sufficient playing area cannot be provided, the referee may call a dead-ball hinder for interference that prevents a player from having a fair chance to see or return the ball (See Rule 4.7A7).

C. Protests. Any decision involving a rules interpretation may be protested before the next serve. It will then be resolved by the chief of referees or tournament director. Judgment hinder calls may not be protested. If the player's protest is upheld, the proper ruling will be made. If the player's protest is not upheld, the player shall be charged with a time-out. If the player is out of time-outs, he will be charged with a technical.

D. Forfeitures. A match may be forfeited by the referee when:

1) Flagrant unsportsmanlike conduct. Player refuses to abide by the referee's decision or engages in flagrant unsportsmanlike conduct.

2) Three technicals. Side receives three technicals in a match.

3) Leaving the court. Player leaves the court at a time not allowed by these rules without permission of the referee.

4) Failure to report.

a) No show. Player for a singles match, or any team for a doubles match, fails to report to play.

b) Late start penalty. If a player is not ready to play (or resume play) on time, the opponent shall be awarded one point. The opponent will then be awarded one additional point for each full minute of delay of game up to 10 minutes. The match shall then be forfeited. This applies to the start of the match, between-game time-outs, time-outs during a game and glove-change time-outs. Players should stay within earshot of the referee to help prevent the delay-of-game penalty. It is the obligation of the players to be ready to resume play on time even if the referee fails to give time warnings. If the matches are on, or ahead of, schedule, the players must be in the court warming up at least 10 minutes before the assigned match time to assure a prompt start. If running behind, the players must be dressed and ready to enter the court for a maximum 10 minute, on-court warm up. If a player shows up less than 10 minutes before the scheduled starting time, his warm-up time will be reduced accordingly. The tournament chairman may permit a longer delay if circumstances warrant.

E. Defaults. 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.

F. Other rulings. The referee shall rule on all matters not covered in the USHA Official Rules. However, the referee may be overruled by the chief of referees or tournament director, who shall have final authority.

### **Rule 3.5 Line Judges.**

A. Linesmen. There should be a linesman, positioned at the most advantageous viewpoints, for each of the side lines, the short line and the long line.

B. Duties and Responsibilities. Their duties shall be to call "out" the balls that hit the floor or the wall off the court and to call faults on their respective lines as they occur. The short linesman may call skip balls, backswing hinders and two bounce returns at the discretion of the referee. If a linesman is uncertain, he should abstain from making a call. The referee may substitute his decision on a call.

Linesmen also help decide appealed calls. In the event of an appeal, and **after** a very brief explanation of the appeal by the referee, the linesmen must indicate their opinions of the referee's call. The signal to show agreement with the referee is arm extended with thumb up; disagreement is shown by thumb pointing down. The signal to show no agreement or that the line judge is unsure or his view was blocked is an arm extended with an open hand and palm down. Line judges should not signal until the referee acknowledges the appeal and asks for a ruling.

### **Rule 3.6 Appeals.**

A. Appealable calls. The server may appeal a short or other service fault. He may also appeal receiving line violations. If his appeal is upheld, the server is awarded the serve over. If he had one short, the call would cancel the previous fault call, and he would have no faults, because he was judged to have made a legal serve. 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 two shorts, a handout. After the rally has ended, either player may appeal on a double-bounce call or non-call, kill shots called good, kill shots called no good and court hinders. The outcome may result in a point being awarded, a handout, or a replay.

After the rally has ended, either player may appeal faults and skip serves not called. If he wins the appeal, he is awarded the appropriate call. After the rally, either player may appeal a double-bounce call or non-call, kill shots called good or no good, or any call or non-call regarding a legal return. The outcome of the appeal may result in a point or handout being upheld, reversed or replayed.

At no time may a player appeal a hinder serve, hinder (other than court hinders), technicals or other discretionary calls.

B. How to appeal. A player must make appeals directly to the referee before the referee announces the score. The referee may then request the opinion of the linesmen. The referee may also appeal to the linesmen himself if he is uncertain of his own call, and may then maintain, reverse or nullify the call. A replay shall be called if the referee believes it is necessary in the interest of fairness.

**Rule 3.7 Scorers.** The scorer, when utilized, shall keep a record of the progress of the game in the manner prescribed by the committee or tournament director. At a minimum, the progress record shall include the order of serves, outs, and points.

**Rule 3.8 Floor Manager.** The floor manager informs players of their court assignments and times.

## **Part 4. Play Regulations.**

### **Rule 4.1 Serve.**

A. Order. In singles, the player winning the toss of a coin serves first in the first game. The other player serves first in the second game. If a tie breaker 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 will be made to determine which player serves first. In doubles, the side winning the toss of a coin chooses to serve or receive in the first game. The other side shall choose for the second game. If both teams score an equal number of points in the first two games, another coin toss will be made to determine which team has the choice.

B. Start. Games are started by the referee announcing "play ball", and then the score, "0-0".

C. Place. The server may serve from anyplace in the service zone. No part of either foot may touch beyond the outer edge of any line of the service zone. Server must remain in the service zone until the served ball passes the short line. Violations are called "foot faults" (See rule 4.3C1).

D. Manner. The server must come to a complete stop in the service zone before beginning the serve. The serve is begun by bouncing the ball to the floor in the service zone. Although the server may bounce and catch the ball several times before serving, when actually beginning the serve, the ball must be struck on a

single bounce. If the server allows the ball to bounce more than once after a single drop before hitting it, a "fault" will be called (See Rule 4.3C5). The ball must be struck by the server's hand or fist so that it hits the wall first and on the rebound hits the floor in the receiving zone, unless played on the fly. If the server bounces the ball outside the service zone as he begins his serve, a "fault" will be called (See Rule 4.3C4).

E. Time. A serve may not be made until the referee has announced the score (See Rule 3.4A9). The referee shall call "point," "sideout," "hinder," etc. 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 serving position, the referee shall announce the score and the server must serve (Strike 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 then the referee shall announce "second serve," "one hinder serve," etc. after which the server must serve within 10 seconds ([See Interpretation No. 4](#)).

#### **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 game's first server is put out on his 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.

B. Partner's position. 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."

**Rule 4.3 Defective Serves.** Defective serves are of four types and result in penalties as follows:

A. Dead-ball serves. A dead-ball serve results in no penalty, and the server is given another serve without canceling a prior illegal serve. This occurs in the following situations:

- 1) Court hinders. If a served ball takes an erratic bounce due to a court obstruction or wetness (before the serve has become a legal serve), a court hinder is called and the serve is replayed (See Rule 3.4A4 and 4.7A1).
- 2) Broken ball. The ball is determined to have broken on the serve, a new ball shall be substituted and the serve shall be replayed.

B. Hinder Serves. A hinder serve call stops play and the server gets another serve (See Rule 4.3C6).

1) 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 ([See Interpretation No. 5](#)). 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 his call too quickly. He should watch the reaction of the receiver. The receiver should be given the benefit of any doubt, as long as he is properly positioned (See Rule 4.3C6).

2) Straddle balls. A legally served ball that travels between the legs of the server is an automatic hinder serve.

C. Fault serves. The following serves are fault serves and any two that are hit before a legal serve is executed result in an out:

1) Foot fault.

a) The server begins the service motion with one or both feet touching the floor outside the service zone (See Rule 4.1C).

b) The server leaves the service zone before the served ball passes the short line.

c) 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 (See Rule 4.2B).

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

3) Long serve. Any serve that first hits the wall and on the rebound hits the floor in 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. Referee will award a point for failure to return.

4) Bouncing ball outside service zone. Any serve that is struck on a bounce that was made outside the service zone (See Rule 4.1D).

5) Not hitting ball on first bounce from a single drop (See Rule 4.1D).

6) Two consecutive hinder serves. Two consecutive "hinder serves" result in a fault (See 4.3B1). This, and the hinder fault, are the only two fault calls that cannot be appealed (See Rule 4.75).

D. Out serves. Any of the following results in an out:

1) Missed serve. Any attempt to strike the ball on the first service bounce that results in a total miss or in the ball touching any part of the server's body other than the striking hand.

2) Non-front serve. Any served ball that does not strike the wall first.

3) Touched serve. Any served ball on the rebound from the wall that touches the server, or touches the server's partner. This includes a serve that is intentionally caught. When the partner is hit by the serve, the "out serve" penalty supersedes the partner's foot fault ([See Interpretation No. 6](#)).

4) Two consecutive fault serves. (See Rule 4.3C).

5) Crotch serve. Any serve that hits the crotch of the wall and the floor shall be considered to have hit the floor first.

6) Out-of-order serve. In doubles, when either partner serves out of order, the points scored by that server will be subtracted and an out serve will be called. If the second server serves out of order, the out serve will apply to the first server and the second server will resume serving. If the player designated as the first server serves out of order, a sideout will be called ([See Interpretation No. 7](#)).

7) Service delay. The server fails to serve the ball within 10 seconds after the referee has announced the score.

8) 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.

9) Outside serve. Any serve that, on the rebound from the wall, hits the floor outside of the side lines 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 in back of the service line until the ball from the wall passes the short line. Any violation of this rule results in a point for the server (See Rule 2.1B5).

B. Fly return. In making a fly return, the receiver must play the ball after it passes, from the wall, over the short line, and no part of his body may extend on or over the plane of the short line when contacting the ball. A violation results in a point for the server. After contacting the ball, the receiver 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 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 wall. Failure to make a legal return results in a point for the server.

**Rule 4.5 Changes of Serve.** A server is entitled to continue serving until he or his side makes an out. When the server or the serving 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. Outs are made by:

A. Out serve. The server makes an out serve under Rule 4.3D.

B. Fault serves. The server makes two fault serves before executing a legal serve under Rule 4.3C.

C. Hits partner. The server hits his partner with an attempted return.

D. Return failure. The server or his partner fails to keep the ball in play by returning it as required by Rule 4.4C.

E. Avoidable hinder. The server or his partner commits an avoidable hinder (See Rule 4.8).

F. Second out. In doubles, the side is retired when both partners have been put out, except on the first serve as provided in Rule 4.2A.

**Rule 4.6 Rally.** 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 the front or back of one hand may be used at any one time 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 the wrist or arm above the player's hand, 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:

- 1) The ball bounces on the floor twice before being hit.
- 2) The ball fails to reach the wall and rebound into the playing zone (See Rule 4.4C).
- 3) A ball that obviously did not have the velocity or direction to be returned legally (See Rule 4.4C) strikes another player on the court.
- 4) In doubles, a ball struck by one player hits that player's partner.
- 5) 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.

F. Return attempts.

- 1) Singles. If a player swings at but misses the ball in play, the player may repeat his attempts to return the ball until it touches the floor the second time.
- 2) Doubles. Both players on a side are entitled to attempt to return the ball. If one player swings at but misses the ball, both player and partner may make further attempts to return the ball until it touches the floor the second time.
- 3) Hinders. In singles or doubles, if a player swings at but misses the ball in play, and, in the player's or his 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).

G. Touching the ball. Except as provided in Rule 4.7A2, 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.

H. Out ball. Any ball in play, after the service, striking outside the side lines or past the long line, is an out or point. During tournament play, the players must not catch balls that they assume to be out. Referee will award an out or point.

I. 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 time-out. This is strictly a referee's judgment. If a player wishes to change to dry gloves, he must hold the palms of his hands up to the referee and obtain the referee's permission to change. He 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 to be back in the court within two minutes.

J. 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. The referee or any player may request that the ball be examined. If the referee decides the ball is broken, a new ball must be put into play and the point replayed. Once a succeeding serve is attempted, the previous rally stands ([See Interpretation No. 8](#)).

K. 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 (See Rule 4.8H); ([See Interpretation No. 9](#)).

L. Replays. Whenever a rally is replayed for any reason, any previous fault is voided, and the server gets up with no faults.

**Rule 4.7 Dead-ball Hinders.** Dead-ball hinders should be called when interference affects the play.

A. Situations.

1) Court hinders. If, after the ball has been legally served in the referee's opinion, an erratic bounce is caused by a court obstruction, 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 player's ([See Interpretation No. 10 and Rule 4.3A1](#)).

2) Ball hits opponent. When a returned ball touches an opponent on the fly before hitting the wall, and the shot obviously would not have been fair, the player who is hit by the shot will be awarded the rally. If there is any doubt in the official's mind, a dead-ball hinder will be called.

3) 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 backswing, physical contact is not an automatic hinder. It is the judgment of the referee as to whether or not the contact impeded the play.

4) Moving on service. If the server or his partner moves out of the way of a legally served ball (See Rule 4.3B1).

5) Backswing hinder. A player may not stop play, except on physical contact during his backswing. He may immediately call "Contact" if he wants a contact hinder. If he elects to hit the ball, no contact call will be permitted. The defensive player may not stop play if contact occurs during his opponent's backswing.

6) Safety holdup. Any player about to execute a return who believes he will strike his opponent with his hand or arm, 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 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 4.8G). This does not affect the rules on legal hinders (See Rule 4.7B1).

7) Other interference. Any other unintentional interference that prevents a player from having a fair chance to see or return the ball.

#### B. Avoidance.

1) Standing still. If a player attempting to play a ball is interfered with by an opponent, who, after his side has played the ball, was perfectly still in front of or aside the player, it is NOT a hinder. This "legal" hinder is the essence of the one-wall game. However, if a player of the side that has just hit the ball stands perfectly still, but his opponent moves back into him in trying to play the ball, not necessarily making contact, and is thus kept from having a fair chance to play the ball, it is a hinder. It is the duty of the player farther from the wall to get out of the way ([See Interpretation No. 11](#)).

2) Being moved into the ball. If a player on the side that has just hit the ball is moved or pushed unintentionally into the ball, or prevented from getting out of the way of a ball, by an opponent trying to play the ball, it is a dead ball hinder.

C. Doubles. Both players on a side are entitled to a fair and unobstructed (See Rule 4.71) chance at the ball. Either one could be entitled to a hinder even though it naturally would be his partner's ball and even though his partner may have attempted to play the ball and has already missed (not touched) it.

D. Effect. A hinder call stops the play and usually voids 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 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 handout. The only hinders a player may call are specified in Rules 4.7A5, and 4.7A6, 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.

**Rule 4.75 Hinder Fault.** During a rally, if a player on the serving side creates a hinder called by the referee, the serving side starts the ensuing service with a fault, except as stated in Rule 4.3B.

**Rule 4.8 Avoidable Hinders.** An avoidable hinder results in an out or a point, depending on whether the offending side 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 getting hit by the ball is not creating an avoidable hinder (See Rule 4.7B1). Avoidable hinders, which should not be confused with "legal" hinders (See Rule 4.7B1) are called when:

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

[\(See Interpretation No. 12\).](#)

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

[\(See Interpretation No. 13\).](#)

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

[\(See Interpretation No. 14\).](#)

D. Pushing. A player forcibly pushes an opponent during a rally.

[\(See Interpretation No. 15\).](#)

E. View obstruction. Moving across an opponent's line of vision just before he strikes the ball

[\(See Interpretation No. 16\).](#)

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

[\(See Interpretation No. 17\).](#)

G. Stroke interference. A player moves into position 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

[\(See Interpretation No. 18\).](#)

H. 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 [\(See Interpretation No. 19\).](#)

**Rule 4.9 Technicals.** A technical is assessed for unsportsmanlike behavior or for improperly wearing eye protection. If a referee issues a technical, one point shall be deducted from the offending side's score. The technical has no effect on service changes or handouts. If the technical occurs between games or when the offending side has no points, the result will be that the offender's score will be a negative one. Three technicals (or two for eye protection) on a side in a match will result in a forfeiture.

A. Types. Some examples of actions that may result in technicals are:

- 1) Too frequent complaints made against the referee's judgment.
- 2) Abuse of appeal privileges.
- 3) Profanity.
- 4) Excessive arguing.
- 5) Threat of any nature to opponent or referee.
- 6) Excessive or hard striking, throwing or kicking of ball between rallies [\(See Interpretation No. 20\).](#)
- 7) Failure to properly wear eye protection.
- 8) Protests lost in the absence of timeouts.
- 9) Anything considered to be unsportsmanlike behavior.

B. Warnings. If a player's behavior 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 Rest Periods.**

The New and Official

A. Time-outs. Any player may request a time-out, but not after the referee has announced the score and/or started the server's 10 second count. Time-outs must not exceed one minute. Three time-outs are allowed each side per 21-point game. Two time-outs are allowed during an 11-point game. Time-outs may be called consecutively. Players may leave the court during a time-out.

B. Equipment time-out. At the discretion of the referee, equipment time-outs may be granted for lost shoes, broken shoelaces, torn equipment, wet gloves, wet shirts, wet floor, or other reasons. Players are not charged for such time-outs, and two minutes is the maximum allowed.

C. Injury. No time-out shall be charged to a player who is injured during play. An injured player shall not be allowed more than a cumulative total of 15 minutes of injury time-out during a match. If the injured player is unable to resume play after a period totaling 15 minutes, the match shall be awarded to the opponent. Injury time-outs shall be allowed only for injuries that occur accidentally during the match. Pre-existing injuries, illness, fatigue or cramps do not warrant injury time-outs. For any injury, the tournament director or committee, after considering any available medical opinion, must determine whether the injured player may be allowed to continue.

1.) 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 can not resume until:

a.) bleeding is stopped;

b.) the open wound is covered with a dressing strong enough to withstand the demands of continued play;

c.) any player whose uniform is soiled with blood changes the part of the uniform affected;

d.) 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.

D. Between games. Five-minute time-outs are allowed between games. Players may leave the court.

E. Postponed by referee. Any games postponed by the referee (due to weather) shall be resumed with the same score.

## Part 5. USHA Tournaments.

**Rule 5.1 Draws.** If possible, the draw shall be made at least two days before the tournament begins. The seeding method shall be approved by the committee or director.

### **Rule 5.2 Scheduling.**

A. Preliminary matches. Contestants entered in both singles and doubles may be required to play both events on the same day or night with little rest between matches. If possible, the schedule should provide at least a one-hour rest period between all matches.

B. Final matches. Where one or more players have reached the finals in both singles and doubles, it is recommended that the singles match be played first, and a rest period of not less than one hour be allowed between the finals in singles and doubles.

**Rule 5.3 Consolation Matches.** Each entrant should be entitled to participate in a minimum of two matches. Therefore, players who lose their first matches should have the opportunity to compete in a consolation bracket. In draws of fewer than seven players, a round-robin bracket may be offered. Consolation matches may be waived at the discretion of the tournament director, but this waiver should be in writing on the tournament application.

**Rule 5.4 Notice of Matches.** After the first round of matches, it is the responsibility of each player to check the posted schedule to determine the time and place of each subsequent match. If any change is made in the schedule after posting, it shall be the duty of the committee or chairman to notify affected players of the change.

**Rule 5.5 Tournament Management.** In all USHA-sanctioned tournaments, the tournament director and/or the national USHA official in attendance may decide on a change of courts before, during or after any tournament game if such a change will accommodate better spectator or player conditions.

**Rule 5.6 Tournament Conduct.** In all USHA-sanctioned tournaments, the referee and/or tournament director is empowered to default a match if a player conducts himself/herself in a manner detrimental to the tournament or the game of handball. This includes the authority of the referee and/or tournament director to remove distracting or abusive people, and to default a match if such individuals are not removed.

Additionally, in all USHA-sanctioned tournaments, the tournament director is

empowered to prohibit further participation, and/or to remove, anyone who conducts himself/herself in a manner detrimental to the event or the game of handball.

### **Rule 5.7 Regional and National Tournaments.**

A. Regional tournaments. Regional tournaments are held each season. A map defining the boundary lines of each region will be drawn and made available to USHA area commissioners.

1) Residence. Players may play only in the regional tournament for the region in which they live, with one exception. If the site of a neighboring regional tournament is closer to a player's city of residence than the site of the tournament in his own region, he may choose to play in either the closest regional tournament or in the tournament for his own region. However, he may play in only one of the two.

B. Collegiates. The purpose of the USHA-sponsored collegiate competition is to give college players a chance to showcase their talents under ideal conditions, and to assist in the promotion of college handball. The Collegiate Eligibility Rules are printed in Handball Magazine each year with the official entry blank.

C. Juniors. The purpose of the USHA Junior program is to promote a worthwhile competition on the local and national levels, and to stimulate an ideal introduction to the game. It is encouraged for Junior events to be held in conjunction with all USHA-sanctioned tournaments.

**Rule 5.8 Eligibility.** All entrants in any USHA event must be current USHA members.

A. Age-group divisions. In any division designated by a minimum age (seniors, masters, etc.), the entrant must reach the proper age on or before Dec. 31 of the calendar year in which he participates. For example, a player who is 39 is allowed to enter the masters (40-plus) if he turns 40 by Dec. 31 of the year in which the tournament is scheduled. In any division designated by a maximum age (juniors, challengers, etc.), the player cannot have passed the age of eligibility until the day after the scheduled end of the tournament. For example, a player entering the 15-and-under division cannot reach his 16th birthday until the day after the tournament is scheduled to end.

**HELP a youngster - teach him (her) to play handball!**

Great care has been taken to verify all information compiled on the pages of this rulebook. Any changes, errors, or omissions brought to our attention are greatly appreciated and updates will be in our next edition. Please submit in

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writing to:

**USHA One-Wall Rules  
c/o Handball  
2333 N. Tucson Blvd.  
Tucson, AZ 85716**

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