



The City of Grande Prairie Dodgeball League Official Rules

The Official Dodgeball Rules listed below have been constantly refined over the past 10 years (by International Dodgeball Rules) to produce a style of dodgeball that is fast-paced, exciting and fun. For the purpose of simplifying the language of the rules, all players, both male and female, will be represented with masculine pronouns.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS:

- Dead ball: A ball that hits an object, surface, or teammate before the player, or a ball declared as a dead ball by the referee.
- Live ball: A ball that has been activated (see *General Rules #5*).
- Match: A match is a series of games played against a team.
- Trap: When a player makes a catch using another surface or object (ground, wall, teammate) (see *Catch #6*).
- In: Being eligible to participate in the game on court.
- Out: Being ineligible to play in the game as a result of being hit, caught, or being out of bounds.
- Opening Rush: When players approach the centerline to retrieve the balls at the signal of the referee (see *General Rules #3*).
- Full Control: A player is in full control of a ball if he is able to release the ball in an obvious and deliberate action.
- Reset: An attempt to stop the ball count in order to prolong possession (see *Dead ball #7*). Any ball thrown above 6FT, or clearly out of reach of every live player on an opposing team is a dead ball, and must be turned over.
- Reach: Regarding resets, one relative arm's length from a defending player's torso, plus any evasive motions of the player.



GENERAL RULES:

1. Maximum of 6 players and a minimum of 2 females (one of which must be from the team's roster) on each team at the start of the game.
2. 6 standard 8" soft rubber balls are placed on the centerline in two groups of 3. Each group of 3 is placed at opposite ends of the centerline, in front of the referees.
3. Games are made up of a series of contests for a maximum of 60 minutes. This time period includes the team organizer meeting with the referee. New contests may not begin if there is only 5 minutes or less left in the 60 minute time period.
 - a) The game winner is the team that has won the most number of contests within the 60 minute time period.
 - b) Regular season games may end in a tie.
 - c) Winners of playoff games, that are at a tie at 55 minute (or more) mark, will be determined by a showdown of each team's nominated player.
3. Opening Rush: Players must be touching the back wall at the start of the game. After the starting countdown of "3, 2, 1 Dodgeball!" teams approach the centerline to retrieve the balls (see *Other Details #3*).
4. Teams can only take the 3 balls to their right initially (see *Technical #2*).
5. Balls must touch the back wall before they are live. The ball is dead otherwise.
6. Players attempt to eliminate opponents by hitting them with balls or catching their throws. If a player is hit with a live ball, that player is out.
7. Eliminated players line up against the designated wall or on the sideline, which is to be announced at the start of the games, next to the referees, according to the order of elimination.
8. Players are to play by the honour system. If in doubt, a player should call themselves out. (see *Officiating Guidelines – Main Responsibilities #6*)
9. Play continues until one entire team is eliminated.
10. The referee can pause the game at any point by saying, "Stop." At that point, all events after and during are void.
 - a) The game restarts with remaining players against their respective walls with ball possession retained, but all ball counts are restarted.



- b) All balls on the ground remain where they lay.
- c) Referees restart the game by a countdown of "3, 2, 1, Dodgeball!"

RULES OF PLAY:

BOUNDARIES

1. The boundaries of the game play area are the standard volleyball court sidelines and end lines. These boundaries will be used when playing on a half court or full court surface.
2. Players are not allowed to make contact with any boundary or out of bounds area during game play; they will be called out. (see *Boundaries #7*)
3. During the opening rush, players may cross the centerline.
4. All parts of a player's person, including all parts of his body, clothing, or balls in possession are considered when determining if contact has been made. Garments falling off of a player, and crossing a boundary (e.g. shoes, hats) do not make the player out.
5. Kamikaze plays: Players are not allowed to deliberately cross the centerline to make a play, they will automatically be called out.
 - a) A player who jumps across the line to throw: the thrown ball will not count; however, if caught, will be considered a catch.
 - b) A player who crosses the line in an attempt to disrupt an opponent's catch: the opponent's catch will be considered successful, regardless of outcome.
6. The use of the apparatus, or the alcoves in the gyms during the games is illegal. Players in violation will be considered out.
7. Balls that go out of bounds are to be retrieved by active players in the game. Players will exit the game play area through the end line, retrieve the out of bounds ball, touch the ball to the back wall (to activate) and re-enter the game play area from the end line.
 - a) Any intentional delay in retrieving the out of bounds ball will receive a warning from the referee.
 - b) Repeated delay by the same player in retrieving an out of bounds ball will result in the turnover of the ball to the other team. The ball must touch the other team's back wall to be activated.



HIT

1. A player is considered hit only if there is direct contact with a live ball released by the opposing team (except for a Failed Block, see *Blocking #2*).
2. Hit Etiquette: If a player is hit, he should drop all held balls, raise his arm to signal that he is out, and leave the court immediately and minimize gameplay disruption. Hit players are not allowed to intentionally interfere with thrown, live balls unless in order to block themselves from getting hit while exiting the game play area.
 - a) Once on the sidelines, knocked-out players are not allowed to kick or pass balls to their teammates. This is illegal and will result in the ball being turned over to the opposing team.
3. Headshots: **All headshots do not count.** The first offense is a dead ball, second offense is a benched player; and a third offense results in the player being eliminate from the match all together. (see [*Code of Conduct*](#)).
4. If in doubt, players should call themselves out (AKA “If in doubt, you are out”).
5. A player is not out from a hit until the thrown ball touches another person, object, or surface.

CATCH

1. A catch is when a player retains full control of a ball released by an opponent. While possession does not require both feet on the ground, the player must land with both feet, or any other part of his body inbounds (see *Technical #4*). This includes catching balls going out of bounds.
2. If a player catches a ball thrown by an opponent, the thrower is out and one player returns to the catcher’s side in the order of first out, first in.
3. In order to be eligible to return to the game, the player who is out must be at the wall or sideline next to the designated referee before a teammate makes a catch to bring him back in. The intention of this rule is to ensure that the player being brought back in was clearly hit out prior to the catch (see *Technical #11, #12*).
4. Returning players after a catch: Returning players must go straight to any part of their own back wall, and touch the wall to be reactivated.
 - a) This must be done without hesitation to touch the wall or to delay reactivation.
 - b) If the player purposely touches a ball before reactivation, the ball becomes dead.



5. If a dead ball is thrown and then caught, it is considered a legal catch.
6. Attempted catches: If a player attempts to catch a live ball thrown by the opposing team, but drops it or allows it to touch any person, surface or object, other than himself, before gaining full control, he is out.
 - a) If while trying to complete the catch, the player becomes out, the catch is void.
7. Catches after blocks: It is considered a catch if an opponent's ball hits a blocking ball and is then caught by the blocker. The blocker, however, must have the blocking ball in possession when making the catch; otherwise he is out (see *Technical #6, #7*).
8. If a ball deflects off a player's body, only that player can make a legal catch afterwards. The ball is dead if another player touches it, or if it hits a surface or object before it is caught (see *Block #2*).
9. In order to make a successful catch, a player must maintain possession of all balls held at the time of initial contact.
10. A double catch (and the odd triple catch) is legal if the balls have not clearly contacted each other before they are caught; otherwise the balls would become dead.
11. In the case where a catch is made and no player walks off (e.g. the player didn't see his ball get caught):
 - a) If the catch is observed by referees but the thrower cannot be determined, the referees should pause the game and request for one of the throwers to come off of the court. Referees can assist by indicating the side that the ball might have come from.
 - b) If no thrower is volunteered by the throwing team, referees must come to a decision using all available on-court information.
12. If a catch is missed by all referees entirely and no one leaves the court, there is no dispute and play continues.
13. You cannot make a catch while holding a dead ball (see *Dead Ball #12*).
14. Clothing exception: if a player makes a catch, but loses an article of clothing during the process (e.g. a hat falls off, even with ball contact), the catch is still valid. There is no requirement to maintain possession of all worn garments during the catch; the player shall continue to be in the game.



BLOCK

1. A block is when a player uses a live ball(s) in possession to keep himself from being hit.
2. Failed Block (Deflection Exception): A player is out if:
 - a) An opponent's ball hits a player's blocking ball and then hits the blocker's body or clothing afterwards.
 - b) A player drops his blocking ball(s) as a result of trying to block an opponent's ball.
 - c) A ball hits the blocker's fingers or hand first, or after, while trying to block.
3. Catches after blocks (see *Catch #7*).
4. Dead balls cannot be used for blocking. A player is out as soon as he blocks with a dead ball.

DEAD BALL

1. Dead ball: A ball that hits an object, surface or person before the player, or a ball declared as a dead ball by the referee.
2. 10 Second Holding Rule: The intention of the 10 Second Holding Rule is to prevent stalling and encourage continuous play. Players can only hold the ball for 10 seconds. After 10 seconds, the ball is dead and must be turned over. It is the responsibility of players to know their ball's countdown status.
 - The 10 second count starts in these situations:
 - (a) when a player picks up a live ball
 - (b) when a player holds down a live ball that is on the ground for longer than 3 seconds
 - (c) when a player maneuvers a live ball alongside himself on the ground to move to a different position on the court
 - (d) when the first ball is activated at the opening rush (see *Technical #1*).
 - The 10 Second Rule does not start in these situations:
 - (a) when a player rolls a ball to another teammate (ball must not leave the ground)
 - (b) when a player rolls a ball back from the centerline
 - (c) when a player stops a moving ball.
3. The 10 second count is announced: "Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one, dead ball." The interval between the first utterance of each number or word must be at least one second. The count should be announced loudly enough for the player to hear, yet the onus remains on the players to keep



count themselves and to be aware of the referee's count. If the player has not released the ball at the first utterance of the word 'dead ball', the player must turn over the ball.

4. How to turn over a dead ball: A dead ball, after a 10 second count, must be rolled over with the intention to touch the opposing team's wall, not just placed over the centerline. It is the carrier of the dead ball's responsibility to ensure the dead ball crosses the center line. It is the other team's responsibility to ensure the ball touches the back wall before being used in game play.

5. Dead balls must be played by the receiving team before the other team can use it again.

6. Countdowns on balls are stopped once they go out of bounds, and do not resume when the balls return to the court (see *Dead Ball #7*).

7. Players cannot intentionally put balls out of bounds, or just over the centerline to reset the ball count. Those balls will be deemed as dead by the referee and must be turned over to the other team.

8. When a player is out for any reason, all balls under his possession are to be dropped. Any countdowns on those balls are removed, unless any of those balls have already been deemed as dead balls by the referees.

9. Dropped balls: Intentionally dropping or passing balls will not stop the 10 second count. A player may drop a held ball in order to catch a thrown ball, but the dropped ball is still counted down.

10. If a team has all 6 balls on their court, and they are not being used (i.e. all 6 balls are left on the ground), referees will begin a 10 second holding rule on the ball closest to the centerline until it is played or turned over to the other team. If a player plays a ball, the countdown is transferred to that ball.

12. If a player in possession of a dead ball makes a catch, that player will be considered hit and the catch void. The dead ball must still be turned over to the other team (see *Technical #14*)

SHOWDOWN

1. If there is only 1 player left from each team, showdown goes into effect after 10 seconds. The procedure for showdown is:

- a) Referees count down 10 seconds, ending with "showdown" to pause the game.
- b) The centerline boundary is dissolved, while the sidelines and end lines remain active boundaries.

Players will access to move around the entire game play area.





- c) Players begin with 2 balls in their hands at their respective walls.
- d) The other 2 balls go at the ends of the centerline.
- e) When ready, showdown begins with a “3, 2, 1, showdown” from the referees.
- f) Tagging the opponent in a showdown will not count; balls must be released in order to hit someone out (see *Technical #8*).
- g) There is no 10 second dead ball count.
- h) If a victor can't be determined within 3 minutes, then a showdown rematch will occur.

TECHNICAL

1. The ball countdown at the Opening Rush starts when the first of the 6 balls is activated. Once the countdown starts, the countdown applies to all 6 balls (see *Dead Ball #2.1.d*).
2. An opposing team's balls at the centerline can be taken once all of your own team's balls are activated, and they must also be activated before they become live.
3. If a player throws a ball at the opposing team while over the centerline during the Opening Rush, he will be called out.
4. When catching, a player must be in full control of the ball without using any out of bounds area or floor as leverage.
5. A player is not to use any part of his clothing, or assistive accessories to make a catch, or interfere with a thrown active ball. Otherwise, that player is out (See *Catch #14*).
6. When attempting to catch a blocked ball, a player must hold onto all the balls that he had in possession of at the time of the block, otherwise the player is out.
7. Countdown on balls is stopped once they go out of bounds and does not resume when the balls return to the court. Balls purposely placed out of bounds are exempt from the resetting of the count.
8. Any physical contact with an opposing player will deem the player that initiated contact out.
9. If a ball is thrown before the first utterance of “showdown”, or “dead ball”, the throw is considered legal.
10. A ball must be picked up in order for the release to be legal. Smacking, spiking, kicking, or scooping a ball are not allowed, and the hit won't count; however if caught by the opponent, the catch is legal.
11. Players must line up next to the referees in the order they were knocked out.



12. Players return to the game in the order they were knocked out. (e.g. Player A was hit out first. Player B was hit out second. Player B lines up next to the referees before Player A. A catch was made by their teammates but Player A has not lined up next to the referees, therefore the catch does not bring anyone back in.)

13. Catch Rule #7 supersedes Catch Rule #13 if the blocking ball becomes dead after the initial block.

OTHER DETAILS

1. Substitutions and timeouts:

- a) Not allowed during a game unless there is an injury. The same 6 players who start a game shall end the game. Substitution may occur after each individual game (i.e. when you switch sides).
- b) Only substitutes (players who did not start the game) are eligible to replace an injured player. A male substitute can only replace an injured male player, but a female substitute can replace either an injured male, or injured female player. In the case where no substitutes are available, the team will play short, or forfeit the game if the injured player is the last live player. Depending on the severity of the injury, referees reserves the right to ask an injured player to stop playing.
- c) For eligible substitute players, see [League Policies](#)

2. Honour System Officiating: it is ultimately up to the players to enforce and uphold the rules of dodgeball when playing or refereeing. Dodgeball relies on the honour system, in which officiating is determined more between players and less from the referees. However, if there is a controversial play, the referees will make the final call. They have the right to stop a game and discuss the incident before proceeding. In respect for the spirit of the game and for fellow players, there is absolutely no protesting allowed. However we encourage players to discuss and clarify any plays in a respectful manner with referees or the supervisor after the game is finished.

3. Ball treatment: No kicking, crushing, dunking, or playing basketball with the dodgeballs is allowed.

4. Kicking a ball at an opponent during a game or in a showdown will result in the kicker being called out.

5. Players are not allowed to intentionally interfere with the opponents during the opening rush.



6. Any discrepancies regarding plays and situations that are not documented in the official City of Grande Prairie Dodgeball League rules will be decided by the referees.

ATTIRE & SAFETY

1. Players must wear proper gym strip. Shirtless play is not allowed. Clothing must not endanger the safety of other players.
2. Players may not use clothing or accessories to provide unfair advantage, or unfairly inhibit or assist the movement of the ball to make a catch or throw.
3. Clothing (uniforms and accessories) is considered part of a player's body. However, fallen off garments not attached to a body cannot be hit, or called out.
4. Players are not allowed to play with gloves, bare hands only. Wraps for supporting recovering injuries are acceptable.
5. Players without proper footwear are not permitted to play. For example, sandals, slippers, flip flops, marking shoes, dress shoes, and going barefoot are not allowed.



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