

## Fistball - Rules of the Game

Valid as for 1 April 2019

### Fistball as a team sport

2 teams consisting of 5 players each play against each other on a court which is divided into 2 halves by a marked line and a net or rope at a height of 2 metres for men and 1.90 metres for women.

Each team's aim is to strike the ball across the net (rope) in a way that the opponent fails to return.

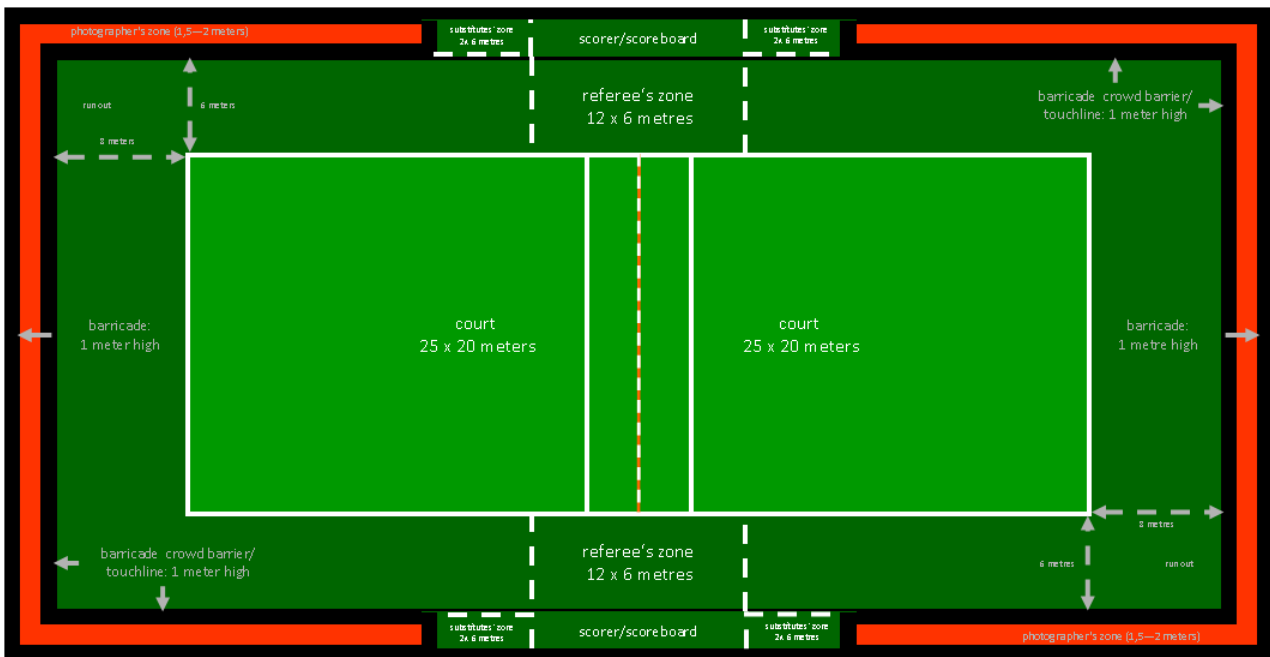
A rally is continued until any team makes an error or a stoppage occurs.

Each error made by a team counts as a point for the opponents.

The winner is the team that

- has won 2, 3, 4 or 5 sets of a set-match
- has scored the most points in a time-match.

### Court



## RULES OF THE GAME

The rules are valid for both **indoor** and **outdoor matches**. Alterations and supplementations due to indoor play are described separately. Special arrangements for juniors are laid down in the addendum.

### **1 Court and Equipment**

**1.1** The court is a marked rectangle, 50 metres in length and 20 metres in width. The surface should be a level grass court.

Matches under floodlight are permitted.

#### **Indoors**

*The court is a marked rectangle, 40 metres in length and 20 metres in width.  
Member associations are free to specify smaller sizes.*

**1.1.1** The court is divided into 2 team-halves by a marked centre line. Each half has a service line which is marked parallel to this central line at a distance of 3 metres.

**1.1.2** Boundary lines, the central line and service lines must be clearly marked. The boundary lines are part of the court, the central line belongs to both halves.

A ball touching these lines is considered to be "in".

#### **Indoors**

*It is regarded as a fault if the ball makes contact with the wall.*

*As for defence and passing, the whole ceiling is part of the court; a ball touching it is still playable. If the ball touches the ceiling on the service or return, however, it is regarded as the acting team's fault. All the unremoveable fixtures are either part of the ceiling or the wall.*

**1.1.3** The lines must be between 8 centimetres (5 centimetres at indoor matches) and 12 centimetres wide.

**1.2** The following must be suspended between two free standing, upright posts at a height of 2 metres for men and 1.90 metres for women. The posts are placed at the intersection of the centre line and the boundary lines.

- a **net**, which is between 3 centimetres and 6 centimetres wide if measured vertically or
- a **ribbon** which is between 3 centimetres and 6 centimetres wide if measured vertically or
- a **string** which is between 5 millimetres and 8 millimetres wide if measured vertically.

Nets (ribbons, strings) can only be accepted if they are easily distinguishable by a bright and dark colouring in intervals of 15 to 20 centimetres.

#### **Indoors**

*If the usage of free standing posts is not possible, the posts can also be affixed to the floor or to the wall.*

*If the posts cannot be fixed at the intersection of the centre line and the boundary line, this point must be marked by so called substitutional posts. (e.g. high jump racks)*

*It is not regarded as a fault if the ball or any player touches the anchoring or any other posts outside the marked intersection.*

The lengthening of the net (ribbon/string) is regarded as anchoring; contacts by ball or player with this lengthening are therefore not faults, whereas the contact by ball or player with those parts of the posts that are higher than 2 metres is regarded as a fault.

**1.3** Spectators, neighbouring courts and other barriers must be at least 6 metres away from the side-lines and 8 metres away from the baselines. The run out must be clearly marked by a dashed line.

#### **Indoors**

*The run out must at least be 0.50 metres (for the sidelines) and 1 metre (for the baselines).*

**1.4** The fistball is a hollow ball filled with air. Its basic colour is white, but up to 20 per cent of the surface can be made up of several smaller coloured pieces. The ball must be fully inflated.

During the whole match the ball must satisfy the following requirements:

- weight	360 grammes +/- 10 grammes	(males)
	330 grammes +/- 10 grammes	(females)
- circumference	65 - 68	centimetres
- air pressure	0.55 - 0.70	bar

Balls used in international matches or in the highest leagues of the member federations must meet additional criteria set by the committee and the Technical Commission of the International Fistball Association.

- 1.5** Before the match begins, both team captains draw lots supervised by the referee.  
The winner either chooses the end or the service. The other captain decides the remaining possibility.
- 1.6** Each team provides at least one standard ball. All balls are checked by the referee prior to the start of play.  
The balls not in use remain under the referee's control.
- 1.6.1** If one team does not provide a match ball prior to the start of play, then it is not allowed to introduce its own ball during the remainder of the match.
- 1.6.2** If neither team can provide a standard ball, the match will not take place.  
The supervising organizer decides on punitive measures to be taken.
- 1.6.3** The referee can put another ball, which has been tested prior to the start of play, into play if the ball in play is not returned immediately, gets lost or becomes unplayable or does not conform to the requirements.
- 1.6.4** If the team has provided more than one ball, the match will be continued immediately with one of these other balls. A further ball exchange is not allowed in this case.  
If the team has provided only one ball, the match will be continued with the opponent's ball as long as this ball is regarded as playable.
- 1.6.5** If a team accepts the opponent's ball, it has by default accepted the opponent's other provided balls.  
The match will be continued with the other balls if the first ball is not returned immediately, gets lost or becomes unplayable. A further exchange of the ball is not allowed in this case.
- 1.7** The IFF can license or prescribe certain types of balls, nets, ribbons or strings for international competitions.  
The national member federations can do the same for national competitions.

### **Notes**

The national member federations may permit departures from the above rules on the court's dimensions, the height of the net (ribbon/string) and the ball's weight for women's, senior or junior competitions.

## **2 Team**

- 2.1** A team consists of 5 players and 5 substitutes who become part of the team from their first entry into the match. At least 4 players must play, but a fifth may join at any time (this is known as completion).
- 2.1.1** Substitutions between the 10 players can be carried out without constraint.
- 2.1.2** Substitution may only be carried out on completion of a rally with prior notification of the referee.  
Substitution (entry and leaving) must be carried out at one's own service line.  
Both teams may substitute if the match has been interrupted by the referee.  
If substitution is carried out without notifying the referee or if there are more than 5 players on the court, the referee interrupts the rally and awards a point to the opponents.  
If the team which is not serving announces a substitution, the referee has to ensure that it takes place before the start of the new rally.
- 2.1.3** Substitutions have to be carried out without delay.
- 2.2** One player is the team's captain and has thus to be marked by wearing an appropriate armband. He (she) is the only speaker of the team during the match and is responsible for entry and farewell.

- 2.2.1 The captain continues to perform his duty if substituted except when he (she) has to leave the court due to injury or being sent off. In this case the team has to appoint a new captain.
- 2.3 Each team has to wear a strip of uniform, shape and colour.
- 2.3.1 Short-sleeved and long-sleeved kits are regarded as uniform.
- 2.3.2 The use of tracksuit bottoms is not permitted.  
The International Fistball Association or the member federations may permit different trousers on condition that all players wear trousers of uniform, shape and colour.

2.3.3 Spikes are forbidden.

### **3 Playing Time**

3.1 The match is played **in sets**.

3.1.1 The match is completed as soon as one team has won **2, 3, 4 or 5 sets**.

The amount of sets is set in the invitation to the competition or in the regulation of the relevant competition.

3.1.2 A team wins a set if it has won **11 points** by a margin of at least two points; otherwise play continues until one team leads by two points.

A set ends as soon as one team has won **15 points** regardless of the margin, eg. 15:14.

3.1.3 Following the end of a set, a change of ends, choice of ball and a service change are made.

3.1.4 Should a decisive set be required, lots are drawn again. As soon as one team wins 6 points, a change of ends, choice of ball and a service change are made.

3.1.5 The break between the sets must not exceed two minutes.

After every 4 sets a break not longer than 10 minutes can be held.

3.1.6 Implementing rules for change of ends: Players leave the court at their ends right after the set, change ends and enter the court only after the referee's instruction (whistle).

Exception: Substitute players who prepare for a forthcoming substitution may use the court for their preparation.

#### ***First Note***

The International Fistball Association and the member federations may also **limit set-matches by time**.

In this case clauses 3.1 to 3.1.5 are supplemented as follows:

3.2 Each set ends after **10 minutes** even if the difference in the score is not more than one point.

3.2.1 If a set ends in a draw, it is continued until one team leads by two points.

Should a set's time end during a rally, the rally is interrupted and resumes with the last service.

Should the end of a set's time coincide with the end of a rally, the next rally starts with the service of the team that has made the last fault.

3.2.2 The beginning and end of a time-limited set is indicated acoustically. Each set is ended by a signal, the last five seconds being counted out.

Lost time caused by stoppages or delays has to be added at the end of the same set.

#### ***Second note***

In exceptional cases the member federations may also allow time-limited matches.

3.3 The playing time is not more than two times fifteen minutes. The break must not exceed two minutes.

Lost time caused by stoppages or delays has to be added at the end of the same half.

The beginning and end of each half is indicated acoustically. Each half is ended by a signal, the last five seconds being counted out.

Following the half-time-break a change of ends, choice of ball and a service change are made.

**3.3.1** Should the match be drawn at the end of normal play, the match is extended:

First period of extra time: lots are drawn according to clause 1.5, playing time two times five minutes. If the extra time should end in a draw, a

Second period of extra time follows: lots are drawn according to clause 1.5, playing time two times five minutes. If this extra time should end in a drawing again, the match is continued until one of the teams leads by two points.

Should playing time end during a rally, the rally is interrupted and resumes with the last service.

Should the end of playing time coincide with the end of a rally, the next rally starts with the service of the team that has made the last fault.

The break between these extra times must not exceed two minutes. During the extra times there is no break.

**3.4** In matches according to clauses 3.1 each team is entitled to a break (time out) of 30 seconds per set after a rally upon notification of the referee.

The players must leave the court. Unless stated otherwise, time-outs are held in the run-out area at the referee's side of court.

**4 Rally**

**4.1** Each rally starts with a service and ends with the following fault, the end of a set or half or a stoppage.

**4.1.1** Following a fault, the serve passes to the team that has made the fault. Following a stoppage, the last service is repeated.

**Note**

The term "stoppage" denotes any stoppage that is not caused by violation of the rules, e.g. obstruction by spectators or violence between players.

**4.2** Only faults during a rally are scored. (exception: clause 10.2.1)

**4.3** It is regarded as a fault if a player or the ball touches the net (ribbon/ string) or the posts during a rally.

**4.4** Each ball that touches the ground outside the marked court is regarded as the fault of the team that touched it last.

If the ball touches a non-playing person it is regarded as having touched the ground. It is regarded as the fault of the team that touched it last as is catching the ball within the run out if the acting team has lost control over the ball. In all other cases, catching the ball is regarded as obstruction.

**4.5** It is regarded as a fault if a player enters the opponent's half without good reason.

**5 Blow**

**5.1** The short period in which fist or arm touch the ball is referred to as blow. The ball must not be pushed.

**5.2** The ball may only be hit once with fist or arm.

**5.3** The fingertips must touch the palm of the hand and the thumb must be positioned alongside the palm at each blow using the fist. If the blow is carried out with the arm, the hand may be opened.

**6 Service**

**6.1** The service may be carried out by any player.

**6.2** The player serving must throw the ball up visibly and hit it directly across the net (ribbon/string).

The service is deemed to have begun as soon as the ball has left the hand of the thrower and ends after the player hits the ball.

**6.2.1** The service is valid if the ball touches the ground within the opponent's court-half or if it touches an opponent within or outside the opponent's half.

**6.3** The service may be carried out running, jumping, standing or walking.

Running and jumping, however, are permissible only if the first ground-contact after the service is behind the service line.

If a standing player has lost contact to the ground during the service, the first ground contact must be behind the service line.

If a player that has lost ground contact during his serve touches the ground simultaneously with both feet (one foot in front of the service line – the other behind) after the service – this is NOT regarded as a fault.

A service by a standing player constitutes the initial ground contact if the standing leg is not involved in the second ground contact.

A service by a walking player leads to a service carried out standing and is therefore permissible according to paragraph three.

- 6.3.1 During the service no player of the serving team must be in the opponent's half.
- 6.3.2 The service line, the space between central and service line and the ground outside the court must not be stepped on by the server prior to the first ground contact after the service behind the service line.
- 6.3.3 The person serving may straddle across service or side line with one leg.
- 6.4 The service has to be started and carried out without any delay.
- 6.4.1 If a service has been initiated, but not carried out because the ball is no longer hit, this is regarded as a fault.

## **7 Return and Pass**

- 7.1 Within each half the ball
  - may only be hit once by a player,
  - may not be hit more often than three times altogether
  - may not touch the ground more than once before each blow.
- 7.1.1 If two players of a team hit the ball simultaneously, this is regarded as two blows.
- 7.2 The return of the ball is valid if it is hit across the net (ribbon/string) and touches the ground within the opponent's court-half or touches an opponent inside or outside the court.
- 7.2.1 A ball which enters the opponent's half below the net (ribbon/string) in a direct blow turns into a fault when crossing the central line.
- 7.3 A blow in the opponent's half across the net (ribbon/string) from one's own half is permissible.
- 7.4 A team is allowed to return even if the ball which has been hit in the opponent's half or which has touched the ground in the opponent's half has not yet crossed the net (ribbon/string).
- 7.5 The return of a ball below the net (ribbon/string) is permissible if it has bounced from one's own half into the opponent's below the net (ribbon/string) and has not touched the ground yet.
- 7.5.1 The return of a ball from the opponent's half into one's own half across the net (ribbon/string) is regarded as a fault.
- 7.5.2 A ball which has bounced from one's own half into the opponent's must not be hit by the opponents before it has touched the ground. This rule does not apply if the ball has touched the ground in one's own half after the second blow.
- 7.6 If the ball hits
  - the net (ribbon/string),
  - the posts,
  - the central line
  - or if it touches the ground outside the court
  - or if it directly crosses the central line below the net (ribbon/string),immediately after a block, this is not regarded as a fault. The last service is repeated.

### ***Indoors***

*If the ball touches the ceiling or the wall outside the court, this is not regarded as a fault. The last service is repeated.*

**Note**

A block shall be defined as follows: if both players touch the ball simultaneously or - unnoticed by the referee - in extremely short succession.

- 7.6.1 Following a block, the team and the blocking player in whose half the ball has touched the ground may still hit the ball three times.
- 7.7 If the ball has crossed the side line or the base line after a pass or return, it may still be hit as long as it touches the ground. The ball may be passed to another player or returned directly across the net (ribbon/string).
- 7.8 If one player is obstructed by an opponent, this is regarded as his/her point. If a player is still allowed to hit the ball, he (she) takes precedence and must not be obstructed in the opponent's court-half.
- 7.8.1 If a player or a rally is obstructed by spectators, referees or any other barriers within the court or the run out, this is not regarded as a fault. The last service is repeated. Obstructions by members of the own team, substitutes or coaches is regarded as a fault.

**8 Scoring**

- 8.1 Each fault counts as a point for the opposing team.
- 8.2 The points won are entered on a score card using Arabic numerals, in sequence.
- 8.2.1 Example:

A	1		2	3					4	5		6	7			8	9		10	11	A	
B		1			2	3	4	5			6			7	8			9				B

**9 Referees**

- 9.1 Each match is supervised by a referee, who is assisted by two linesmen and one scorer.

**Indoors**

*The member federations may allow two referees for indoor matches.*

- 9.2 The referee ensures that the rules are complied with and makes decisions at his own discretion. He may be assisted by the linesman.

His (Her) decisions are undisputable.

**Indoors**

*If two referees supervise the match, each of them has sole decision on faults seen during the match. He/She is responsible for his/her decisions and may not consult the other referee.*

- 9.2.1 The referee has to check the court, the balls and the strips. He/She also checks the score card and supervises the drawing of lots prior to the match.

If the match is played within time limits the referee is responsible for timekeeping. The actual timekeeping may be centralized, but the referee stays responsible for his/her court.

**Indoors**

*If two referees supervise the match, one of them has to check the court, the balls and the strips. He/She also checks the score card and supervises the drawing of lots prior to the match.*

- 9.2.2 The referee starts and ends the match and has the right to interrupt it and to discontinue it. He/She indicates interruptions, extra times and points by whistling, shouting or a stepping onto the court.

The duration of the extra time must be announced immediately after the rally (interruption) or the delay.

**9.2.3** Each point and its justification has to be announced aloud. At the same time the referee points in the direction of the team that has won the point.

If the referee decides that the last service be repeated he/she points in the direction of both teams.

The referee supervises the scorer so as to ensure correct scoring and takes care that the score is constantly announced or displayed.

**9.2.4** The referee stays outside the court during the match. Exception: see clause 9.2.2

**9.2.5** The referee announces the result after the end of the match.

The referee, the scorer and the two captains have to witness the correctness of the entries in the score card by their signatures.

**9.3** The linesmen stand at the corner points of the sidelines opposite the referee. They help the referee supervise the match and indicate when a ball touches the ground outside the lines through raising a flag or arm.

**9.4** The scorer stands close to the referee and scores the points for both teams following the referee's call.

## **10 Penalties**

**10.1** The referee has the right to punish unsportsman-like behaviour in the following way according to the severeness of the offence:

- caution (yellow card)

- suspension until both teams together have won 10 points (yellow and red card)

- disqualification (red card)

**10.1.1** A suspended player may not be replaced during the time of the suspension.

If the team that received the suspension does not have the right to serve after the rally following the suspension, the referee interrupts the match in order to enable the team to complete according to clause 2.1.2 paragraph 3.

If during a suspension a second player is suspended or disqualified, the match has to be broken off.

**10.1.2** A player who has been disqualified may not be replaced in the same match.

**10.1.3** Trainer and manager may be penalized for unsportsmanlike behaviour by caution (yellow card) or disqualification (red card).

**10.2** The referee cautions the team at the first sign of delaying tactics (clauses 2.1.3 or 6.4). The caution is announced to the team's captain.

**10.2.1** All further delaying tactics are punished by a point for the opponent. (punishment ball)

**10.2.2** In a match with time limits the sum of all delays has to be added as extra time.



## **Annex** **Rules for the part of the up-and-comings**

### ***Principle***

As a general rule, juniors must observe the same regulations. Special regulations are marked in *italics*.

<b>Age group (*)</b>	<b>court (m)</b>	<b>net (ribbon/string) (m)</b>	<b>weight (grammes)</b>	<b>contacts</b>	<b>air pressure (bar)</b>
Under 21 (males)	50 x 20	2.00	360 +/- 10	3	0.55 - 0.70
Under 21 (females)	50 x 20	1.90	330 +/- 10	3	0.55 - 0.70
Under 18 (males)	50 x 20	2.00	360 +/- 10	3	0.55 - 0.70
Under 18 (females)	50 x 20	1.90	330 +/- 10	3	0.55 - 0.70
Under 16 (males)	50 x 20	2.00	330 +/- 10	3	0.55 - 0.70
Under 16 (females)	50 x 20	1.90	330 +/- 10	3	0.55 - 0.70
Under 14 (males)	40 x 20	1.80	300 +/- 10	3	0.55 - 0.70
Under 14 (females)	40 x 20	1.80	300 +/- 10	3	0.55 - 0.70
<i>Under 12 (males)</i>	<i>30 x 15 /28 x 15**)</i>	<i>1.60</i>	<i>300 +/- 10</i>	<i>3/4**)</i>	<i>0.40 - 0.60</i>
<i>Under 12 (females)</i>	<i>30 x 15 /28 x 15**)</i>	<i>1.60</i>	<i>280 +/- 10</i>	<i>3/4**)</i>	<i>0.40 - 0.60</i>
<i>Under 10 (males/females)</i>	<i>20 x 10 /28 x 15**)</i>	<i>1.60</i>	<i>280 +/- 10</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>0.40 - 0.60</i>

\*) according to the competition rules (IFCR), clause 4.1.3

\*\*\*) to be decided by member federation

#### **Meaning of Asterisks:**

Member federations can only decide about court size and contacts – not about height of the net, ball weight or air pressure.

#### **ad Ball Weight:**

In case there are mixed competitions in any juniors' category, the rules for the respective women's category are binding: eg U12 mixed: 280 g balls.

The IFA's Youth Commission is willing to still pursue the idea of harmonising ball weights.

**Editor: International Fistball Association (IFA)**

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