

Fistball - Rules of the Game

Valid as for 1 April 2025

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 meters for men and 1.90 meters 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 a team makes an error or a stoppage occurs.

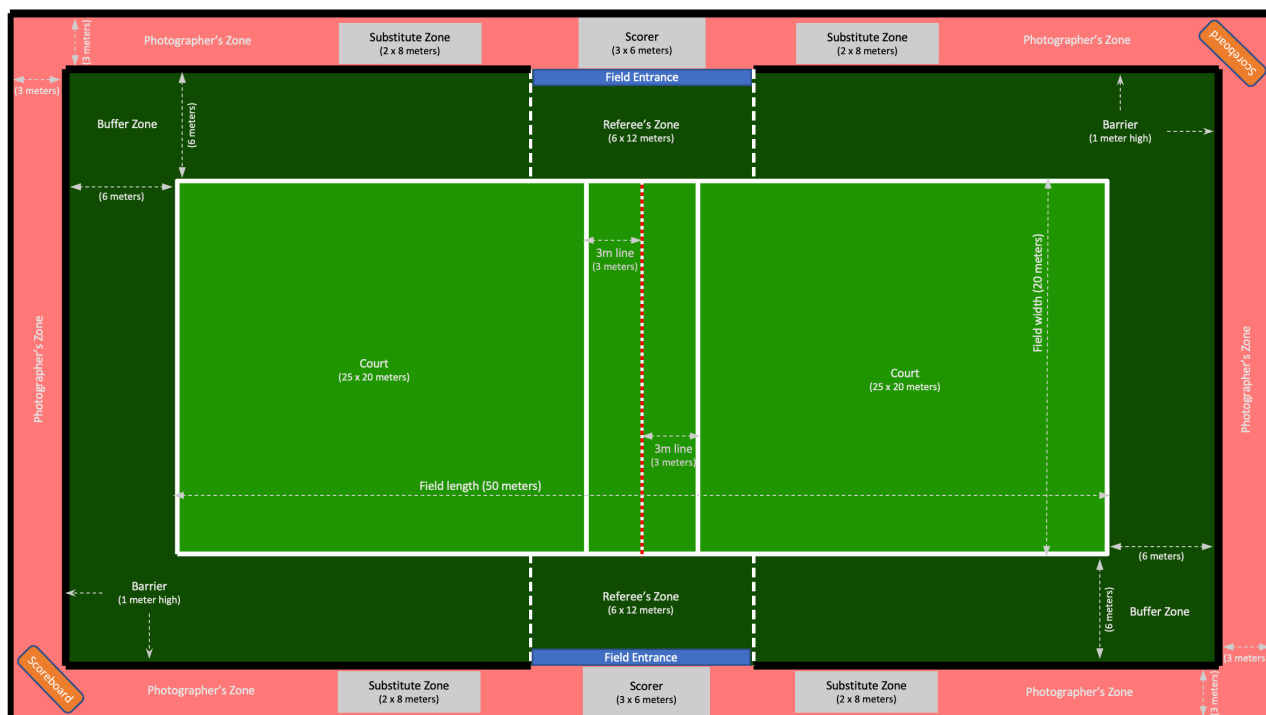
Each error made by a team counts as a point for the opponents.

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

Court (ENG)



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 youth are laid down in the addendum.

1 Court and Equipment

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

Matches under floodlight are permitted.

Indoors

The court is a marked rectangle, 40 meters in length and 20 meters in width.

Member associations are free to specify smaller sizes.

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

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 defense 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 unremovable fixtures are either part of the ceiling or the wall.

1.1.3 The lines must be between 10 centimeters (5 centimeters for indoor matches) and 15 centimeters wide.

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

- a **net**, which is between 3 centimeters and 6 centimeters wide if measured vertically or

- a **ribbon** which is between 3 centimeters and 6 centimeters wide if measured vertically or

- a **string** which is between 5 millimeters and 8 millimeters wide if measured vertically.

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

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 center 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 players with this lengthening are therefore not faults, whereas the contact by the ball or a player with those parts of the posts that are higher than 2 meters is regarded as a fault.

1.3 Spectators, neighboring courts and other barriers must be at least 6 meters away from both the sidelines and the baselines. The run out must be clearly marked by a dashed line.

Indoors

The run out must at least be 0.50 meters (for the sidelines) and 1 meter (for the baselines).

1.4 The fistball is a hollow ball filled with air. Its basic color is white, but up to 20 percent of the surface can be made up of several smaller colored pieces. The ball must be fully inflated.

During the whole match the ball must satisfy the requirements stated in the annex.

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 side or
 - which team has the first service (“defend” or “service”)
- The other captain decides out of the remaining possibility. The serving team always chooses all balls submitted by one of the teams for the first set.
- 1.6** Each team provides at least one standard ball. All balls are checked by the referee prior to the start of play and are adjusted as needed.
The balls not in use remain under the referee's control, but outside the buffer zone.
- 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 decides which ball out of the selected balls chosen by the team is to be played.
- 1.6.4** If none of the teams selected balls are available, the opponent's submitted balls will be used. As soon as at least one of the selected balls is available, it is returned to the game before the next service.
- 1.7** The IFA 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 and the ball's weight for women's, senior or junior competitions, but not in the height of the net (ribbon/string).

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 (exception youth games). The game can still be played with one less player on the field on each team, but a fifth missing player may join at any time (this is known as completion). If a team is missing two players on the field, the game cannot be played.
- 2.1.1** Substitutions between the 10 players can be carried out without constraint.
- 2.1.2** Additions and substitutions may only be made by the serving team after a rallye and when the referee has been notified in advance.
An addition or substitution (entry and exit) must take place at the height of the team's own attacking line.
Both teams may make additions or substitutions if the referee has interrupted the game.
If a substitution is made without informing the referee or if there are more than 5 players on the field, the referee will stop the game and award a point to the opposing team.
If the team that does not have the right to serve reports a substitution/addition, the referee must prevent the substitution before the restart of the match.
- 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. In this case the team has to appoint a new acting captain. The acting captain will be given the armband by the team's captain and will be the point of contact for the referee. If the original captain has been sent off, the acting captain will perform all captain duties.
- 2.3 Each team must wear a uniform of the same base design and color. Additional requirements for the uniform can be enforced by Competition Managers or National Federations.
- 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 color.
- 2.3.3 Metal spikes are prohibited. Shoes and protection equipment (e.g., compression socks, compression pants, knee/ankle/elbow/head, etc) are not regulated.

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 are determined 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 the first set, the choice of balls changes to the other team. Following the end of every set, change of side and first service 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 side, choice of the submitted balls that will be used, and a service change are made. The change of side is considered an official break and follows 3.1.5.
- 3.1.5 The break between the sets must not exceed 90 seconds.
- 3.1.6 Specific rules for change of side: Players leave the court on their side at the completion of the set and change side outside the court. The players 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 90 seconds.

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 side, choice of balls that will be used and 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 90 seconds. 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 buffer zone area at the referee's side of court. Coaches and reserve players cannot enter the playing field during or after the time-out (except indoor spaces where buffer zone is not big enough).

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 during a rally without being directly involved in the rally.

5 Hit

- 5.1 The short period in which fist or arm touches the ball is referred to as a hit. 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 during each hit using the fist. If the contact with the ball 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 over the net (ribbon/string).
The service is deemed to have begun as soon as the ball has left the hand of a player with intent to serve and ends after the same 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 stationary 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.
- 6.4 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 not 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 contact.

- 7.1.1 If two players of a team hit the ball simultaneously, this is regarded as two contacts.
- 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 hit turns into a fault when crossing the central line.
- 7.3 A contact in the opponent's half by reaching over the net (ribbon/string) from one's own half is permissible.
- 7.4 A team is allowed to contact the ball which was hit by the opponent in the opponent's half, or which has touched the ground in the opponent's half but has not yet crossed over the net (ribbon/string).
- 7.5 The return of a ball back 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 back from the opponent's half into one's own half over the net (ribbon/string) is regarded as a fault.
- 7.5.2 A ball which has bounced from one's own half under the net 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 contact.
- 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 after a block, 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 doesn't touch the ground. The ball may be passed to another player or returned directly over 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, that player takes precedence and must not be obstructed in the opponent's court-half.
- 7.8.1 If the hindrance occurs unintentionally and through no fault of one's own (unavoidable due to the course of the game), it leads to a repetition of the last point.
- 7.8.2 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 their own team, substitutes or coaches are 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 at least one referee, being assisted by two linesmen and one scorer. A Video Assistant Referee "VAR" can be used. All video reviews will be initiated by the head referee and managed by a video referee.

Note: Further regulations in which more referees are used are defined in the "Competition Regulations". Their responsibilities are defined in the "IFA Referee Order".

- 9.2 The referee ensures that the rules are complied with and makes decisions at their own discretion. The Referee also may be assisted by the linesman. Head referee decisions are undisputable.
 - 9.2.1 Before the game, the referee makes sure that the playing field, the balls and the playing clothes are in the correct condition, ensures that the game report is correct and conducts the draw.

In the timed game, he also takes care of the timekeeping. Timing can also be done centrally, but the referee remains responsible for his field.
 - 9.2.2 The referee starts and ends the match and has the right to interrupt it and to discontinue it. The referee indicates interruptions, extra time and points by whistling, shouting or 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 must be displayed. 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, this is indicated by pointing closed fists with thumbs up 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 side-lines opposite the referee. They help the referee supervise the match and indicate when a ball touches the ground outside the boundary lines through raising a flag or arm as well as pointing down (at the line) if the ball touches the boundary line or inside the court.
- 9.4 The scorer stands or sits 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 behavior 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 must be broken off according to clause 2.1.
- 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 behavior 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 –
 Regulations for age group, court size, net height, ball weight, ball contacts, ball pressure, number of players and service line

NEW since 01.04.2023								
Age Group *)	Court (m)	Net height (m)	Ball weight (g)	Ball circumference (cm)	Ball contacts	Air pressure (bars)	Number of players	service line
Male: U18, U21, Men, Masters	50x20	2,00	350 +/- 10	65-68	3	0.55 - 0.7	5	3m
Female: U18, U21, Women, Masters	50x20	1,90	320 +/- 10	65-68	3	0.55 - 0.7	5	3m
U16 m	50x20	2,00	320 +/- 10	65-68	3	0.55 - 0.7	5	3m
U16 f	50x20	1,90	320 +/- 10	65-68	3	0.55 - 0.7	5	3m
U14 m/f	40x20	1,80	290 +/- 10	65-68	3	0.55 - 0.7	5	3m
U12 m/f	28x15 ***)	1,60	260 +/- 10	65-68	3/4 **)	0.3 - 0.5	3-5 **)	3m
U10 m/f	18x9 ***)	1,50	240 +/-10	60-68	3/4 **)	0.2 - 0.3	3-5 **)	3m
U8 m/f	12x6 ***)	1,30	220 +/-10	60-68	3/4 **)	0.2- 0.3	3-5 **)	2m

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

**) to be decided by member federation

***) proposal of IFA. Member Federations can use alternate dimensions if needed.

Meaning of Asterisks: Member federations can only decide about court size, ball contacts and number of players – not about height of the net, ball weight, air pressure and service line.

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