
INTERNATIONAL BLIND SPORTS FEDERATION

SHOWDOWN RULES

2018 – 2021

Version: Rev. 1, 09.02.2018



The rules have been negotiated and approved by the IBSA Showdown Sub-Committee, Handen October 2017. The rules are valid starting from January 1st 2018.

These rules shall govern the Showdown play at all IBSA World Championships, IBSA Continental Championships and all other IBSA sanctioned events.

1. PREAMBLE

Showdown is played by two players. The game is played on a rectangular table with goal pockets at each end, and a centerboard screen. The game is played with bats and an audible ball. The objective of the game is to bat the ball across the table, under the centerboard screen, into the opponent's goal, while the opponent tries to prevent this from happening.

1.1 The rules of the game are set out below.

1.2 The IBSA Showdown Sub-Committee, in consultation with the event organizer shall determine the playing system of the tournament. The competition must follow the guidelines approved by the IBSA Showdown Sub-Committee to be considered an officially recognized tournament by the IBSA Showdown Sub-Committee, offering points for the international ranking system.

1.3 Countries who are organizing national championships approved by their federations must follow international IBSA Showdown rules. If not, participating players will not get points for the official ranking system.

1.4 Should there be any misunderstanding of the IBSA Showdown Rules the English version shall prevail.

These regulations consist of four parts:

A: DEFINITIONS

B: RULES OF PLAY

C: EQUIPMENT SPECIFICATIONS

D: TEAM PLAY RULES

A: DEFINITIONS

- **Batting hand:**
The hand (up to and including 6 cm past the wrist joint) that is holding the bat. The batting hand includes hand protection as described in rule 10.2.
- **Centerboard screen:**
The rectangular board dividing the playing area in two sides. The centerboard screen rests on the sidewalls above the playing area.
- **Contact board:**
The narrow wooden cap that rests on the top of both end-walls.
- **Giving up a match:**
When a player is "giving up a match" he is voluntarily resigning, for example because of an injury.

The player who gives up a match will keep all ball and set points he/she has already won. He/she loses by the lowest possible result.

Example: Player A has won the first set 11:5 and is leading in the second set 7:2, then he/she gives up the match because of injury. Player B wins this match 11:5, 7:11,0:11.

- **Goal:**
A goal is scored when the ball passes fully into the goal pocket or the player who conceded a goal pushes the ball intentionally out of the goal pocket with any part of his/her body and the referee is aware of it.
- **Goal area:**
The space between the goal pocket and (including) the tactile boundary line.
- **Goal pocket:**
The opening in the horizontal playing deck and the vertical end-wall.
- **Language:**
The player and his/her coach are allowed to speak in any language, with these exceptions:
 - If the coach wants to cheer or support his player when the ball is not in play only the official language of tournament is permitted (Rule 9.1 or 9.2 applies in case of infraction).
- **Losing by default:**
A player is “losing a match by default” when he/she is infringing on some rule. The player who loses a match by default will lose all sets without any ball point. Ball and set points already won by that player will be annulled.
Example: 11:0, 11:0, 11:0.
- **Match:**
Any combination of sets, e.g. best of three (2-1) or in the knock-out stage within the EC/WC: best of five (3-2).
- **Non-batting hand:**
The hand that currently is not holding the bat. Can also be called “free hand”.
- **Playing area:**
Is defined as follows:
 - At the sides, by side walls and end walls without vertical limits.
 - At the bottom, by the surface of the playing deck.
 - The top of the sidewalls.
 - The top of the contact board is excluded. The downside of the contact board and the front of the contact board are part of the playing area.
- **Penalty:**
Heavy sanction for serious infraction of the rules or misconduct by the player or coach during the match (including all breaks). A penalty can be issued either with or without giving a warning first. The issuing of a penalty will not change the order of service.
 - If the match was stopped by the referee to issue a penalty it will continue with a re-serve.
 - If the penalty was given when the ball was not in play the match will continue with the next regular service.

- **Playing mistake:**
Failure caused by technical or unintentional mistakes during play, usually causing the loss of one (1) point.
- **Playing deck:**
The surface of the horizontal board.
- **Serve turn:**
A series of two (2) serves.
- **Set:**
A set is a part of a match where a player shall win when he/she reaches a minimum of eleven (11) points with a margin of two (2) points over his/her opponent.
Team matches are played to a minimum of 31 points with a margin of (2) points over the opposing team.
- **Stop time:**
The total accumulated playing time.
- **Warm-up**
Applies to single and team competition.
The time that two or more players can freely practice with each other and get used to the table. The amount of time for warm-up is usually 60 seconds but can be changed by the referee if he/she deems appropriate. Also, warm up can be omitted completely. During warm-up the players must wear all required Showdown equipment. During warm-up talking between player and his/her coach is not permitted (Rule 9.1 or 9.2 applies in case of infraction).
Warm-up is started and stopped by the referee by either blowing the whistle or giving verbal a command.
- **Warning:**
Issued warnings are valid for the whole match.
A warning issued in team play is valid for the whole team and the whole match.
The referee can issue a warning when the ball is in play or in breaks.
 - If the match was stopped by the referee to issue a warning it will continue with a re-serve.
 - If the warning was given when the ball was not in play the match will continue with the next regular service.

B: RULES OF PLAY

2. GENERAL RULES

2.1 Officials for each table during tournament play shall be:

- Referee (fully sighted)
- Second referee (also fully sighted, elapsed time, time out, score and number of serves)

The referee can also assume all tasks of the second referee. This rule must not be applied to play-off matches within Continental / World Championships where there have to be two officials.

2.2 If the referee is injured, he/she stops the match and he/she must be replaced by another referee.

2.3 The referee must conduct the match at Continental / World Championships in English. Players who cannot understand the official language can use an interpreter, but he/she must announce him/her prior to the match.

2.4 The referee will ensure that the rules of the game are observed in all cases. The referee has the option to use assistance of the second referee (if he/she is present) before making a decision or to call "let" and thereby designate a re-serve if he/she has not been able to properly assess a situation with certainty. The decision of the referee is final.

2.5 After checking out the equipment, play will be started and stopped by the referee sounding a whistle, one blast to start or stop, a double-whistle for goal and a long whistle when the set/match is over.

2.6 The winner is the player to reach a minimum of eleven (11) points having a margin of two points (2) over the opponent.

2.7 No time limit is allowed for National / Continental / World Championships. Organizers of any other tournament may introduce time limit play. The organizer should inform the participants about time limit prior to the tournament.

2.8 If the match is played with a time limit, the player who is ahead when time allotted for the set has expired will be declared the winner. If, when time has expired there is a draw, a coin will be tossed to determine which player will serve, and the next point wins.

2.9 The players will change sides after each set. In the last set of the match the players will change sides after six (6) points are scored by one (1) player or after half of stop time has expired.

2.10 If only one (1) set is being played rule 2.9 applies.

2.11 The time limit for changing sides is one (1) minute (60 seconds). The referee gives an audible warning 15 seconds before the time-out or changing sides is finished. The referee calls out: 15 seconds.

2.12 When changing sides players will move to their right.

2.13 While changing sides timeout rules apply (see 3.1).

2.14 Before the match the player must announce the name of his/her coach to the referee. The player can announce his/her coach even if the coach is not present. The coach can enter/leave the room only when the set is over and the referee must open the door between sets.

The player can change the announced coach until the referee has started the match.

2.15 During the change of sides the player can refresh himself/herself or with the assistance of the coach. The player must stay in the playing room.

2.16 Spectators must be quiet during play. After the referee whistles, spectators and coaches can cheer. The referee ensures silence before play is resumed and while the ball is in play. The audience must come in and go out when the set is over. The referee must open the door between sets.

2.17 The coach must remain on the side of table of his player.

3. TIME OUTS

3.1 Each player will be entitled to one (1) time-out of one (1) minute (60 seconds) during a set. Time-out requests must be made to the referee during a break in play. Time-out can be called either by the player or the coach. Only during a time-out and side changes any discussion can occur between the coach and the player (see also 2.12, 2.13).

3.2 The referee can stop the match whenever he/she deems it necessary (e.g. injury, excessive noise, for toilet visits of referee or player, etc.). The referee resumes the match with a re-serve if the match was stopped when the ball was in play. If the referee gives a player permission to visit the toilet the time limit to return to the table is five (5) minutes. If the player fails to return within this time limit he/she loses the match by default.

3.3 The referee can call a medical time-out if the player is injured. The player must be ready to play by 5 minutes otherwise he/she loses the match by default.

3.4 The match clock will be stopped during a timeout or break in play.

4. SCORING

4.1 Two (2) points are awarded for a goal. When a goal has been scored the referee gives a double-whistle signal.

4.2 Players may score points regardless of which player is serving.

4.3 One (1) point is awarded to the opponent of the player who hits the ball into the centerboard screen and stops its forward motion. The ball is considered in "forward motion" if the ball hits the bottom of the centerboard screen and directly passes onto the other side of the table.

4.4 One (1) point is awarded to the opponent of the player who hits the ball over the centerboard screen.

4.5. One (1) point is awarded to the opponent of the player who touches the ball with any part of his/her body, other than the bat or batting hand, within the playing area.

4.6 One (1) point is awarded to the opponent of the player whose bat or batting hand causes the ball to leave the playing area of the table.

4.7 One (1) point is awarded to the opponent of the player who traps or stops the ball for more than two (2) seconds, so that the ball is inaudible for the opponent. The measuring of the "two seconds" is not being done by stop watch, but is in the judgement of the referee.

4.8 One (1) point shall be awarded to the opponent of the player who hits the ball and it touches the top of the contact board..

4.9 No contact is allowed within the goal area with the ball. If that happens, one (1) point will be awarded to the opponent of that player. That means like this: If the ball touches the bat or batting-hand in the goal area and moves directly into the goal, there is a goal and two (2) points are awarded to the opponent. If the ball touches the bat or batting-hand, and after that touches any other part of the body, there is an illegal touch and one (1) point is awarded to the opponent. If the ball touches the bat or the batting-hand, and goes anywhere else, in or out of the table, there is an illegal defense and one (1) point is awarded to the opponent because of the first sentence in this rule: No contact is allowed within the goal area with the ball.

5. BEGINNING PLAY

5.1 Before the match begins, the referee, the second referee, the players and the coaches will be introduced by the referee.

5.2 Before the match begins, the referee will inspect the opaque eye protection, the bats, any hand protection and the attire worn by the players.

5.3 Prior to the start of play, the referee will toss a coin. The player first on the list will be asked to choose head or tail. The player winning the coin toss will be given the choice of taking or giving away the first serve to his/her opponent.

5.4 The eye protection must be worn during the whole match. Warm-up, time-outs and side/ends changes are part of the match. The players are not allowed to touch his/her eye protection. He/she must ask the referee for permission to do so, even in breaks. If permission is given, he/she must turn away from the table. Before play resumes the referee checks the eye protection so it is correctly put on the face and properly darkened with no gaps to be seen through.

If the player breaks this rule, one (1) point will be awarded to the opponent.

If a player touches his/her mask without the referee's permit before the set has begun the set will start with the score of 1:0 for the player who received the point. The set will start with the regular serving order.

If a player touches his/her mask during play the referee will stop the match and will award one (1) point to his/her opponent. The match continues with a re-serve.

5.5 The referee will roll the ball to the player serving and ask both players, first the returner and then the server, if they are ready to play. When the referee receives positive acknowledgement from both players answering YES, the referee announces the score and then the number of the serve. Then the referee will signal the commencement of play by blowing the whistle once. This should be used by starting the match, set, after time-outs and unusually long breaks. (For example: A is the server. B is the opponent. "Is B ready? - Yes! - Is A ready? - Yes! - Let's start, the score is zero zero. A's first serve. - Whistle.")

6. SERVES

6.1 After a whistle signal from the referee, the player serving the ball must do so within two (2) seconds. If he/she does not, one (1) point is awarded to the opponent. The same will happen if the player starts to serve before the referee has whistled.

6.2 The ball must be placed on the surface before serving. If this doesn't occur the player loses one (1) point immediately.

6.3 Rolling the ball intentionally before hitting it is not allowed and will resolve in an illegal serve. The opponent will be awarded one (1) point.

- After placing it on the playing surface and releasing the ball, the ball is allowed to roll before the player hits it with the bat, under the condition that the player is not moving it on purpose. (For example, single-handed player will have problems keeping the ball still or the table is not completely even).

The player can place the ball to a different location on the playing surface even after the referee has started the game by blowing the whistle (Rule 6.1 still applies).

6.4 When serving, each touch of the ball with bat counts as one (1) serve.

6.5 If the player misses the ball during service, one of these two interpretations will be used:

- if there was no audible sound (for the referee) the player can swing at the ball multiple times (until he/she reaches the 2 second limit for serves).

- if there was an audible sound (for the referee) the swing counts as one service.

6.6 Each player will serve two (2) times consecutively.

6.7 A served ball must bounce off the sidewall exactly once prior to passing under the centerboard screen. If this does not occur, the referee must stop the play and one (1) point will be awarded to the opponent. If the served ball "slides" along one side of the table wall it is considered as multiple bounces and one (1) point is awarded to the opponent. When, during the serve, the ball hits the bottom of the centerboard screen and directly passes onto the other side of the table, no playing mistake will be called.

6.8 After the referee announced the service, the player must be ready to serve without delaying the game. The player shows that she/he is ready to serve by placing the ball on the table.

7. PLAY

7.1 One (1) point shall be awarded to the opponent of a player who holds his/her non-batting hand within the playing area except when switching hands. Referee shall tolerate a non-batting hand over the playing area as long as it is part of a natural movement when swinging the bat for shooting the ball. The non-batting hand can overreach the contact board. The player is not allowed to put his/her fingers/hand down under the line of the contact board or grip the contact board with his/her fingers. It is tolerated to lean the upper body into the playing area. In each case rule 4.5 still applies.

7.2 The bat must be held in one hand at all times, except when switching hands. An infraction of this rule will result in the loss of one (1) point.

7.3 If the player drops the bat, he/she loses one (1) point immediately.

7.4 When a bat is broken and play cannot be continued the referee shall order a re-serve immediately. Any point(s) scored after a bat is broken are not counted even if the referee has not blown the whistle yet. The bat is considered broken when it is badly damaged or if one or more major parts of the bat broke off and are not attached to each other anymore.

8. DEAD BALL

8.1 The referee will call a "dead ball" and a re-serve when, in his/her opinion, the ball is moving so slowly that it not will reach the point, where the player can take care of the ball and go on with the game, or a player has lost track of the ball.

8.2 If the ball is inaudible for more than two (2) seconds the referee calls a dead ball. The ball is inaudible when the referee is not able to hear it move on the table

9. PENALTIES

9.1 Penalties with warnings.

Each of the listed incidents under 9.1 will be sanctioned with

- 1st infraction: Warning
- 2nd and subsequent infractions: a two (2) point penalty will be issued by the referee.

9.1.1 Not playing from behind the table.

- Play must be from the end of the table. A player must not play from the side of the table. It's not allowed to hold on to any part of the table with the non-batting hand, except at the end of the table. "The end" is defined by the curve of the table, including the whole curve.

9.1.2 Hooking the ball with a finger.

- It is not allowed to move the ball by hooking or holding it with any finger.

9.1.3 Shoving, excessive or constant moving the table in a disturbing way.

9.1.4 Scraping the bat in a disturbing way.

9.1.5 Talking during play or break in play (except 2.12, 2.13, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3).

9.1.6 Pushing any part of the body into the goal area from the outside.

9.1.7 Any other activities judged by the referee to be disturbing for the opponent or are purposely delaying the game.

9.2 Penalties without warnings.

Each of the listed incidents under 9.2 will be immediately cause a two (2) point penalty.

9.2.1 The mobile phone or any other electronic device of a player or his/her coach is making any kind of noise during the match.

9.2.2 Any attempt of the coach to give secret signs to his/her player between services.

This will at once be considered serious misconduct. The referee will directly send the coach out of the playing room.

9.3 Other sanctions

9.3.1 Very serious misconduct by the player.

- In case of, e.g. swearing at the referee, throwing the ball or the bat, or similar actions, the referee is entitled to immediately penalize the offending player. The offending player loses the match by default.

9.3.2 The referee can send supporters or coaches out of the room in case of unfair misconduct.

9.3.3 The player must be at the playing room at the specified time. If the referee waits for five (5) minutes and the player does not appear, he/she loses the match by default. If a player repeatedly appears late he/she can be excluded from the tournament

10. ATTIRE

10.1. Players must wear a short-sleeved shirt with sleeves not longer than elbow length.

10.2. The players must wear hand protection.

- The hand protection must not cover more than six (6) cm of the arm measured from the wrist.
- The thickness of the hand protection may be maximum 2,5 cm in the front part (all fingers) up to the wrist

have a bat with these measurements: 2 mm soft cover + 6 mm blade + 2 mm soft cover.

- The width and length of the overhang of the handle and the blade can be up to forty (40) mm (this is consistent with the width of the handle).

Blueprints available on IBSA website - <http://www.ibsasport.org/sports/showdown/rules>

12. BALLS

Balls are to be made audible. Balls are to be six (6) cm in diameter with a hard, smooth surface. The balls must be approved by the IBSA Showdown Sub-Committee to be used during IBSA tournaments. IBSA tournaments are all official championships and tournaments where you can receive points for IBSA ranking list.

13. TABLE

Dimensions:

- Interior length: 366 cm (5 mm tolerance)
- Interior width: 122 cm (5 mm tolerance)
- Height (Playing deck from floor): 78 cm
- Sidewall: 14 cm
- Corners (interior radius): 23 cm
- Goal pocket (semi-circle): 30 cm diameter
- Rectangular vertical hole: 30 cm x 10 cm (in the end-wall)
- Tactile boundary line for goal area: 40 cm diameter
- Contact board: 5 cm overhang to the inside of the table, an overhang back outside the table is allowed.
- Centerboard screen: 42 cm from top of the sidewalls, 10 cm opening from playing deck.

Blueprints available on IBSA website - <http://www.ibsasport.org/sports/showdown/rules>

D: TEAM PLAY RULES

14. GENERAL RULES FOR TEAM PLAY

14.1 Team competition is played according to the IBSA Showdown rules for single play as laid out above if not otherwise noted.

15. TEAMS

15.1 A team must be mixed, i.e. the line-up consists of two (2) men players and one (1) women players and/or vice-versa.

15.2 It is possible to change one (1) player up to the complete team for a new match during the competition (team consists of five (5) players). Players must not be signed under the squad list of a different national team, e.g. a player from national team A cannot play for national team B during the tournament.

16. ADDITIONAL RULES

16.1 Winner of the match is a team which reaches a minimum of thirty-one (31) points with the margin of two (2) points, e.g.: 31:29.

16.2 Each player has three (3) serves after which he/she goes away and leaves the serves to his team-mate who must first catch three (3) serves by the opponent player.

16.3 Before the play starts, coaches must announce the line-up to the referee and assign the numbers by which the players go to serve and return. The line-up should be announced secretly before the coin toss.

16.4 Players must stay in the room for they must be ready to change his/her team-mate.

16.5 Prior to the start of play, the referee will toss a coin. The team (a player or coach) first on the list will be asked to choose head or tail. The team winning the coin toss will be given the choice, after knowing the opponent team's playing order, of taking or giving away the first serve to the opposing team.

16.6 In team matches side changes shall be done when one (1) team has reached the score of sixteen (16). The referee must open the door.

16.7 Each team can take one (1) time-out during each match.

17. SYSTEM OF PLAY

1. Player 1 from team A (A1) serves 3 times against player 1 from team B (B1).
2. After 3 serves player A1 leaves, and player B1 serves 3 times against player A2.
3. After 3 serves player B1 leaves, and player A2 serves 3 times against player B2.
4. After 3 serves player A2 leaves, and player B2 serves 3 times against player A3.
5. After 3 serves player B2 leaves, and player A3 serves 3 times against player B3.
6. After 3 serves player A3 leaves, and player B3 serves 3 times against player A1.
7. After 3 serves player B3 leaves, and player A1 serves 3 times against player B1.

This order is repeated up to the end of the match.

Version History:

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- Minor grammatical, spelling and wording corrections with no impact on the meaning of the rules.
- Correction of numbering.