



CMSA Women's+ Division Dodgeball Rules & Play

Dodgeball is a fun and dynamic sport for all ages. In 20 minute matches, 8 players for each team attempt to get all of the players on the opposing team out by hitting them with a dodgeball or catching a ball thrown by the opposing team. Each match consists of as many games as possible, the team that wins a game earns a point for the match. At the end of 20 minutes the team with the most points wins the match. In the following sections you'll find the complete rules and procedures for CMSA Women's Plus Dodgeball. If you have any questions reach out to womensdodgeball@chicagomsa.org

Part 1: Definitions

1. Live ball: a ball that was thrown by a live player and can get someone out.
2. Dead ball: a ball that has interacted with the floor, walls, ceiling, or has been caught.
3. Live player: a player on the court that has not been deemed out.
4. Out player: a player that has been deemed out.
5. Burden: The possession of the majority of the dead balls, teams have 10 seconds to relinquish burden.
6. Game: a distinct game of dodgeball, where one team gets all of the players on the other team out. Winning a game earns your team a point.
7. Match: 20 minutes of regulation time in which many games are played.

Part 2: The Game

Section 1: Court and Equipment

1. Playing Area
 - a. Attack Line: the ten-foot volleyball court line
 - b. Centerline: the half way line between opposing baselines
 - c. Baseline: the furthest edge of a team's half of the court
 - d. Sideline: the boundary signifying the width of the court
2. Balls
 - a. All matches are played with 7.5 foam dodgeballs

Section 2: Participants

1. Team
 - a. A team can have up to 20 players on a roster.
 - i. 8 players will compete on a side; at least four (4) players need to be present at their scheduled time of play, three (3) of which must be from the scheduled team. If a team is unable to be fielded legally the game will be forfeited.
 - ii. All players must be a current member of CMSA (current fiscal year 9/1-8/31) and have paid both their CMSA membership fee, signed the waiver, and paid the sport player fee.
 - iii. If a team uses an ineligible player, that team will forfeit that match and could be required to forfeit their next match. You cannot ask non-CMSA players to sub.
 - b. Players active for a game must not stand with inactive teammates.



2. Substitutions

- a. Substitutions are not allowed unless there is an injury or another medical situation. The same 8 players who started the game, must end that same game.
 - i. Teams who do not have enough players at the time of their match are allowed to pick up substitute players in order to be eligible to play.
 1. Teams can pick up players from another team until they have 8 players.
 2. Picked up players should be removed and replaced by rostered team players upon their arrival.
 3. All substitute players must be current registered CMSA dodgeball players with signed waivers.
 4. Picked up players may not be substituted with others once the match begins, unless an injury happens, and the players are no longer able to compete.
 - a. Whoever chooses to sub as a player for a team will stay as a substitute for that team for the remainder of the match unless they become injured or an original member of the team arrives.
 5. The team in need of subs is solely responsible for finding subs to fill their team for play and line judging responsibilities.
 - ii. Playoff substitutions: There will be no substitutions allowed during playoff games. However many players a team has will be the number of players they will play with during playoffs (minimum of 4, maximum of 8).
 1. Using subs during playoffs creates an unfair advantage and will not be allowed.

3. Captains

- a. Each team must have a designated captain for each match.
 - i. If the registered captain is unable to attend the match an acting captain must be named and the head referees notified.
- b. Captains are the only members of the team who are able to communicate with referees.
 - i. They are not able to overturn, or challenge, a call, but may ask for clarification.
 - ii. If communication with the referee is disrespectful, the referee is able to remove the captain for the rest of the match. If they are asked to leave multiple matches during the season they may be subject to removal from the league.

4. Uniforms

- a. All players must wear their league t-shirts to play in a match.
 - i. If their t-shirt is damaged or they are unable to wear it for the day a plain t-shirt of the same team color may be worn.
 - ii. If a player repeatedly does not wear their league t-shirt they will no longer be able to play.



- b. Players may modify the provided league shirt as long as all printed elements including number, league logo, and sponsor logos are clearly visible.
- 5. Player Equipment
 - a. Gym shoes must be worn at all times while playing.
 - i. You may not wear the same shoes you wore outside, even if they could be worn in an athletic context.
 - b. Players may only use liquid chalk or finger tape on their hands
 - i. Gloves made for sports like football and baseball are prohibited
 - c. All dangling or sharp jewelry is prohibited and must be removed before play begins.
 - i. If it cannot be removed it must be covered with a bandage or appropriate padding.

Section 3: Timing and Scoring

- 1. Timing
 - a. A match lasts for 20 minutes, with the timer counting down from 20.
 - i. There is no limit to the number of games played within a match
 - b. In between each game both teams have up to 30 seconds to line up for the next game.
 - i. If there is an obvious attempt to delay the start of a new game within a match a point will be awarded to the opposing team.
 - c. If a game ends, and there is less than a minute left in match time, and one team is winning by two or more points, the match will end.
- 2. Scoring
 - a. A point is awarded to the team who eliminates all of the opposing team's players in a game.
 - i. At the end of 20 minutes the team with the most points wins.
 - ii. Points are not awarded unless all players are eliminated, so at the end of the game having a majority of players on your side will not earn you a point.
 - b. During a game, if both teams only have one player, gameplay is stopped and the point will be decided by sudden death.
 - i. See Section 10: Sudden Death for more details.
- 3. Tiebreaking
 - a. If the game has reached 20 minutes and both sides have an equal amount of points, gameplay will stop and the game will be determined by sudden death.
 - i. If there is more than one active player on the court the captain must choose one player to compete in sudden death.
 - 1. Only players that were not out at the end of regulation may be selected.
 - ii. See Section 10: Sudden Death for more details.
- 4. Forfeits
 - a. A game is forfeited if a team is unable to field at least 4 eligible players at the start of the match
 - i. See Section 2.1 and 2.2 for more details on player eligibility



- b. In the event of a forfeit the game will be recorded as 7-0 in favor of the team that did not forfeit.
- c. Teams who forfeit games with less than 24 hours notification will be subject to a \$50.00 team fee. This fee must be paid prior to your next scheduled matches.

Section 4: Opening Rush

1. Ball position
 - a. 7 dodgeballs are placed along the centerline, three(3) on one side of the court and four(4) on the other.
2. Beginning of play
 - a. Before the match begins each team's captain will determine which side of the court they will start on with a coin flip or rock/paper/scissors.
 - b. Players take a position behind their end lines, with both feet being completely behind the line.
 - c. The head referee will confirm with both sides that they are ready to begin. After positive affirmation from the captain the referee will blow the starting whistle.
 - d. Teams can send up to three (3) players to retrieve the balls on the right side of their half.
 - i. Players may not run up on the left side of their half of the court to confuse or scare the opposing team.
 - ii. Players may step on or over the centerline during the opening rush.
 1. Any centerline crossing must happen within the action of picking up a ball and a player is not allowed to linger or stand with their foot, or feet, on the opposing team's side of the court.
 - e. All balls must clear the side's attack line before being considered a live ball.
 - i. If a ball is thrown before it is live it is not eligible for hits or catches, but the side that threw the dead ball will not get the ball back.
 - ii. See Section 1.1 for details on the attack line
3. False starts
 - a. If a player begins running before the referee blows the whistle the game is reset with one ball being moved to the opposite half of the court.
 - b. Once the game is reset the beginning of play procedure remains the same.
 - i. If there is an additional false start another ball will be given to the opposing team. This procedure can repeat as many times as necessary until all balls are given to the opposing team.

Section 5: Throwing

1. Attempts
 - a. All balls must be thrown using the palm of your hands. If a ball is moved across the court illegally it is immediately dead, no hits or catches will be considered out.
 - i. Kicking with one or both feet is an illegal motion.
 - ii. Punching with a closed fist is an illegal motion.
 - iii. Slapped through the air, similar to a volleyball hit, is an illegal motion.
2. Possession Burden
 - a. Teams have 10 seconds to relinquish possession of the majority of their balls.



- i. Possession is when a ball is on your side of the centerline, regardless of if it's on the court.
 - ii. For example, if you have burden with 4 balls, you need to throw one ball to relinquish possession.
 - iii. A valid throw attempt, defined in section 5.1.a, must be made to relinquish possession.
- b. The head referee will call out "Burden, Blue" to signify when a team now has the burden of throwing. The first 5 seconds of burden are counted silently. At the 5 second mark the referee will start counting out loud.
 - c. If the team who has burden fails to relinquish that burden in the allotted 10 seconds all balls are sent to the opposite team.
 - d. If a single player remains on one side, and they have burden as defined by Section 5.2.a, they have 10 seconds to legally throw at least one ball. If that throw does not relinquish burden, they will have another 10 seconds to throw another ball. This pattern will continue until the opposing team has possession burden, as defined in Section 5.2.a.
3. Pinching
 - a. When holding or throwing a ball the player may not pinch the ball such that two fingers are able to touch through the material of the ball.
 - b. If a player pinches a ball it is not a valid throw, if the ball hits the opposing team or is caught neither action is valid.
 - c. If a player is repeatedly pinching the ball they may be removed from the match.

Section 6: Hitting

1. Outs
 - a. A player is deemed out if they are hit by a live ball on any part of their body including hair and clothes.
 - b. If a player is hit above the shoulders that is a headshot and they are not considered out.
 - i. If a headshot occurs gameplay will be stopped to ensure the player is okay.
 1. Players return to their respective baselines and restart on the referee's whistle.
 2. If the player that was hit with a headshot needs to be substituted they can do so.
 - a. See Section 12 for injury substitution details
 - ii. The player who threw the headshot is not out of the match but will receive a warning. If they throw a second headshot in the match they will be deemed out. If a third headshot is thrown in the match they will no longer be able to play for the rest of the match.
 1. If a player has 2 match removals they may be subject to suspension of play, determined by the commissioner.
 2. If a player has 8 total headshot warnings they may be subject to suspension of play, determined by the commissioner.



- iii. If a player intentionally moves in such a way that their head is hit with a ball they are deemed out. The throwing player does not receive a warning.

2. Exiting Players

- a. Once a player is deemed out they must raise their hand and exit via the closest outer boundary.
 - i. Once exited you must go to the player lineup area.
- b. The out player must line up based on when they were deemed out. With the first player out standing near the baseline.
 - i. All players must line up against the divider wall.
 - ii. The first person out must line up behind the designated lineup marker, typically an orange cone. All subsequent out players must line up behind the first out player, extending to the centerline of the court.
- c. Once a player is out they may not place any body part on the court until they are brought back into play.

Section 7: Blocking

1. Blocking

- a. A player may use one or more balls to block a live ball from hitting you.
 - i. The ball is still live until it is caught or it hits the floor, wall, or ceiling
- b. If a blocked ball is caught by a team member it is a valid catch.
 - i. See Section 8.1 Catching for details on catching protocol.

2. Disarming

- a. If a player blocks a ball but they lose possession of it that player is deemed out.

Section 8: Catching

1. Catching

- a. Any thrown live ball may be caught by the opposing team. If it's caught, the player who threw the ball is out.
 - i. When a catch is made the team who made that catch brings the next player in from their player line up area.
- b. If a player is hit and fails to catch the ball their teammate can catch the ball. In that case, nobody involved in the play is out. This is known as a team catch.

2. Trapped Balls

- a. If a ball hits a player and the floor at the same time the ball is considered trapped. No one is out and the ball is dead until it's thrown.

3. Entering Players

- a. When a player is brought in from a catch they must enter the game through the baseline.
- b. They cannot be deemed out or interact with a ball until they step in bounds.

Section 9: Boundaries

1. Out of bounds

- a. Players are not allowed to step over any boundary, including the centerline. If they do step over a boundary they are out.
 - i. Players may grab a ball that is over any boundary, as long as they do not touch the ground while attempting to grab the ball.



- ii. Boundary lines are the white rectangular lines outlining the volleyball and dodgeball court.

Section 10: Sudden Death

1. Procedure

- a. If there is only 1 player left from each team, sudden death automatically goes into play and will be set up by the referees.
- b. The centerline boundary is dissolved, leaving the whole court open. Players begin with 2 balls in their hands at their own end lines, diagonal from each other. The other 2 balls go on the ends of the centerline. When ready, sudden death begins by a signal from the referees.
- c. Play continues with these 2 players until one player is deemed out via a hit, their ball is caught, or they step over the outer boundaries.
 - i. Balls in the middle are extra balls available for use once a player has released both of their original balls.
- d. The ball must be thrown or released in order to get the other player out. Touching an opponent with the ball without releasing it does not count as an out.

Section 11: Ball Retrieving

1. Ball Retrievers

- a. Players who are out and in the player line up area may retrieve balls in possession of their team but not on the court.
 - i. If they leave their place in line they must return to that place after retrieving the ball.
- b. Substitutes may retrieve balls in possession of their team but not on the court.
- c. All retrieved balls should be placed just inside the boundary. Rolling or throwing the ball into play risks player injuries.
- d. Spectators, people watching a game who are not on a playing team or who are not refereeing, may nudge the ball back towards the court if a ball retriever is unable to get to it. If a spectator throws a ball onto the court, especially if it's thrown to the opposite side of the court in which the ball rolled out, they may be warned by the head referee.
 - i. If a spectator repeatedly interacts with a ball they may be asked to leave.

Section 12: Injuries

1. Player Injury

- a. Should a player become injured and requires immediate attention, the referees shall stop play immediately.
- b. If an injured player is unable to continue play, a team is allowed to substitute them for a player on their roster.
- c. The substituted player replaces the injured player either on the court or in the player line up area if the injured player was deemed out prior to the injury.
- d. If a player is replaced during a game, they may not play until the next game after the current one has concluded.
- e. Referees may substitute players at their discretion, if they determine that the player presents an unreasonable risk to themselves or others.



2. Blood Injury
 - a. If a player is bleeding the same injury protocol is in place. However, the player cannot return to the match until they have stopped and covered the bleeding.
 - i. If blood is on the players clothing they must change their clothing before returning to the match.

Part 3: Officiating

Section 1: Roles

1. Head Referees
 - a. The head referees are the officials located on the door side of the centerline. There will be a maximum of 2 head referees in the game.
 - b. The head referees are responsible for checking all the equipment before the game.
 - c. The head referees are responsible for clarifying all the calls if needed.
 - d. The head referees are in charge of all officials on their court and are the final decision maker on all matters covered by these rules and regulations.
 - e. The head referees are responsible for indicating the start of a game with a loud whistle blast.
 - f. The head referees are responsible to ensure the ball is activated.
 - g. The head referees are responsible for the count down on the burden side.
 - h. The head referees enforce the rules of the game by whistle and action.
 - i. The head referees may issue warnings to any player that does not follow the rules as described.
 - j. During gameplay one referee should be keeping track of the time, the other should keep track of possession burden.
2. Line Referees
 - a. Line referees are officials positioned at the divider wall side of the court at each half's baseline.
 - b. The line referee is responsible for ensuring all players are at the valid position before the start of the game.
 - c. The line referee should make sure all opening rush is valid in every game.
 - d. The line referee enforces the rules of the game by validating or refuting a head referee's call when asked by the head referee.
 - e. The line referees may retrieve balls in accordance with the ball retrieval procedure laid out in Section 1.3 Ball Retrievers as long as it does not disrupt their primary duty of adjudicating line violations.
 - f. The line referees are responsible for ensuring the team's out lineup is correct.
 - g. Teams listed as referees must provide 2 line referees.
 - i. If they are unable to provide referees at their designated time they may be subject to a 3 point deduction in their next match.
 - ii. Whoever is designated as a line ref must remain in that role for the duration of the match.
3. Ball Retrievers



- a. Ball retrievers are optional officials positioned at the door side of the court at each half's baseline or along the wall side of the court near the centerline.
- b. The ball retriever is responsible for fetching dead balls that leave the court and placing them on the court at the place in which they rolled out.
 - i. Retrieved balls must never be thrown or rolled onto the court.
- c. The ball retriever may also be asked to validate a call made by the head or line referees.
- d. Teams listed as referees may provide any number of ball retrievers to help keep games moving.
 - i. There is no penalty for not providing ball retrievers.

Section 2: Procedures and Signals

1. Starting Play
 - a. Both teams must give an affirmative acknowledgement of play starting before the whistle is blown. It is recommended to explicitly ask if each side is ready.
 - b. Play begins with one whistle blast.
2. Stopping Play
 - a. If play needs to be stopped for injury, or a referee conference, two short whistle blasts must be blown.
 - b. The end of a game, or match, must be signified with three short whistle blasts.

Part 4: COVID-19 Procedures

1. Masks are strongly recommended indoors at all times. As of Jan 5, 2024, they are not required.
 - a. Approved masks: disposable, KN95, N95, & cloth. No gaiters or bandanas
2. We know that all players are vaccinated, but also know that the COVID-19 virus is ever changing. If rates rise in Chicago and we are told to increase mask wearing, masks will become mandatory during dodgeball. Consistent mask wearing inside the gym will help us keep everyone safer.
3. If a player is feeling sick or has any of the COVID-19 symptoms, they should not play.
 - a. Teams can find substitutes in accordance to section 2.2
4. If you have been exposed to someone (unmasked, face-to-face contact for longer than 15 minutes) who tests positive for COVID-19 you must test negative before coming to dodgeball. We recommended that you test within the next 2-5 days after exposure because that is typically when symptoms arise.
 - a. If you are exposed within 24-48 hours of dodgeball, do not come. Let your captain know you have been exposed so they can plan accordingly and get subs if necessary.
5. If you or anyone on your team tests positive or you have been exposed after being at dodgeball, email womensdodgeball@chicagomsa.org so we can alert other players to get tested.
 - a. Refer to the CMSA email about how to alert CMSA to COVID-19 exposure or infection.
 - b. We will keep the player's identity confidential but must let others know for their safety.



6. Should you test positive for COVID-19, wait to come back to play until you have at least 2 negative rapid tests.
7. Spectators: If your team brings spectators, know that there is a COVID-19 capacity limit on each side of the gym. If/when we reach capacity, we will ask people to leave. This will be a first come, first to stay rule.

Part 5: Code of Conduct

1. The players are ultimately up to enforcing and upholding the rules of Dodgeball when playing and/or officiating. Referees will make most calls but it is expected that players will read and follow the rules during each game. If there is a controversial play, the referees will make the final decision! A Referee has the right to stop a game and discuss the incident with the other referees before proceeding.
2. In respect for the spirit of the game, and for your fellow players, there is absolutely NO protesting. **Any and all questions regarding a call by the referee will be done by captains only. Unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated. And is subject to removal from the league.**
 - a. Unsportsmanlike conduct includes the following
 - i. Excessive foul language
 - ii. Racial slurs and verbal abuse
 - iii. Regular hits above the shoulders (head-hunting)
 - iv. Unnecessary roughness and physical abuse
 - v. Slamming down or kicking balls in anger when hit
 - vi. Arguing with officials, staff, players, or spectators
 - vii. Yelling at or calling other players names or disrespectful comments to and/or about other players
 - viii. Abuse of the honor system.
 - b. Minor violation(s) of these codes will result in a warning.
 - c. Severe violations or repeated minor violations will warrant a match ejection
3. No alcohol, or controlled substances are allowed in league facilities.
 - a. If a player on a team is found with alcohol or a controlled substance their team may be subject to forfeiting their match.
4. All players are required to carry a valid identification card (e.g., driver's license, state I.D., etc.). CMSA Board Members, referees, and the league commissioner have the right to ask any player to see their ID at any time.