



International
Handball
Federation

IX. Rules of the Game d) Wheelchair Handball Four-a-Side

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Note: The provisions highlighted in yellow will come into force on 1 July 2026.

Note: For the sake of simplicity, this rule book generally uses the male form of words with respect to players, officials, referees, and other persons.



I. Foreword

The IHF Rules of the Game for Wheelchair Handball Four-a-Side basically follow the IHF Rules of the Game for Wheelchair Handball Six-a-Side, nevertheless with strong influence of beach handball especially concerning the number of players and counting the goals (points). A reduced number of players provides for optimal better individual use of space, increases the high dynamics of the game, favourable gives better preconditions for possible separate men's and women's competitions and creates distinctly better possibilities to recruit players and reduce economic costs.



Rule 1

1. The Game

Wheelchair handball four-a-side is practised by two teams of four players each, including one goalkeeper per team. The aim of each team is to score goals and prevent the other team from scoring. Wheelchair handball shall be based on the spirit of fair play and aimed at physically disabled players.



Rule 2

2. The Team

1. A team delegation consists of a maximum of 14 persons, including a maximum of 10 players and a maximum of four (4) team officials. A minimum of eight (8) players must be present at the beginning of the match.

2. A maximum of four (4) players per team may be on the court. The remaining players are substitutes. The total number of classification points of players on the court may not exceed a total of 11 points per team at any time in accordance with the Wheelchair Handball Classification Rules and Regulations. For competitions with mixed teams, each team must have at least two female players, unless the rules of the competition concerned state otherwise. At least one female player per team must be on the court at any time.

3. The goalkeeper is a the player designated by the team who is allowed to enter the goal area and to defend the goal and plays like the other players sitting in their wheelchair.

Any player present on the court may act as a goalkeeper at any time, but only one player may enter and remain in his own goalkeeper area at the same time. Therefore, the goalkeeper does not wear a special

goalkeeper shirt but the same shirt as the rest of the team.

If more than one player enters the goal area at the same time **with the intention of** defending an opponent or **trying** to stop or **to** deflect a ball that goes towards the goal, their team must be penalised with a 7-metre throw. **If the additional player acting as goalkeeper inside the own goal area stops or deflects the ball that goes toward the goal, then the additional player acting as goalkeeper must be penalised with a suspension.**

Comments:

Teams are not allowed to play with less than four (4) players for tactical reasons in order to use players with higher classification points if there is a possibility to complete the team with players with lower classification points.

*If any team does so, the referees must order the team's line-up to be corrected and sanction the coach progressively **starting with a suspension** for unsportsmanlike behaviour.*

4. If a team suffers several injuries, it may continue the match or the tournament with fewer players.

The match may continue, even if one of the teams is reduced to less than four (4) players.

If the number of players of a team is reduced, the maximum number of classification points allowed are as follows:

- in case of three (3) players on the court, a maximum of 9 points on the court;
- in case of two (2) players on the court, a maximum of 6 points on the court;

The maximum number of points on the court will always consider the average points per player.

It is for the referees to judge whether and when the game should be permanently suspended.

Note:

In case no female player is able to play (due to injuries or disqualifications) the team concerned will be reduced by one player for the rest of the match. In addition, the maximum team points will be reduced to 8.



Rule 3

3. The Players

A player must be considered eligible by the Wheelchair Handball Classification Team to play an official competition.

Players in senior competitions must be at least 15 years old to participate (the age on the day of the start of the competition shall be considered). A written parental permission for players aged 15 to 18 must be presented prior to the tournament.



Rule 4

4. Playing Time and Time-Out

Playing Time

1. Matches consist of two sets of ten (10) minutes, which are scored separately.
The half-time break will be five (5) minutes.

Comment:

Due to the short duration of match sets, referees should consider calling time-out immediately in case of interruptions in play such as:

- *The ball goes out of the field of play and out of the reach of the players.*
- *Players accidentally collide in a way that players need help to lift their wheelchairs back up.*

Team Time-Out

2. Each team has the right to receive a one-minute team time-out in each set of the regular playing time.
The teams must not be granted time-outs in the third set (tiebreaker).

The team requesting a team time-out must be in the possession of the ball.

3. If a team requests a team time-out when the opposing team is in possession of the ball, the following punishment and decision will apply:

- a) Progressive punishment starting with a suspension for the team official who requested the team time-out by pushing the buzzer.
- b) 7-metre throw for the team in possession of the ball.

4. If a team requests a team time-out when the opposing team is in possession of the ball and has a clear chance of scoring, the following punishment and decision will apply:

- a) Disqualification (red card) for the team official that requested the team time-out by pushing the buzzer.
- b) 7-metre throw for the team in possession of the ball.

Note:

If the delegates or the referees do not recognise who has caused a faulty team time-out, the responsible team official will receive the punishment according to the above-mentioned punishments.

5. If a team requests a team time-out immediately after losing ball possession and it is clear that it was not intentional, the match shall restart according to the technical decision based on the situation on the court at the time of the interruption.



Rule 5

5. The Ball

The balls used for official IHF tournaments shall be in compliance with the provisions of the IHF Ball Regulations, specifically regarding handballs played without resin.



Rule 6

6. The Court

The provisions for indoor handball and wheelchair handball six-a-side shall apply.

The entire surface of the court should be at least 48 m long and 28.5 m wide. The playing court is a 40 metres long and 20 metres wide rectangle, consisting of two goal areas and a playing area. The longer boundary lines are called side lines, and the shorter ones are called goal lines (between the goalposts) or outer goal lines (on either side of the goal). The substitution area should be 4.5 m long. There should be a safety area surrounding the playing court of 4 m on the side of the team benches and 2 m on the other sides. A max. of four chairs shall be available on every side for the team officials.

Diagram 1: The playing court

Dimensions indicated in cm.

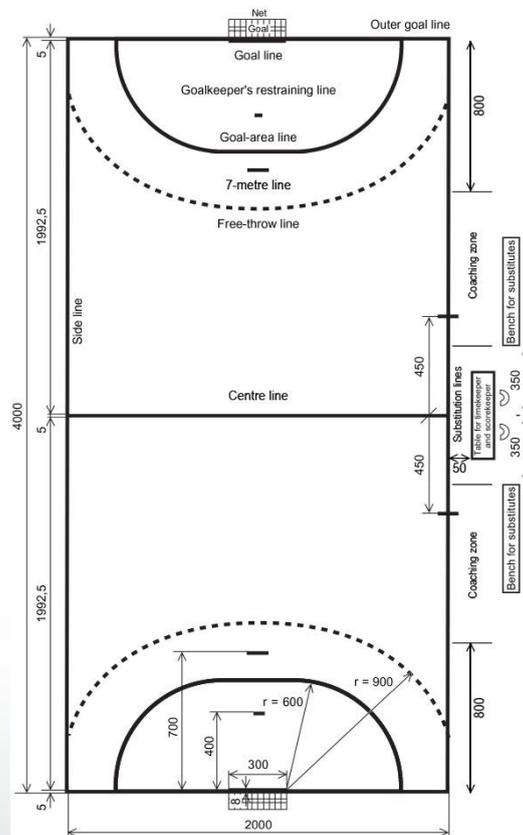
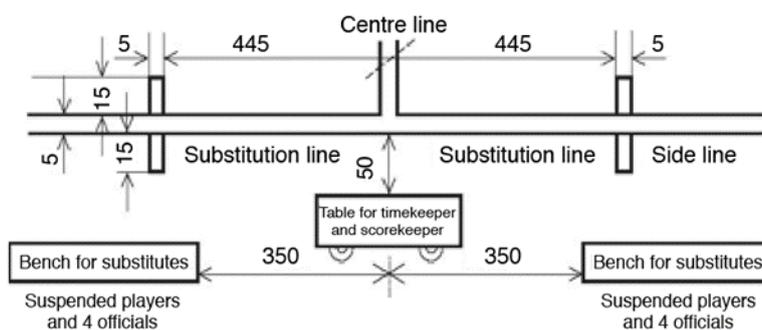


Diagram 2: Substitution lines and substitution area



Rule 7

7. The Goal

The internal dimensions of the goals shall be 3 m x 1.7 m. The catch net in the goals shall be removed (or fixed to the goal net) in order to avoid entangling with the wheelchair.



Rule 8

8. Scoring and Deciding the Outcome of the Game

Scoring

1. A goal is scored when the entire ball has crossed the entire width of the goal line, provided that no violation of the rules has been committed by the shooter or a teammate before or during the shot.

A goal shall be awarded, if there is a violation of the rules by a defender but the ball still goes into the goal. **After a goal is scored, the game is restarted with a goalkeeper throw from the goal area.**

2. A goal cannot be awarded, if a referee or the timekeeper has interrupted the match before the ball has completely crossed the goal line. A goal shall be awarded to the opponents, if a player plays the ball into his own goal, except in the situation where a goalkeeper is executing a goalkeeper throw and the ball does not cross the goal-area line. **An own goal scored by any player is awarded with one point.**

After a goal is scored, the game is restarted with a goalkeeper throw from the goal area.

3. One (1) point is awarded in the following cases:

- a) An own goal scored by any player
- b) All other goals which are not mentioned in 8:4.

4. Two (2) points are awarded in the following cases:

- a) A player throws the ball and scores a goal immediately after having made a 360° turn with their wheelchair (spectacular goal)

Note:

The turn must be a complete 360° rotation, and the spin may only be done using one hand. The 360° rotation has to be done without touching the wheel during the rotation, but the player can stop the wheel after 360°, and the shot must be executed simultaneously. Stopping the wheelchair must not lead to a stabilisation of the position and/or adjustment of the shot, the player has to shoot immediately.

- b) The goalkeeper scores from his goal area
- c) The goal is scored by a 7-metre throw.

5. During the shoot-out, spectacular goals in accordance with 8:4a are also awarded two (2) points.

Outcome of the Set

6. If the score is tied at the end of a set, the winner shall be decided by golden goal. The set continues as follows:

- a) After a one-minute break, the referees make a coin toss to decide which team will be in possession of the ball. The set is restarted with a goalkeeper throw and continues until one of the teams scores a goal, at which point the set is completed.
- b) If after five (5) minutes neither team has scored a goal, the golden goal is considered completed and the winner of the set is determined through a series of five (5) shoot-outs which will be executed as follows:

Each team nominates 5 players, players who are not suspended or disqualified at the end of the playing time are entitled to participate. These players make one throw each, alternating with the players of the other team. The teams are not required to predetermine the sequence of their throwers. Players may participate in the shoot-out as both throwers and goalkeepers. The referees decide which goal is used. The referees make a coin toss, and the winning team chooses whether they wish to throw first or last. After each sequence of five (5) throws, the starting team will change if the throwing has to continue because the score is still tied after five (5) throws each. For such a continuation, each team shall again nominate five (5) players. All or some of them may be the same as in the first round. This method of nominating five (5) players at a time continues as long as it is necessary. However, the winner is now decided as soon as there is a goal difference after both teams have had the same number of throws. Players may be disqualified from further participation in the shoot-out in cases of significant or repeated unsportsmanlike conduct. If this concerns a player who has just been nominated in a group of five (5) throwers, the team must nominate another thrower.

Comment:

The **shoot-out** consists of a player starting (after the referee's whistle) from the centre of the court with the ball under control (as in a counterattack) who must face the goalkeeper and try to score a goal, complying with the Rules of the Game.

Specifically, in this case, it will not be allowed to place the ball on the lap while pushing the wheelchair for a maximum of 3 seconds.

As in the regular playing time, teams do not have to select one specific goalkeeper but are allowed to change goalkeepers during the shoot-out.

~~If the outcome has not been decided after the first round, the shoot-out is continued until one team takes the lead once there has been an equal number of attempts by each team.~~

7. Each shoot-out converted into a goal will be worth 1 (one) point (see however Rule 8:4a, spectacular goal).

8. During the shoot-out and after the referee whistled, the goalkeeper cannot leave the own goal area. If the ball hits the face of the goalkeeper during the shoot-out and if the goalkeeper is not moving his head in the direction of the ball, the player shooting the ball must be punished with a suspension until the start of the next set.

Outcome of the Game

9. If both sets are won by the same team, this team shall be the overall winner, with a score of 2-0.

If each team wins one set, the result is a tie. In the event of a set tie, the teams will play a third set (tiebreaker) of five (5) minutes. If at the end of the third set the match remains tied, the winner will be determined by a series of five (5) shoot-outs.

If a match is decided by tiebreaker, the overall result shall be 2-1 for the team which has won the tiebreaker.



Rule 9

9. Equipment

1. The following material is not permitted:

- Glue for handling the ball
- Protective equipment if including metal components
- **Orthoses**
- Finger, hand, wrist, etc. braces made of plastic, metal, etc.

2. It is permitted to use:

- Protective equipment if padded/soft (not including metal)
- Tape for fingers, arms, etc.

- Prostheses and adaptive equipment if they are in accordance with Article 4.4.1 of the IHF Wheelchair Handball Classification Rules and Regulations and if the use does not harm any other player.

Comments:

The use of prostheses is permitted only with the approval of the Wheelchair Handball Classification Team.

The prostheses will only be allowed if covered with padded/soft materials (not including metal).

Players who use prostheses to play must use their prostheses during the evaluation by the Wheelchair Handball Classification Team.

3. All equipment intended to be used by the teams shall be presented on the occasion of the technical meeting for definite approval.

The IHF Regulations on Protective Equipment and Accessories shall apply, with the exception that all players (not only those acting as goalkeepers) are allowed to wear long pants and no socks are required. However, all players shall wear the same pants (either all shorts or all long pants) in the same colour.



Rule 10

10. Playing Kit

1. Each team shall have two (2) playing kits (one light colour/one dark colour). The jerseys shall have the players' numbers on the front (10 cm in height).

2. The players of a same team on the court must wear identical uniforms, including the player acting as goalkeeper.

3. Other sports accessories used, such as wristbands, bandanas, t-shirts worn under the uniform, etc. must be black, white or the predominant colour of the uniform.

Special protective equipment customised to the players does not need to have the same colour as the uniform.

4. A colour code will be used to identify the class of each player. A sticker with the code and the player's number will be placed on the back rest of the wheelchair after classification.

| | |
|------------------|----------------|
| Class 1 = green | Class 3 = blue |
| Class 2 = yellow | Class 4 = red |



Rule 11

11. Straps

Players have to be strapped to the wheelchair at the upper and lower legs in order to avoid lifting or moving/using the legs.

Lifting of court players when playing/defending the ball will be punished with a suspension until the next turnover; lifting of the goalkeeper while defending will be punished with a suspension until the next turnover and the awarding of a 7-metre throw to the opposing team.



Rule 12

12. Playing the Ball

~~The provisions for wheelchair handball six-a-side shall apply.~~

1. It is permitted to:

- throw, catch, stop, push or hit the ball by using hands, arms, head and torso;
- hold the ball for a maximum of 3 seconds;
- push the wheelchair and dribble the ball;
- place the ball on the lap (not between the knees) while pushing the wheelchair for a maximum of 3 seconds;
- monitor and follow the opponent (with or without ball) by using arms and hands as long as the opponent has enough time and distance to react and no danger is present;
- block or force away an opponent with arms or hands, wheelchair (when the player is at a moderate speed);
- enter the goal area or cross the side lines without the ball after a shot or after being pushed when not creating an advantage doing so; the player has to leave the goal area as soon and fast as possible.

2. It is not permitted to:

- touch the ball more than once, after it has been controlled, unless it has touched the floor, another player, or the goal in the meantime; however, touching it more than once is not penalised, if the player is “fumbling” the ball, i.e. failing to control it when trying to catch or stop it;
- start bouncing (by the same player) after a throw, before another player or a goalpost touched the ball;
- stop the ball with the wheelchair outside the goal area;
- enter the goal area with the ball under control (as court player);

- cross the side line with the ball under control (the wheelchair has to be in the field).

Comments:

The wheelchair can be pushed for a maximum of 3 seconds; it is allowed to place the ball on the lap during these pushes. A ball on the lap is considered as “under control”. The opponent is therefore not allowed to take the ball off the laps.

After receiving the ball, the player has to start the action by bouncing.

“Pushing” means pushing/moving the wheel. When the hand leaves the wheel the next action (dribbling, passing, shooting) has to follow within 3 seconds. It is not allowed to touch the wheel again after those 3 seconds.

It is not allowed to hold the ball for more than 3 seconds.

In case a ball is thrown against a wheelchair or covered under a wheelchair the referees have to decide on the intention and the respective consequences.

It is allowed to use/touch the wheelchair for picking up the ball.

The new rules regarding goalkeeper, 30 seconds and passive play shall apply.



Rule 13

13. Violations

1. Violations shall be handled according to the following scales for players and team officials ~~IHF Rules of the Game for Beach Handball~~:

a) Players

- Suspension: Up to two suspensions per player. The suspended player has to leave the court until the next turnover/change of ball possession/beginning of new set (~~reduction until next turnover~~)
- Disqualification: red card, the disqualified player has to leave the court for the rest of the match and head to the designated area, and another player can enter the court after the next turnover/change of ball possession/beginning of new set

b) Team Officials

- Up to one suspension per team; reduction of the team by one player until the next turnover/change of ball possession/beginning of new set
- Disqualification: red card, the disqualified official shall leave the substitution area, and the team shall be reduced until the next turnover/change of ball possession/beginning of new set.

2. It is permitted to:

- use an open hand to play the ball out of the hand of another player;
- use bent arms to make body contact with an opponent, and to monitor and follow him in this way;
- use one’s wheelchair to block the opponent in a struggle for positions.

3. It is not permitted to:

- pull or hit the ball out of the hands of the opponent;
- block the opponent with arms, hands, legs, wheelchair or to use any part of the body to displace him or push him away; this includes a dangerous use of the elbow, both as a starting position and in motion;
- hold an opponent (wheelchair, body, or uniform), even if he remains free to continue the play;
- endanger an opponent.

Comments:

Blocking an opponent by holding the wheelchair will be punished progressively.

Front contacts are tolerated, but side and rear contacts must be punished. For all these fouls, the chair is considered as part of the player and a non-accidental contact between chairs also constitutes a foul.

7-metre throws, free throw, etc. have to be taken from behind the respective lines.

4. Fouls that warrant a personal punishment

Fouls, where the action is mainly or exclusively aimed at the body of the opponent, must lead to a personal punishment. This means that, in addition to a free throw or 7-metre throw, at least the foul is to be punished progressively, beginning with suspensions and then disqualification.

5. Fouls that warrant a suspension

Even a foul with a very small physical impact can be very dangerous and have potentially very serious consequences, if the timing of the foul is such that the opponent is defenceless and caught unaware. It is the risk to the player and not the seemingly minor nature of the body contact that should be guiding in determining the appropriateness of a disqualification.

This applies especially for such fouls where the culpable player disregards the danger to the opponent. Taking into account the decision-making criteria for fouls that warrant a personal punishment, these fouls may include:

- fouls that are committed with high intensity or against an opponent who is moving fast;
- holding on to the opponent for a long time, or pulling him down;
- fouls against the head, throat or neck;
- hard hitting against the torso or throwing arm;
- attempting to make the opponent lose body control;
- pushing the wheelchair into an opponent with great speed;
- exceeding the maximum classification team points.

6. Fouls that warrant a disqualification

A player who is attacking an opponent in a way that is dangerous to his health is to be disqualified. The special danger to the opponent's health follows from the high intensity of the foul or from the fact that the opponent is completely unprepared for the foul and therefore cannot protect himself.

During the game, in no case is the player allowed to rise from the chair (compulsory use of a belt fixing to the chair) to get an advantage. Fixations can only be opened to enable the player to get back into the wheelchair after a fall.

The disqualification of a player or team official is always for the entire remainder of the playing time.

Comment:

In case of a suspension/disqualification the maximum classification team points will be reduced by the number of points of the punished player until the next turnover.



II. Wheelchair Specifications

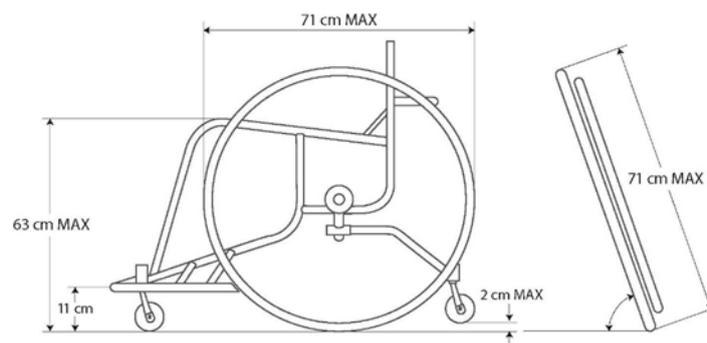
The provisions for wheelchair handball six-a-side shall apply.

The wheelchairs shall be constructed in a safe and fair way without any risk for the player himself, his team colleagues or the opposing team. A wheelchair may be banned from the game if there is any concern about its safety or fairness (IHF Supervisors' decision). All wheelchairs used in the tournament will be checked by the officials prior to the tournament. Only verified wheelchairs can be used during the tournament.

Each team is solely responsible for maintenance, etc. of their wheelchairs during the tournament.

The following specifications shall apply:

- No electronic wheelchairs are allowed.
- A horizontal bar shall be placed at the front of the wheelchair (at a height of approx. 11 cm above floor level). However, it is mandatory to use a complete wing covering the front and side of the wheelchair in order to protect the players.
- 1-2 anti-tip devices shall be attached to the wheelchair.
- The maximum height (from the floor to the top of the cushion or seat platform) shall not exceed 63 cm.
- 5-6 wheels (2 large wheels in the rear, two at the front and one or two safety wheels on the back. Max. diameter of large wheels: 71 cm (28 inches)).
- 1 hand rim on each wheel obligatory.
- Both wheels need to be fully covered. When using cover all players of one team shall use the same design.
- In case carbon fibre spokes are used, no cover will be needed.
- Padding of bar at back of the backrest (15 mm).
- If a wheelchair is no longer functional or unsafe, the player has to leave the field for any repairs.





III. Clarifications to the Rules of the Game

1. Player Injuries

If a player suffers an injury (or seems to be injured) on the court and requires treatment, this player may remain on the court after treatment.

2. Spectacular Goals

a) Advantage

Considering the specificity of the double value of goals scored by 7-meter throws (Rule 8:4c), referees must assess the interruption of the advantage at the exact moment of a foul that prevents a clear chance of scoring.

b) Scoring in free throw

According to Rule 8:4a, the scoring of a spectacular goal during the execution of a free throw is not considered an exception. Therefore, if the requirements of a full 360° turn are met and the throw is made from the correct position without moving from the exact spot, a score of double value, two (2) points, may be awarded.

c) Preventing a full 360° turn in a defensive action

Attempting to prevent an attacking player from scoring a spectacular goal by making a full 360° turn once he has started his rotation should be considered an illegal action and should be punished according to the Rules of the Game.

However, the defender may anticipate the start of the rotation by occupying the space, which will be considered a legal defensive action.

3. Execution of the Shoot-Out

During the execution of the shoot-out, the player will be allowed to make a short forward throw of the ball after the referee's whistle in order to be able to propel himself and gain speed with the wheelchair. He must then continue to advance according to the rules. There is no time limit for the execution.