

INTERNATIONAL BLIND SPORTS FEDERATION (IBSA)

SHOWDOWN RULES 8 April 2013-31 December 2017

The rules have been negotiated and approved by the IBSA Showdown Sub-Committee, Prague February 2013. The rules are valid starting from April 8th 2013.

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 centreboard 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 centreboard 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 in Appendix E 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, countries 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 five parts:

A: DEFINITIONS

B: RULES OF PLAY

C: EQUIPMENT SPECIFICATIONS

D: TABLE BLUEPRINT APPENDIX 1

E: GUIDELINES FOR OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED TOURNAMENTS (To Be Done)

F: 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.
- **Centreboard screen:**
The rectangular board dividing the playing area in two sides. The centreboard screen rests on the sidewalls above the playing area.
- **Contact board:**
The narrow wooden cap that rests on the top of both end-walls.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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 side-walls and the end-walls, contact boards are excluded.
- **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.
- **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.

- Warnings:
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 warning is issued during play, the referee stops the match with one (1) whistle, gives the warning and the reason, and resumes the match with a re-serve.

B: RULES OF PLAY

2. GENERAL RULES

2.1 Officials for each table during tournament play shall be:

a) Referee (fully sighted)

b) Time and score keeper (elapsed time, time out, score and number of serves)

c) The referee can also be score and time-keeper. 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 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 match play. 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 time-out 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.

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.

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 play 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.

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

3.4 The match clock will be stopped by the time-keeper during a time-out 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 centreboard screen and stops its forward motion. The ball is considered in "forward motion" if the ball hits the bottom of the centreboard 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 centreboard 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 sidewall and/or top of the contact board and/or jumps back into the playing area.

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, time-and score-keeper, 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.

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 When serving each swing at the ball will count as one (1) serve.

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

6.5 A served ball must bounce off the sidewall exactly once prior to passing under the centreboard 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 centreboard screen and directly passes onto the other side of the table, no paying mistake will be called.

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-playing 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 (rule 4.5 still applies). It is tolerated to lean the upper body into the playing area (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 opponent 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 seconds the referee calls a dead ball.

9. PENALTIES

9.1 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-playing hand, except at the end of the table. "The end" is defined by the curve of the table, including the whole curve. Holding outside of the this area will immediately cause a two (2) point penalty.

9.2 If, in the opinion of the referee, the player is hooking the ball with his/her fingers or thumb, the referee will issue a two (2) point penalty.

9.3 If, in the opinion of the referee, a player or coach is guilty of misconduct, such as:

- a) Shoving, excessive or constant moving the table in a disturbing way,
- b) Scraping the bat in a disturbing way,
- c) Talking during play or break in play (except 2.12, 3.1),
- d) Any other activities judged by the referee to be in this category

the following penalties apply:

- 1st infraction: warning and a re-serve,
- 2nd and subsequent infraction: a two (2) point penalty will be issued by the referee.

The referee is allowed to send supporters or coaches out of the room in case of unfair misconduct.

9.4 In case of very serious misconduct (e.g. swearing at the referee, throwing the ball or the bat) the referee is entitled to immediately penalize the offending player (without having to warn him/her first). The offending player loses the match by default.

9.5 The player must be at the playing room at the specified time. If the referee waits for 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.

9.6 A two (2) point penalty is issued against the player who pushes any part of his/her body into the goal area from the outside.

9.7 If a mobile phone, watch or similar device of the player or of his/her coach rings, beeps etc. during the match, the referee issues a two (2) point penalty.

9.8 If the coach tries to give secret signs to his/her player between serves, it will at once be considered serious misconduct. The referee will directly send him/her out of the playing room. Additionally a two (2) point penalty will be issued against the player.

10. ATTIRE

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

10.2. The players must wear hand protection.

- The hand protection must not cover more than 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
- The hand protection must not enlarge the hand by more than two (2) cm (on each side).
- When measuring the hand, the thumb is excluded.

10.3. Players may wear protection above 6 cm upon the arm, but it must be a different colour from the glove (e.g. sweat bands, bandages etc.). This part of the protection is not considered to be part of the batting hand.

10.4. Players must wear opaque eye protection that completely obscures the player's vision. Darkened alpine skiing glasses or adequate alternatives like goalball masks are the only types which are allowed. The rim of the glasses must be padded with foam or silicone material in order to completely shut out all light.

10.5. The referee must be clearly identifiable as the referee.

C: EQUIPMENT SPECIFICATIONS

11. BATS

Bats are to be constructed of a hard smooth material, with a length of 30 cm. It can be covered with soft material (a layer up to two (2) mm on one side or both sides). The overlap of the handle and blade can have any length.

Maximum dimensions:

- Blade length: 20 cm
- Blade width: 7,5 cm
- Blade thickness: 1 cm (including the soft cover)
- Handle length: 10 cm
- Handle diameter: 4 cm

The blade can be rounded and/or squared. The measuring of the blade starts from where it's outside of the handle. The measuring of the handle starts from where it's outside from the blade. Should the blade and the handle be virtually made of one piece, the handle ends where its diameter becomes wider than 4 cm – in this case that's where the blade begins. (See the technical blueprint and picture of the Showdown bat).

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

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.

Centreboard screen: 42 cm from top of the sidewalls, 10 cm opening from playing deck.

D: TABLE BLUEPRINTS APPENDIX 1

(Photos and Blueprints will come)

(Contact IBSA for more info)

E: GUIDELINES FOR OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED TOURNAMENTS (Works Going On)

(We will also give a new playing system for EC in Showdown for 2014 and 2016 in a few weeks)

F: TEAM PLAY RULES

20. GENERAL RULES FOR TEAM PLAY

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

21. TEAMS

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

21.2 It is possible to change 1 player up to the complete team for a new match during the competition (team consists of 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.

22. ADDITIONAL RULES

22.1 Winner of the match is a team which reaches a minimum of 31 points with the margin of 2 points, e.g.: 31:29.

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

22.3 Before the play starts, coaches must announce the line-up to the main 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.

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

22.5 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.

22.6 In team matches side changes shall be done when one (1) team has reached the score of sixteen (16).

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

23. 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 reaching 31 points (see Article 3).