



GAME OFFICIALS HANDBOOK

— 2026 EDITION · VERSION 1.0

Own the Grid™. Own the Game.



National Gridball League™

Game Officials Handbook — Version 1.0 · 2026 Edition

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This Handbook sets out how NGL Officiators run a match and apply the rules. It does not change any rule. Where this Handbook and the NGL Official Rulebook (Version 3.6, 2026 Edition) differ, the Rulebook governs. References in the form "Rulebook 8.1.2" point to that edition.

The league policies in this Handbook were ratified with Rulebook Version 3.1 and are listed with their rule references in Appendix 15.6.

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SECTION 01

1 About this Handbook

1.1 Purpose

- 1.1.1 The Rulebook says what the rules are. This Handbook says how Officiators run a match and apply those rules: where to stand, when to whistle, how to signal, how to work with the table, and what to write down afterward.
- 1.1.2 Where this Handbook and the Rulebook differ, the Rulebook governs. Rules are cited, not restated: " (Rulebook 8.1.1)" means Rulebook rule 8.1.1, Foot Faults.
- 1.1.3 This Handbook applies to every NGL-sanctioned match and to every Officiator, Head Officiator and member of the table crew working one.

1.2 How to Read It

- 1.2.1 **Must** marks a requirement. **Should** marks good practice that a crew may depart from only for a reason it can explain to the Head Officiator.
- 1.2.2 Paragraphs are numbered for reference in evaluations and reports (for example, "Handbook 7.3.2").
- 1.2.3 Procedures are written as steps, checklists and situation → action tables. Follow the steps in order.
- 1.2.4 League policies set out here, such as the serve clock, injury replacement and protests, were ratified for 2026 with Rulebook Version 3.1. Appendix [15.6](#) lists each with its rule reference.

1.3 Terms

- 1.3.1 This Handbook uses the Rulebook's terms (Rulebook 13). In particular:
- **Officiator**: one of the four on-court officials, one per side of the Grid. Never "referee".
 - **Head Officiator**: the Officiator designated before the match to lead the crew, rule on reviews and sign off the result (Rulebook 9.1).
 - **Game Officiator**: the title worn on the uniform and used in assignments.
 - **Table, operator**: the scorer's table and the person running the scoring console (Chapter 11).
 - **Side**: one edge of the Grid, named by its two quadrants: Prime-Major, Major-Entry, Entry-Minor, Minor-Prime.

SECTION 02

2 The Officiating Crew

2.1 Composition

- 2.1.1 Every match must have four Officiators, one per side of the Grid (Rulebook 9.1, 9.2.1).
- 2.1.2 One Officiator must be designated Head Officiator before the match. The Head Officiator is Officiator 1 and works the Prime–Major side, with Prime and the serve, straight across the Grid from the Officials Table. Officiator 3, on the Entry–Minor side next to the Officials Table, is the table liaison (Chapter 6).
- 2.1.3 The table must have a console operator (scorekeeper). It should also have a spotter. At league level it should have a scorekeeper, a timekeeper and a statistician (Chapter 11).

2.2 Duties of the Head Officiator

- 2.2.1 The Head Officiator leads the crew and is responsible for the match from the ball inspection to sign-off (Rulebook 9.1.3). The Head Officiator must:
- Run the pre-match procedure and the crew briefing (Chapter 5).
 - Conduct the coin toss and confirm the result in the console.
 - Whistle to authorize every serve (Chapter 7).
 - Confirm every Grid Hold and Gridlock award with the table.
 - Name the player when a team foul count reaches an Elimination or Ejection step (Rulebook 8).
 - Rule on challenges and lead replay review (Chapter 10).
 - Stop play for injury, safety or equipment, and decide resumption (Chapter 12).
 - Confirm the score at every timeout and at the end of each quarter, once Officiator 3 has run the score check with the table.
 - Sign off the match record and file any reports (Chapter 13).
- 2.2.2 The Head Officiator is the only Officiator who explains a ruling to a captain (Rulebook 4.6).

2.3 Duties of Every Officiator

- 2.3.1 Each Officiator must:
- Hold their position on their own side for the whole match (Chapter 6).
 - Own the outer boundary line of their side and the calls in their primary quadrant.
 - Back up the primary Officiator in their secondary quadrant.
 - Whistle, signal and confirm with the table every call they own (Chapter 7).
 - **Watch the Grid, not the ball alone:** feet, lines and the next serve's set-up.
 - Report anything the table did not see, such as an unnamed foul, an empty Next In Box or a delayed Next In Player.
- 2.3.2 Officiators carry no cards or notepads. Fouls and counts are logged at the table (Chapter 11).

2.4 Authority

- 2.4.1 Officials' rulings are binding, except where changed through the challenge and replay process (Rulebook 9.1.2, 9.3).
- 2.4.2 Jurisdiction runs from the ball inspection to the Head Officiator's sign-off. Scoring errors may be corrected until sign-off (Rulebook 9.1.3).
- 2.4.3 Arguing with a ruling outside the challenge process is Unsportsmanlike Conduct (Rulebook 9.1.2, 8.3.1). Officials should first use the de-escalation steps in 12.5, unless the conduct is abusive.

SECTION 03

3 Standards and Conduct

3.1 Impartiality

- 3.1.1 An Officiator must apply the same standard to both teams, in every quarter, whatever the score.
- 3.1.2 An Officiator must not call a foul to "even up" a previous call, and must not withhold a call because of the score or the clock.
- 3.1.3 An Officiator must not show approval or disapproval of play, players or coaches.

3.2 Conflicts of Interest

- 3.2.1 An Officiator must decline an assignment, or tell the assigning official before accepting it, where they:
- are rostered with, employed by, coach or are related to anyone on either team;
 - have a financial interest in either club or in the result;
 - have a personal dispute with a player or coach in the match.
- 3.2.2 An Officiator must not bet on any NGL match.
- 3.2.3 If a conflict comes to light at the venue, the Head Officiator must reassign sides or replace the Officiator before the toss, and record it on the match record.

3.3 Communication with Players and Coaches

- 3.3.1 Officials communicate by whistle and signal first, words second. Every call is signaled (Chapter 9).
- 3.3.2 Only the captain may ask the Head Officiator to explain a ruling (Rulebook 4.6). The explanation should be one or two sentences: what was seen and which rule applies.
- 3.3.3 Coaches address the Head Officiator through the challenge signal (Rulebook 9.3.1) or at a timeout. Officials should not debate calls with a bench.
- 3.3.4 Use player color and number ("Red 14"), not names, when making a call.
- 3.3.5 Keep a calm voice and neutral body language. Do not point at a player except as part of a signal.

3.4 Social Media and Public Comment

- 3.4.1** An Officiator must not comment publicly, in person or online, on a match they worked, on a team they may officiate, or on a call, until the league has closed any review of it.
- 3.4.2** An Officiator must not post images or video from the Officials Table or from a crew briefing.
- 3.4.3** Media requests go to the league. An Officiator may confirm only their own name and role.
-

3.5 Appearance and Fitness

- 3.5.1** Officiators must arrive in uniform or change before the crew meeting (Chapter 4).
- 3.5.2** Officiators stand for the whole match and move along their side. They should be fit enough to stay set and alert through four 16-minute quarters and overtime.

SECTION 04

4 Uniform and Equipment

4.1

Uniform

4.1.1

The Game Officiator uniform is (Rulebook 3.4):

- **Shirt:** charcoal long-sleeve collared polo with thin turquoise piping across the chest and shoulders.
- **Number:** on the front left chest, and large on the back.
- **Title:** GAME OFFICIATOR across the back.
- **Mark:** the current NGL mark on the left chest.
- **Trousers:** charcoal.
- **Belt:** black.
- **Shoes:** black athletic court shoes with hardwood traction.

4.1.2

No cap or other headwear is worn indoors.

4.1.3

All four Officiators must wear the same uniform.

4.1.4

Where a club's kit is similar to charcoal, the crew wears a light alternate uniform so that Officiators are never mistaken for players. The Head Officiator decides at the uniform check (Rulebook 3.4; Chapter 5).

4.1.5

Sleeve side markers, small patches showing each Officiator's side, are an open question and are not part of the 2026 uniform (Appendix 15.6).



Figure 4.1 – Game Officiator Uniform

Charcoal collared polo with turquoise piping, number front and back, GAME OFFICIATOR across the back, NGL mark on the left chest; charcoal trousers, black belt, black court shoes.

4.2

Equipment

4.2.1

Every Officiator must carry a whistle on a lanyard.

4.2.2

The Head Officiator also carries the toss coin and a backup stopwatch.

4.2.3

Officiators carry no cards and no notepads. Fouls are logged at the table.

SECTION 05

5 Pre-Match Procedure

5.1 Timeline

5.1.1 The crew follows this timeline, counted back from the scheduled start. A one-page checklist version is Appendix [15.1](#).

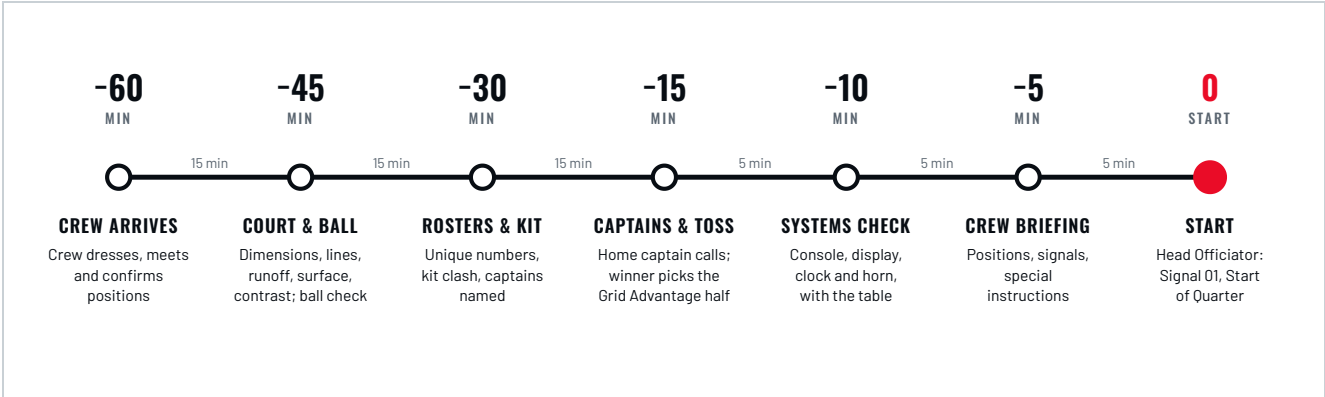


Figure 5.1 – Pre-Match Timeline Times are minutes before the scheduled start of the first quarter.

MINUTES	TASK	LEAD
-60	Crew arrives, dresses and meets. Head Officiator confirms sides and the Head.	Head Officiator
-45	Court inspection: dimensions, lines, runoff, surface, contrast with the ball. Match ball inspection (Rulebook 3.2).	Head + Officiator 2
-30	Roster and uniform checks: unique numbers, kit clash, captains named.	Officiators 2 and 3
-15	Captains' meeting and coin toss. Captains inspect the ball. Head confirms the toss in the console.	Head Officiator
-10	Systems check with the table.	Head + operator
-5	Crew briefing. Officiators take position.	Head Officiator

5.2 Court Inspection

5.2.1 At -45 the Head Officiator and Officiator 2 walk the court and check:

- ☐ **Dimensions:** Grid 24 × 24 ft, quadrants 12 × 12 ft (Rulebook 3.1.1).

- ☐ **Lines:** outer boundary and quadrant lines solid and clear; service lines and 2 ft center circle present; quadrant labels visible (Rulebook 3.1.4).
- ☐ **Runoff:** at least 5 ft on every side, 10 ft in official NGL venues, visually distinct from the Grid (Rulebook 3.1.5).
- ☐ **Surface:** hardwood or approved equivalent, dry, clean and even; no dead spots (Rulebook 3.1.3).
- ☐ **Contrast:** the finish contrasts clearly with the ball and the boundary markings (Rulebook 3.1.3).
- ☐ **Layout:** benches and Officials Table outside the Officiator observation area (Rulebook 3.1.6, 12.5); nothing inside the runoff.
- ☐ **Next In Boxes:** two 4 × 4 ft boxes on the Major-Entry side, just outside the runoff, side by side 1 ft apart and centered level with the middle of Entry; Team A's nearer the Minor-Entry baseline, Team B's nearer Major; each in its team's color or labeled, with at most one seat; nothing else in or in front of them (Rulebook 4.4.2, 12.5).

5.2.2 A defect that can be fixed (a loose object, a wet patch, tape lifting) must be fixed before the toss. A defect that cannot be fixed is recorded on the match record, and the Head Officiator decides whether the match can be played safely.

5.3 Ball Inspection

5.3.1 The Head Officiator checks the match ball and a spare against Rulebook 3.2.1: 8.5 in diameter, about 10 oz, textured surface, and a drop from 6 ft returning to about 65% of the height (3.9 ft).

5.3.2 The Rulebook requires the Head Officiator and both captains to inspect the match ball jointly (Rulebook 3.2.2). The crew's check at -45 is preparation; the joint inspection takes place at the captains' meeting.

5.3.3 A ball that is improperly inflated, fails the bounce standard or is damaged must be replaced before play (Rulebook 3.2.2).

5.4 Roster and Uniform Checks

5.4.1 At -30 Officiators 2 and 3 check each team against the roster entered in the console:

- ☐ **Roster:** 14 players, 7 male-identifying and 7 female-identifying (Rulebook 4.1.1). A non-compliant roster is reported to the league; it is not a forfeit unless the team cannot field 7 eligible players (Rulebook 8.5.2).
- ☐ **Numbers:** 0-99, unique within the team, visible front and back (Rulebook 3.3.1, 3.3.4).
- ☐ **Kit:** each team in its designated kit; NGL patch on the sleeve; no gloves or grip aids (Rulebook 3.3.1, 3.3.3).
- ☐ **Clash:** if kits clash, the away team changes; the Head Officiator decides (Rulebook 3.3.4).
- ☐ **Captains:** each team names one rostered captain (Rulebook 4.6).

5.4.2 Uniform faults found at the check should be corrected before the toss, so that Uniform Violations (Rulebook 8.4.1) are not needed once play starts.

5.5 Captains' Meeting and Coin Toss

5.5.1 At -15 the Head Officiator meets both captains at the center circle (Rulebook 2.5.1, 3.1.4). The Head Officiator should use this script:

"Captains, I'm [name], your Head Officiator, on the Prime-Major side. Officiators today are [name] on the Major-Entry side, [name] on the Entry-Minor side, who is our table liaison, and [name] on the Minor-Prime side."

"Here is the match ball. Please check it with me." [Joint ball inspection, Rulebook 3.2.2.]

"Captains are the only players who may ask me to explain a ruling. Coaches challenge with the challenge signal within 15 seconds."

"[Home captain], call it in the air." [Toss. Let the coin land.]

"[Team] wins the toss. Do you want Grid Advantage in the first half or the second half?"

"[Team] holds Grid Advantage in the first half, Quarters 1 and 2. [Other team] holds it in the second half, Quarters 3 and 4."

"Coaches give me your two Grid Advantage Starters before each half you hold it. Good luck."

5.5.2 The Head Officiator must then confirm the toss result in the console (Chapter 11).

5.5.3 Before each half, the team holding Grid Advantage must give its two Grid Advantage Starters to the Head Officiator (Rulebook 4.2.2). Their opponents' two starting players go to Minor and Entry.

5.6 Systems Check

5.6.1 At -10 the Head Officiator and operator complete the console's systems step together (Chapter 11): arena display, crash recovery, sync, clock and horn. Each Officiator blows one whistle so the operator can confirm it is heard at the table.

5.6.2 The spotter confirms the Official Match Scorecard (Appendix 15.3) is filled in to the start.

5.7 Crew Briefing

5.7.1 At -5 the Head Officiator briefs the crew. The briefing should cover:

- sides and primary quadrants (Chapter 6);
- any court defect, and how a ball striking it is ruled;
- known history between the teams, and any player on a warning from a previous match;
- injury and medical arrangements at the venue (Chapter 12);
- replay availability (Chapter 10);
- **one reminder:** whistle, signal, point, confirm.

5.7.2 Officiators then take position. The Head Officiator gives Signal 01, Start of Quarter, once the Grid is set.

SECTION 06

6 Positioning and Coverage

6.1 Positions

- 6.1.1** The four Officiators stand 2–3 ft outside the outer boundary, at the midpoint of their side. They move along their own side to keep the play in view and stay standing.
- 6.1.2** Sides are named by their two quadrants and numbered as in Rulebook 9.2.1: Officiator 1 Prime–Major, Officiator 2 Major–Entry, Officiator 3 Entry–Minor, Officiator 4 Minor–Prime. The Head Officiator is Officiator 1, on the Prime–Major side, straight across the Grid from the Officials Table. The Officials Table and both team benches sit directly below Minor and Entry, along the Minor–Entry baseline (Rulebook 12.5), beside Officiator 3, who is the table liaison. The two Next In Boxes sit on the Major–Entry side, just outside the out-of-bounds area and level with Entry, behind Officiator 2 (Rulebook 4.4.2). Teams keep their benches and Next In Boxes for the whole match, overtime included.
- 6.1.3** Positions are fixed for the whole match, overtime included, as for line judges in volleyball. There is no halftime rotation (Rulebook 9.2.2).
- 6.1.4** An Officiator must never step onto the Grid while the ball is in play.

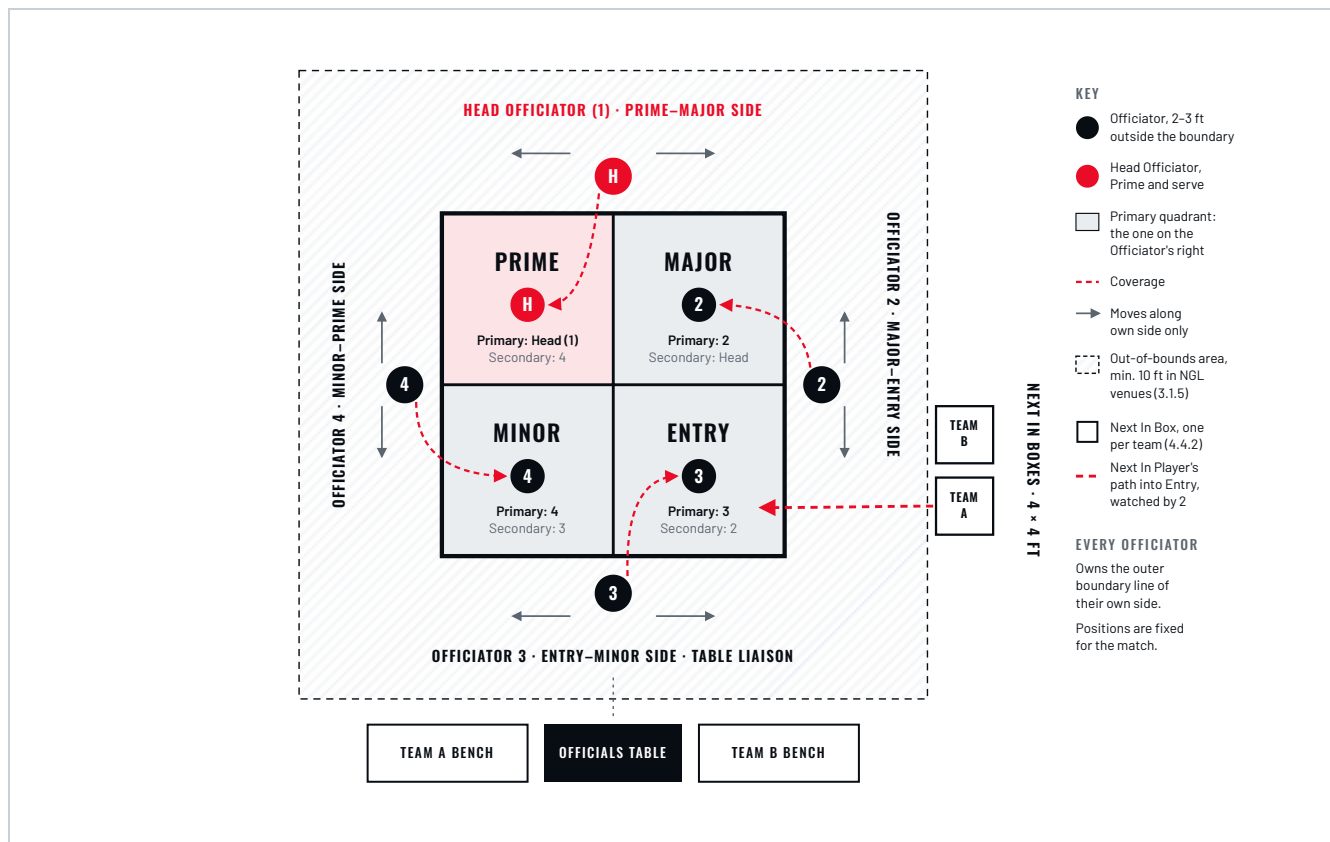


Figure 6.1 – Crew Positions and Coverage Each Officiator owns the outer boundary line of their side and a primary quadrant, the one on their right as they face the court. The table and benches follow Rulebook 12.5; the Next In Boxes, Rulebook 4.4.2.

6.2 Coverage: the Right-Hand Rule

6.2.1 Each Officiator owns the outer boundary line of their side and one primary quadrant: the quadrant on their right as they face the court, which is also the first quadrant in their side's name (Rulebook 9.2.1).

SIDE	OFFICIATOR	PRIMARY QUADRANT	SECONDARY FOR
Prime-Major	1, Head	Prime	Major
Major-Entry	2	Major	Entry
Entry-Minor	3, table liaison	Entry	Minor
Minor-Prime	4	Minor	Prime

6.2.2 Every quadrant has one primary and one secondary Officiator, the secondary being the other side that touches it. Each Officiator therefore watches the two quadrants on their side, as Rulebook 9.2.1 requires.

6.2.3 The primary Officiator owns, in their quadrant: the bounce, a double bounce, a Foot Fault and the legality of the return (Rulebook 6.2.1, 6.2.2, 8.1.1).

6.2.4 The secondary Officiator backs up. They whistle only when the primary is blocked or clearly missed the play, and they make eye contact with the primary first if time allows.

6.2.5 Because the Head Officiator's primary is Prime, the Head watches every serve from the side where it starts: the bounce in Prime, the underhand action and the serve's target (Rulebook 6.1.1, 9.2.1). Officiator 4 is secondary on the serve.

6.2.6 Officiator 3 is the table liaison, like the second referee in volleyball, with the Head Officiator in the first referee's place on the opposite side. From the Entry-Minor side, beside the Officials Table, Officiator 3 relays timeout and challenge requests to the Head Officiator, confirms each console entry with the operator by eye contact, checks the table's Next In read against the console before each serve (7.1.4), and runs the score check at every timeout and quarter end. The Head Officiator faces the table straight across the Grid and has the final word on every entry.

6.2.7 A ball landing near the outer boundary is called by the Officiator who owns that side's line. A ball on the outer boundary line is in (Rulebook 6.5.1).

6.2.8 Officiator 2, on the Major-Entry side, also watches the two Next In Boxes and each Next In Player's entry (Rulebook 9.2.1). Only the Next In Player may be in a box. The Next In Player must not touch a ball in play, interfere with play or an Officiator, or leave the box except to enter the Grid or to return to the bench when replaced (Rulebook 4.4.2). After an Elimination, Officiator 2 checks that the Next In Player walks from the box straight into Entry, outside the other quadrants and behind Officiator 2 (Rulebook 6.3.2). The eliminated player's exit is checked by the Officiator who made the call (7.4).

6.3 Conflicting Calls

6.3.1 When two Officiators disagree, the primary's call stands, unless the Head Officiator clearly saw otherwise and overrules. This follows the chair-umpire model in tennis.

6.3.2 Officiators resolve a conflict with a short conference at the Head Officiator's side of the Grid, out of the players' hearing. The Head announces the result by signal.

6.3.3 A challenge is a different process with its own procedure (Chapter 10).

SECTION 07

7 Calling the Game

7.1 Whistle Mechanics

7.1.1 Every Officiator carries a whistle. A whistle means one of two things: the Head Officiator authorizing a serve, or the owner of a call ending the rally.

7.1.2 The call sequence is the same for every call:

- 1 Whistle:** one sharp blast.
- 2** Signal the call (Chapter 9). Face the table.
- 3** Point to the awarded team, or name the player by color and number.
- 4** Say the call to the table, and wait for the table's read-back (7.1.3).
- 5** For a Grid Hold or Gridlock, the Head Officiator confirms the count award with the table.

7.1.3 The confirm-back. The Officiator calls, the table reads the call back, and nothing is entered until both agree. The table reads back starting with "Copy". Silence or a nod from the Officiator means yes; "Negative" means the call is said again. "Their point" means a point to the team opposing the player named; where it could be unclear, name the team by color.

SITUATION	OFFICIATOR SAYS	TABLE REPLIES
Elimination	"Elimination, Minor, their point."	"Copy, Minor, their point."
Line fault	"Line fault, Major, their point."	"Copy, line fault, Major, their point."
Out of bounds	"Out, Entry, their point."	"Copy, out, Entry, their point."
Foul	"Foot Fault, Prime, Blue 6."	"Copy, Foot Fault, Prime, Blue 6."
Timeout	"Timeout, Red."	"Copy, timeout, Red."
Count award	The table speaks first: "Gridlock, Red 1."	The Head Officiator: "Confirmed."
Ready for the serve		"Next In: Red 7, Blue 4. Table set."
A mismatch before the serve, or an empty Next In Box		"Table hold."
A question at a stoppage		"Table query."

- 7.1.4** The Head Officiator does not whistle the serve until the table has said "Table set". Before it does, the table reads both teams' Next In Players by the number of the player in each Next In Box and checks them against the console and the scorecard (Rulebook 4.4.2). If a box is empty or a number does not match, the table says "Table hold". From "Table set" until the round ends, the Next In designation is locked. Anyone who sees a mismatch before the serve says "Table hold"; the Head Officiator resolves it before the whistle. The table raises anything else at a stoppage with "Table query", never during a rally. If a team changes the player in its Next In Box after "Table set", the table says "Table hold"; the original Next In Player returns to the box, and the change waits until the round ends.

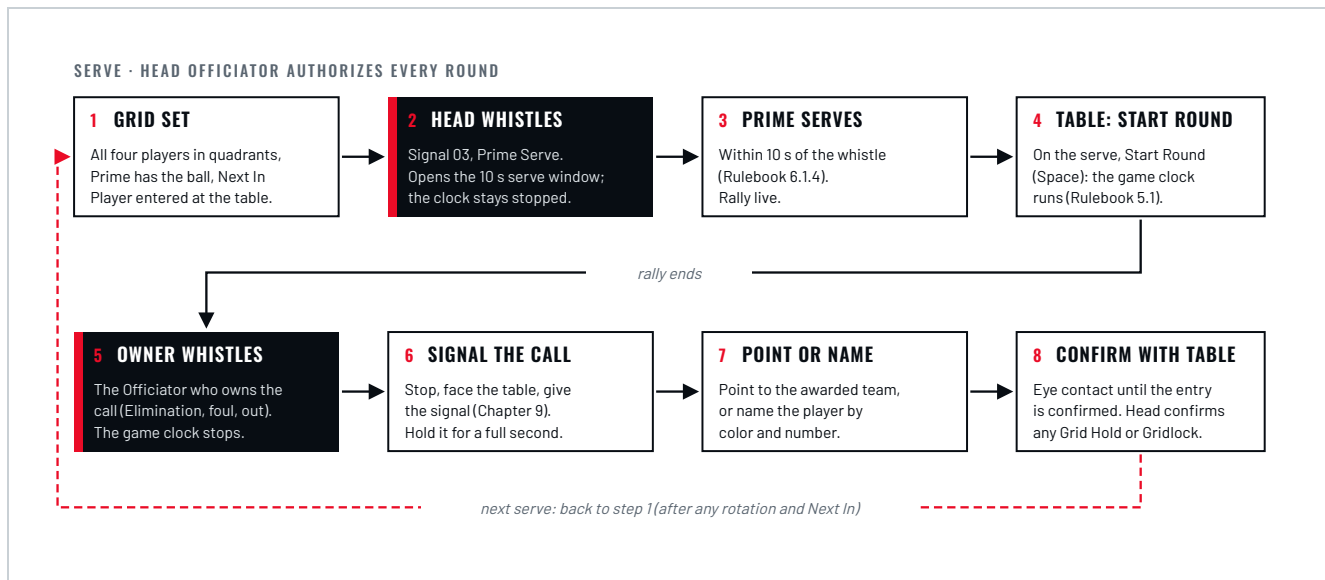


Figure 7.1 – Whistle and Call Sequence The Head Officiator's whistle authorizes every serve and the serve starts the clock; the owner's whistle ends every rally.

7.2 The Serve

- 7.2.1** The Head Officiator whistles to authorize each serve, and only when the Grid is set: all four players in their quadrants, each team's Next In Player staged in its Next In Box, and the table has read both Next In numbers and said "Table set" (7.1.4; Rulebook 4.4.2).
- 7.2.2** The Head Officiator gives Signal 03, Prime Serve, with the whistle. The whistle authorizes the serve and opens Prime's 10-second serve window; the game clock stays stopped. The game clock starts with the Prime serve (Rulebook 5.1): the operator presses Start Round when Prime strikes the ball.
- 7.2.3** Prime must serve within 10 seconds of the whistle (Rulebook 6.1.4). A delay is Time Wasting (Rulebook 8.1.2): warning first. This follows the 10-second serve rule in USA Pickleball.
- 7.2.4** The serve must be underhand, bounce once in Prime and travel to a quadrant held by an opponent, never a teammate (Rulebook 2.6.3, 6.1.1). Otherwise it is an Illegal Serve: Signal 08 (Rulebook 8.2.2).
- 7.2.5** Before whistling, the Head Officiator checks which quadrants the serving team holds. After a rotation the serving team may hold any quadrant, so the legal targets change from round to round.
- 7.2.6** Ball reset. Before every serve an Officiator puts the ball in the Prime player's hands (Rulebook 6.1.5):
- The Head Officiator resets at the start of each quarter and of overtime, and at every restart after a stoppage: a timeout, a challenge or review, an injury stoppage, a re-serve after a non-eliminating foul and a replay (Rulebook 6.5.3, 6.6.1).
 - After an Elimination, the Officiator who made the call resets once the call is complete: Signal 04 given and the table's "Copy" heard. Normally that is the primary of the eliminated quadrant (Prime: Officiator

1, the Head; Major: Officiator 2; Entry: Officiator 3; Minor: Officiator 4); if the secondary made the call, the secondary resets.

- If a timeout follows the Elimination, give the ball to the Head Officiator, who makes the restart after the timeout.
- If the ball has left the Grid, the Officiator on the side where it went out retrieves it and resets instead.
- Hand the ball to the Prime player or bounce-pass it from where you are. At a dead ball you may cross the Grid to fetch or return it; never while the ball is in play (6.1.4). Never lob it over players' heads.
- The Head Officiator whistles only once Prime has the ball and the table has said "Table set" (7.2.1).

7.3 Legal Returns

- 7.3.1** The primary Officiator for the receiving quadrant watches: one bounce in the quadrant, then a strike that lands in a different quadrant, made from inside the quadrant (Rulebook 6.2.1).
- 7.3.2** The ball must be struck, not caught, held, carried or thrown, with one or both open hands or the forearms, below the elbow (Rulebook 6.2.4). A catch, throw, carry or fist strike is not a legal return. Two hands, or both forearms, used together are one strike.
- 7.3.3** A return that lands in the striker's own quadrant, is struck before it bounces, or is allowed to bounce twice eliminates the player (Rulebook 6.2.1, 6.3.1).
- 7.3.4** A strike with any part of the body outside the quadrant is a Foot Fault (Rulebook 6.2.2, 8.1.1). Watch the feet at the moment of contact, not before or after.
- 7.3.5** Illegal Touch. After the bounce, the ball may touch the receiver only on the hands or forearms. A touch on the upper arm, shoulder, torso, head, legs or feet is an Illegal Touch: whistle, give Signal 04 at the player, and the player is eliminated (Rulebook 6.2.5, 6.3.1). Watch the elbow line on digs: a ball off the upper arm is an Illegal Touch.
- 7.3.6** Hinder. A ball that bounces and then strikes the receiver's head or face when they were not trying to play it is a Hinder: whistle, give Signal 18 (Replay), and the rally is replayed from a new Prime serve with no penalty (Rulebook 6.2.6). If the player was trying to play it (a header), it is an Illegal Touch instead. A player who keeps aiming at opponents' heads is reported to the Head for Unsportsmanlike Conduct (Rulebook 8.3.1).
- 7.3.7** Ball in flight. A return that touches any player before it lands eliminates the striker: Signal 04 at the striker (Rulebook 6.2.7). If the player touched moved into the path or reached for it, they played it before the bounce: Signal 04 at that player. Ask one question: did they go for it? This includes a ball to the head in flight: that is not a Hinder. A serve that touches a player is an Illegal Serve (Rulebook 8.2.2).

7.4 Elimination, Rotation and Next In

SITUATION	ACTION
A player fails to make a legal return.	Owner whistles, gives Signal 04 Elimination, points at the eliminated player and winds the forearms. Clock stops.
The operator enters the Elimination.	Operator presses the quadrant key (1 Prime, 2 Major, 3 Minor, 4 Entry) and records who forced it. The spotter confirms the credit.
Players rotate.	All four Officiators check that only the players below the vacancy advance one quadrant, whichever team they are on; players above stay (Rulebook 2.4.1, 6.4.1).
The eliminated player leaves.	The owner checks that the player exits across the nearest Outer Boundary line of their quadrant, without crossing another quadrant, and returns to the team bench (Rulebook 6.3.2).
The ball is reset.	Once the table has said "Copy", the Officiator who made the call retrieves the ball and hands or bounce-passes it to the Prime player, crossing the Grid if needed (the ball is dead). If the ball left the Grid, the Officiator on that side resets it instead (7.2.6; Rulebook 6.1.5).
The Next In Player enters.	Officiator 2 (who watches the boxes) checks that the eliminated team's Next In Player walks from its Next In Box straight into Entry, outside the other quadrants and behind Officiator 2, and takes position as the rotation completes (Rulebook 4.4.2, 6.3.2).
The box is refilled.	The Head Coach sends the next Next In Player to the empty box. It must be filled before the table can say "Table set". The coach may also send a different player to either box at any dead ball before "Table set"; the player leaving returns to the bench (Rulebook 4.4.2).
A Next In Box is empty when the table is ready, or the Next In Player is slow to enter.	Time Wasting (Rulebook 4.3.2, 6.4.2, 8.1.2). Warning first.
The Grid is set.	The table reads both Next In numbers and says "Table set"; the Head Officiator then whistles the next serve.

7.4.2 Officiators must confirm the new Grid against the console before the next serve. Any rotation error must be corrected before the whistle. Scoring errors may be corrected until sign-off (Rulebook 9.1.3).

7.4.3 Only one Elimination happens in a round, because the Elimination ends the round (Rulebook 7.2.1).

7.5 Counts: Grid Hold and Gridlock

7.5.1 The table keeps the counts (Rulebook 7.2.2, 7.2.3). Officiators do not keep their own tally but should watch the console's count display.

7.5.2 A count belongs to the player. It advances at each round end with that player still in Major (Grid Hold) or Prime (Gridlock), and resets when that player is eliminated or leaves the quadrant. All counts reset at the

start of each quarter and carry into overtime.

7.5.3 On a fourth count the operator flags the award aloud (7.1.3). The Head Officiator confirms it with the operator, then gives Signal 05, Grid Hold, or Signal 06, Gridlock. The Head Officiator must not signal an award the table has not confirmed.

7.5.4 A Gridlock, Grid Hold and Elimination may all be awarded on the same Elimination, to one team or to both: every count that reaches four at that round-end is awarded, whichever team holds it (Rulebook 7.2.2, 7.2.3). Signal the Elimination first, then the awards.

7.6 Line Balls

7.6.1 A ball touching the outer boundary line is in. A serve or return that lands on a quadrant line is a line fault: the player who struck it is eliminated, with standard rotation and 1 point to the opponents (Rulebook 6.5.1). Give Signal 04, Elimination, pointing at that player.

7.6.2 The Officiator owning the line gives Signal 17, Ball In, for a close ball that is in, and Signal 07, Out of Bounds, for a ball that lands outside.

7.6.3 A ball returned out of bounds is an Elimination of the player who struck it (Rulebook 6.5.2). Give Signal 07, then Signal 04 pointing at that player.

7.7 Interference and Replay

7.7.1 A rally interrupted by an outside object, person or fixture is replayed from a new Prime serve with no penalty (Rulebook 6.5.3).

7.7.2 The Officiator who sees it whistles at once and gives Signal 18, Replay. The round continues; no counts change.

7.7.3 Interference by a player against an opponent is not a replay. It is Deliberate Interference (Rulebook 8.3.2; Chapter 8).

7.7.4 Players may talk to their own partner at any time, including decoy calls. Words aimed at an opponent while the ball is in play, a line or out call on a ball traveling toward the opponents, and imitating an Officiator's whistle or call are Deliberate Interference (Rulebook 8.3.2). Line and out calls belong to the receiving side and the Officiators only.

7.8 Restarts

7.8.1 A foul that does not eliminate a player does not end the round. After the penalty is applied, the ball is re-served from Prime and no counts change (Rulebook 6.6.1, 7.3).

7.8.2 The Head Officiator whistles each re-serve exactly as a new serve.

7.9 The Game Clock

7.9.1 The clock runs only while a round is in play. It starts with the Prime serve and stops at every Elimination, timeout, challenge and official stoppage (Rulebook 5.1).

7.9.2 If time expires during a rally, the rally is played out. An Elimination and any award it completes count. No new round begins (Rulebook 5.1.1).

7.9.3 When the rally has ended at 0:00, the Head Officiator gives Signal 02, End of Quarter.

7.10 Timeouts

- 7.10.1** Each team has 7 timeouts of 75 seconds per match. A timeout may be called only between rounds: after an Elimination and before the next Prime serve. At most 2 may be used in any quarter and at most 2 in overtime (Rulebook 5.3).
- 7.10.2** The Head Officiator grants the timeout with Signal 09 and points to the team. The operator records it (Q for Team A, W for Team B).
- 7.10.3** At every timeout Officiator 3 runs the score check with the table and the Head Officiator confirms it (11.4.1).
- 7.10.4** A request during a rally is refused. A request beyond the quarter limit is refused and the Head Officiator tells the coach why.

7.11 Quarters and Breaks

- 7.11.1** Quarters are 16 minutes, with 2-minute breaks and a 12-minute halftime (Rulebook 5.1).
- 7.11.2** At the end of each quarter Officiator 3 runs the score check with the table and the Head Officiator confirms it (11.4.1). Counts reset at the start of each quarter (see 7.5).
- 7.11.3** Quarters 2 and 4 start from the Grid as the previous quarter ended. Quarters 1 and 3 start with the Grid Advantage team in Prime and Major (Rulebook 2.5.2).

7.12 Overtime

- 7.12.1** If the score is tied after the fourth quarter, overtime is played as a continuation of the fourth quarter, sudden death (Rulebook 5.2).
- 7.12.2** The Grid stays exactly as the fourth quarter ended. There is no reset and no new lineup. Grid Hold, Gridlock and foul counts carry over. The player in Prime serves (Rulebook 5.2.1, 6.1.3).
- 7.12.3** Overtime has no time limit. The match ends the moment one team leads by 2 points in total score. When several awards complete on the same round-end, for one team or both, add them all before checking the lead (Rulebook 5.2). Each team may use at most 2 timeouts in overtime; challenges do not reset (Rulebook 5.3, 9.3.1).
- 7.12.4** The Head Officiator gives Signal 01 to start overtime and Signal 02 when it ends.

SECTION 08

8 Fouls in Practice

8.1 Calling a Foul

- 8.1.1** The penalties are set out in Rulebook 8. Points listed are the total for the offense. A team's score cannot fall below zero.
- 8.1.2** Offense counts are kept per player, per foul type, for the whole match, overtime included (Rulebook 8). The table keeps them; Officiators do not.

8.1.3 To call a foul: whistle, give the foul signal, name the player by color and number, and confirm with the table. The operator opens the foul modal for that player (A for Team A, S for Team B), and the console shows which step of the ladder applies.

8.2 **The Warning Ladder**

8.2.1 Several fouls start with a warning. Use Signal 15, Warning: point at the player, then raise a palm.

FOUL	RULEBOOK	1ST	2ND	3RD
Foot Fault	8.1.1	Warning	Team loses 1	Eliminated; opponents +1
Time Wasting	8.1.2	Warning	Opponents +1	Eliminated; opponents +2 and possession
Double Touch	8.2.1	Opponents +1	Eliminated; opponents +2	—
Illegal Serve	8.2.2	Warning	Opponents +1	Eliminated; opponents +2
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	8.3.1	Team loses 1	Ejection	—
Deliberate Interference	8.3.2	Opponents +2	Eliminated; opponents +2 and possession	Ejection
Uniform Violation	8.4.1	Warning; correct now	Team loses 1	Eliminated, no points; out until corrected
Equipment Malfunction	8.4.2	Stoppage up to 75 s, not charged	Opponents +1	—

8.2.2 The table tracks each player's step. Before calling, the Officiator should glance at the table; the spotter (the operator, when there is no spotter) calls out the step if it is a second or third offense: "Blue 6, second Foot Fault."

8.3 **Naming the Player**

8.3.1 Name the offending player for every foul whenever possible.

8.3.2 A foul charged with no player named counts against the team. When a team count reaches a step that eliminates or ejects, the Head Officiator must name the player (Rulebook 8).

8.3.3 If the calling Officiator could not identify the player, they confer with the secondary Officiator before the Head names one.

8.4 Possession Procedure

8.4.1 Time Wasting (third offense) and Deliberate Interference (second offense) award the opponents points and possession (Rulebook 8.1.2, 8.3.2).

8.4.2 Steps:

- 1 Apply the Elimination and standard rotation; the Next In Player enters at Entry (Rulebook 8).
- 2 The Head Officiator gives Signal 19, Possession, pointing at the awarded team, then toward Prime.
- 3 The awarded team's player highest on the Z-path moves into Prime and exchanges quadrants with the player there.
- 4 The operator confirms the move in the console. Both moved players' Grid Hold and Gridlock counts reset.
- 5 The Head Officiator whistles the serve.

8.4.3 If the awarded team already holds Prime after rotation, no exchange is needed. Give Signal 19 and continue.

8.5 Ejection Procedure

8.5.1 Only the Head Officiator ejects (Rulebook 8.5.1). An Officiator who sees conduct that may warrant ejection whistles and calls the Head over.

8.5.2 Steps:

- 1 Whistle; stop play.
- 2 Give the foul signal, then Signal 16, Ejection, pointing at the player and sweeping the arm away from the court.
- 3 If the player is on the Grid, they are removed as an Elimination with standard rotation; the Next In Player enters. No points are awarded for the ejection itself (Rulebook 8.5.1).
- 4 The player leaves the Grid at once and is ineligible for the rest of the match (Rulebook 8.5.1).
- 5 The operator records the ejection. The Head Officiator notes time, quarter and score.
- 6 After the match, the Head Officiator files the incident report (Appendix 15.4).

8.5.3 A team reduced to fewer than 2 eligible players forfeits at once (Rulebook 8.5.2).

8.5.4 Every ejection must be reported to the Commissioner within 24 hours on the incident report form (Rulebook 8.5.1).

8.6 Bench Conduct

8.6.1 Unsportsmanlike Conduct includes verbal abuse directed at officials (Rulebook 8.3.1). Bench conduct that cannot be charged to a named player counts against the team (Rulebook 8).

8.6.2 The Head Officiator should speak to the Head Coach once at the next stoppage before calling a first bench offense, unless the conduct is abusive.

8.6.3 Only the Head Coach may signal a challenge (Rulebook 12.4). Other bench requests are directed to the captain or the Head Coach.

SECTION 09

9 Officiator Signals

9.1 Using the Signals

9.1.1 The 19 signals below are the official NGL signals. All four Officiators must use them, and only them, in every sanctioned match (Rulebook 12.3).

9.1.2 Signal standards:

- Stop moving before signaling. A signal on the move is hard to read.
- Face the table. The operator must see every signal.
- Hold each part for about one second. Two-part signals are given in order, with a clear break.
- Point with the whole arm, fingers together, not with a finger at chest height.
- Give the whistle first, then the signal, then point or name (see [7.1](#)).

9.1.3 Signals 07, 08 and 09 were redesigned and 15–19 added for 2026 so that no two signals look alike (Rulebook 12.3). Each entry below gives the signal, how to give it and when.

**SIGNAL 01****Start of Quarter****HOW**

Whistle; one arm straight up, index finger extended.

WHEN

Start of each quarter and of overtime.

Rulebook 5.1, 5.2

1**2****SIGNAL 02****End of Quarter****HOW**

Arms crossed overhead in an X, then lowered to the sides.

WHEN

The clock reaches 0:00, after any live rally ends.

Rulebook 5.1.1

**SIGNAL 03****Prime Serve****HOW**

Whistle; arm extended toward Prime, pointing at the court.

WHEN

Authorizes each serve, once the Grid is set.

Rulebook 6.1.1

1



2

**SIGNAL 04****Elimination****HOW**

Point at the eliminated player, then wind the forearms around each other (rotation).

WHEN

Every Elimination.

Rulebook 6.3

**SIGNAL 05****Grid Hold****HOW**

Thumbs and index fingers form a diamond above the head.

WHEN

A player's fourth count in Major, confirmed with the table.

Rulebook 7.2.2

1



2

**SIGNAL 06****Gridlock****HOW**

Arm at a right angle (an L), then fists pressed together (the lock).

WHEN

A player's fourth count in Prime, confirmed with the table.

Rulebook 7.2.3

**SIGNAL 07****Out of Bounds****HOW**

Both forearms raised vertically in front of the shoulders.

WHEN

The ball lands outside the outer boundary.

Rulebook 6.5.1, 6.5.2

**SIGNAL 08****Illegal Serve****HOW**

Arm extended forward at waist height, palm down (the serve must bounce in Prime).

WHEN

Serve does not bounce in Prime, does not reach an opponent's quadrant, or is overhand.

Rulebook 8.2.2

**SIGNAL 09****Timeout****HOW**

Hands form a T, then point to the team.

WHEN

A timeout granted between rounds.

Rulebook 5.3

**SIGNAL 10****Challenge****HOW**

Fist raised to shoulder height, repeating the coach's signal, then point to that team's bench.

WHEN

Acknowledging a Head Coach's challenge.

Rulebook 9.3.1

**SIGNAL 11****Unsportsmanlike Conduct****HOW**

Grasp the wrist at chest level with the opposite hand.

WHEN

Unsportsmanlike Conduct.

Rulebook 8.3.1

**SIGNAL 12****Deliberate Interference****HOW**

Arms crossed at the chest, then spread wide at hip height.

WHEN

Deliberate Interference.

Rulebook 8.3.2

SIGNAL 13**Foot Fault****HOW**

Bend and point at your own foot.

WHEN

A strike made with any part of the body outside the quadrant.

Rulebook 8.1.1

**1****2****SIGNAL 14****Double Touch****HOW**

Palms apart, then clap together; give it twice.

WHEN

Two consecutive strikes by one player.

Rulebook 8.2.1

1**2****SIGNAL 15****Warning****HOW**

Point at the player, then raise a palm toward them (stop).

WHEN

First-offense warnings.

Rulebook 8.1.1, 8.1.2, 8.2.2, 8.4.1

1



2

**SIGNAL 16****Ejection****HOW**

Point at the player, then sweep the arm away from the court.

WHEN

Ejections, by the Head Officiator only.

Rulebook 8.5.1

SIGNAL 17**Ball In****HOW**

Point down at the floor inside the line.

WHEN

Line balls: a ball on the outer boundary line is in.

Rulebook 6.5.1

**SIGNAL 18****Replay****HOW**

Both thumbs up at shoulder height.

WHEN

Outside interference or a Hinder; the rally is replayed.

Rulebook 6.2.6, 6.5.3



1



2

**SIGNAL 19****Possession****HOW**

Point at the awarded team, then point toward Prime.

WHEN

Any "gains possession" award.

Rulebook 8; Handbook 8.4

SECTION 10

10 Challenges and Replay Review**10.1****The Challenge Rule****10.1.1**

Each team has 2 challenges per half. A challenge may dispute an Elimination, a scoring event or a foul. Only the Head Coach may challenge, by raising a clenched fist within 15 seconds of the play. A team with no timeouts left may not challenge. Challenges do not reset for overtime (Rulebook 9.3.1, 12.4).

10.1.2

If the call is overturned, the team keeps the challenge and loses no timeout. If the call stands, the team loses the challenge and one timeout from its 7 match timeouts; that timeout does not count toward the 2-per-quarter limit (Rulebook 9.3.1).

10.2**Procedure****10.2.1**

Steps:

- 1** The nearest Officiator sees the coach's fist and whistles. Clock stops.
- 2** The Head Officiator gives Signal 10, repeating the fist, then pointing to that team's bench.
- 3** The Head Officiator checks the challenge is valid (within 15 seconds; a challenge left for the half; at least one timeout left).
- 4** The operator records the challenge (C for Team A, V for Team B).
- 5** The play is reviewed by replay or by the crew panel (10.3).
- 6** The Head Officiator announces the ruling by signal and, if needed, a short statement to both captains.
- 7** The operator enters the ruling. O, overturned, keeps the challenge, and the console offers to reverse the last call. K, stands, costs the challenge and one match timeout.
- 8** Any correction to the Grid or score is confirmed with the table before the next serve.

10.2.2

An invalid challenge is refused at step 3 and nothing is charged. The Head Officiator tells the coach why.

10.3 Replay Review and Crew Panel

- 10.3.1 In venues with replay technology, the Head Officiator reviews the footage and announces a decision within 60 seconds (Rulebook 9.3.2).
- 10.3.2 In venues without replay, all four Officiators confer at the Head Officiator's side. Each states only what they saw. The decision is by majority; the Head Officiator breaks a tie (Rulebook 9.3.2).
- 10.3.3 A call should be changed only on clear evidence. If the evidence is not clear, the call stands.
- 10.3.4 The reviewed decision is final. No further dispute is permitted (Rulebook 9.3.2, 12.4).

SECTION 11

11 The Scorer's Table and Console Protocol

11.1 Table Crew

LEVEL	TABLE CREW
Minimum	Console operator (scorekeeper)
Recommended	Console operator and spotter
League	Scorekeeper, timekeeper and statistician

- 11.1.1 The spotter confirms credits (who forced each Elimination, assists) and keeps the Official Match Scorecard, the table's paper record (Appendix 15.3).
- 11.1.2 The table is the official record. Officiators make the calls; the table records them and tracks counts, fouls, timeouts and challenges.

11.2 Setup Wizard

- 11.2.1 The Head Officiator and operator complete the console's eight setup steps together before the match:
 - 1 **Match:** competition, venue, date.
 - 2 **Officials:** four Officiators, the Head Officiator, and the scorekeeper if any.
 - 3 **Teams and rosters:** captain named; rosters confirmed and locked.
 - 4 Colors.
 - 5 **Coin toss:** winner picks the half in which to hold Grid Advantage; the Head Officiator confirms.
 - 6 Starting Grid.
 - 7 **Systems check:** arena display, crash recovery, sync, clock and horn tested.
 - 8 Review and Head Officiator sign-off, then Start.

11.3

Console Keys

KEY	ACTION	CUE
Space	Start Round (clock runs); pressed again, pauses the clock	Prime's serve, after the serve whistle; any stopping whistle that is not an Elimination
1 / 2 / 3 / 4	Eliminate Prime / Major / Minor / Entry (clock stops)	Owner's whistle and Signal 04
F / G, then D	Credit the Elimination to a player; D records an assist	Spotter's confirmation
A / S	Foul on Team A / Team B (foul modal: player and foul type)	Foul signal and player named
Q / W	Timeout Team A / Team B	Signal 09
C / V	Challenge Team A / Team B	Signal 10
O / K	Challenge ruling: overturned / stands	Head Officiator's ruling
Z	Undo the last action	Head Officiator's correction
N	Next quarter	Signal 02 and score check

11.3.1 The operator must not enter a call before the Officiator's signal and the accepted read-back (7.1.3), and must not change an entry without the Head Officiator.

11.3.2 Practice mode is for rehearsal only. The operator must confirm it is off before the first serve.

11.4

Score Checks and Corrections

11.4.1 At every timeout and at the end of each quarter, Officiator 3 runs the score check at the table: the operator reads the console score, the spotter reads the scorecard against it. The Head Officiator then says "Confirmed." Play does not restart until they have.

11.4.2 Corrections may be made until the Head Officiator's sign-off (Rulebook 9.1.3). The Head Officiator approves each correction; the operator uses Undo or the correction tools and notes it in the end-of-match notes.

11.4.3 Statistical credits (assists, Defensive Plays) are a Head Officiator decision (Rulebook 10.1.2). Clutch Plays are credited automatically (Rulebook 10.1.2).

11.5

Console or Display Failure

SITUATION	ACTION
Console fails or freezes.	Head Officiator stops play at the end of the rally. Continue on the paper backup and the backup stopwatch.
Console restarts.	Crash recovery resumes the match paused. Reconcile it with the paper backup at the next stoppage, then resume.
Arena display fails or shows a sync warning.	The sync badge is shown to the operator only. Continue; the console is the record. Announce the score at stoppages if the display stays down.
Clock or horn fails.	Head Officiator keeps time on the backup stopwatch and signals the end of the quarter.

SECTION 12

12 Game Management and Safety

12.1

Injury

- 12.1.1 Player safety comes before the game (Rulebook 12.6). The Head Officiator stops play for any injury and calls the team's medical staff, who may remove a player for evaluation at any time (Rulebook 4.5.4).
- 12.1.2 If the player cannot continue within 75 seconds, the Next In Player walks from the team's Next In Box and replaces them in the same quadrant: no rotation, no points, and that quadrant's Grid Hold or Gridlock count resets. The injured player may return later as a Next In Player once cleared by the team's medical staff (Rulebook 12.6).
- 12.1.3 Each team has one injury stoppage per quarter that is not charged; further injury stoppages in the quarter are charged as a timeout (Rulebook 12.6).
- 12.1.4 A player suspected of a concussion must be removed at once and may not return that day (Rulebook 12.6).
- 12.1.5 For a serious injury, the Head Officiator may suspend the match. Resumption, rescheduling or forfeit is the Commissioner's decision (Rulebook 12.6).

12.2

Stoppages

- 12.2.1 An official stoppage stops the clock and does not end the round. Play resumes with a new Prime serve (Rulebook 5.1, 7.3).
- 12.2.2 Common stoppages:

SITUATION	ACTION
Ball damaged or deflated in play.	Replace it with the inspected spare (Rulebook 3.2.2).
Broken shoe or other player equipment.	Equipment stoppage up to 75 s, not charged (Rulebook 8.4.2).

Object or person on the court.	Signal 18, Replay, if a rally was interrupted (Rulebook 6.5.3). Clear the court.
Wet patch on the surface.	Stop play; have it dried. Resume when the Head Officiator is satisfied.

12.3 Outdoor Play and Weather

- 12.3.1 NGL courts are hardwood (Rulebook 3.1.3). Where a match is played outdoors, the Head Officiator must stop play if the surface becomes wet or uneven, or the light no longer lets Officiators see the lines.
- 12.3.2 At any sign of lightning, players and crew should leave the court and follow the venue's severe-weather plan. Resumption or rescheduling is decided as for an emergency suspension (Rulebook 12.6).

12.4 Crowd and Venue

- 12.4.1 Spectators and media must stay outside the Officiator observation area (Rulebook 3.1.6, 12.5).
- 12.4.2 The Head Officiator should ask the venue's event manager, not the crowd, to deal with abusive spectators, objects thrown, or intrusions. Play stops until it is safe.
- 12.4.3 Officiators must not respond to the crowd.

12.5 De-escalation

- 12.5.1 Officiators should step in early and calmly:
 - **Create space:** step toward the players with a raised open hand, not between them.
 - **Speak to the captain, not the group:** one sentence, low voice.
 - **Use the stoppage:** a whistle and a pause often ends it.
 - **Stay neutral:** never touch a player except to prevent injury.
 - **Escalate by the rules:** warning, then foul, then ejection by the Head Officiator.
- 12.5.2 After an incident, the Officiators who saw it each note what happened at the next break, for the incident report.

SECTION 13

13 After the Match

13.1 Sign-Off

- 13.1.1 When the match ends, the Head Officiator gives Signal 02 and goes straight to the table.
- 13.1.2 The Head Officiator, operator and spotter reconcile the console with the paper backup: final score, Eliminations, Grid Holds and Gridlocks, fouls, timeouts and challenges.
- 13.1.3 The Head Officiator approves any final corrections (Rulebook 9.1.3), enters end-of-match notes, and signs off in the console. Sign-off closes the Officiators' jurisdiction.
- 13.1.4 The crew leaves the court together and does not discuss calls with teams or spectators.

13.2

Reports

- 13.2.1
- The Head Officiator files an incident report (Appendix 15.4) for every ejection, serious injury, suspension, forfeit or crowd incident.
- 13.2.2
- Ejection reports must reach the Commissioner within 24 hours (Rulebook 8.5.1).
- 13.2.3
- Forfeits are recorded on the match record. A forfeit counts as a win for the opponent and a loss for the forfeiting team, and does not affect point differential (Rulebook 8.5.2).

13.3

Protests

- 13.3.1
- A protest must meet all of these conditions (Rulebook 9.3.3):

1

The captain notifies the Head Officiator before sign-off. The Head Officiator records it in the end-of-match notes.

2

The team submits a written protest to the league within 24 hours.

3

It concerns the misapplication of a rule, never a judgment call.
- 13.3.2
- The Commissioner decides protests, and the decision is final (Rulebook 9.3.3). Disputes about statistics follow Rulebook 10.7 (within 48 hours).

13.4

Debrief

- 13.4.1
- The crew should debrief briefly after sign-off, led by the Head Officiator: what went well, any missed or conflicting calls, positioning, and table communication.
- 13.4.2
- Where an evaluator observed the match, the crew evaluation form (Appendix 15.5) is completed and shared with each Officiator.

SECTION 14

14 Certification and Training

14.1

Levels

- 14.1.1
- NGL Officiators are certified at three levels (Rulebook 9.1.4):

LEVEL	REQUIREMENT	MAY OFFICIATE
1 · Community	Online rules test and clinic	Casual and exhibition matches
2 · Certified	In-person clinic; observed matches with a mechanics evaluation	League matches; required to be Head Officiator
3 · Championship	Evaluated at Level 2 across a season	Playoffs and the NGL Championship Cup

- 14.1.2
- Every Officiator must pass a rules test each season to keep their level (Rulebook 9.1.4).

14.2**Evaluation****14.2.1**

Mechanics evaluations use the crew evaluation form (Appendix 15.5): positioning, coverage, whistle and signals, communication, table protocol and game management.

14.2.2

An evaluator should observe a full match from the Officials Table side and give feedback after the debrief.

14.3**Training****14.3.1**

Officiators should practice the 19 signals in front of a mirror or on video until each is given cleanly without thinking.

14.3.2

Crews should rehearse the console workflow in Practice mode with an operator before their first match together.

14.3.3

Officiators must read each new Rulebook edition and this Handbook before the season.

SECTION 15

15 Appendices

The forms in this section may be printed and copied for NGL matches.

15.1 Pre-Match Checklist

MATCH	DATE	VENUE	HEAD OFFICIATOR
-60 CREW ARRIVES		-45 COURT AND BALL	
☐ All four Officiators present and in uniform (Handbook 4.1)		☐ Grid 24 × 24 ft; quadrants 12 × 12 ft (3.1.1)	
☐ Head Officiator confirmed; sides assigned		☐ Lines, service lines, center circle, labels (3.1.4)	
1 HEAD, PRIME-MAJOR	2 MAJOR-ENTRY	☐ Runoff at least 5 ft; 10 ft in NGL venues (3.1.5)	
3 ENTRY-MINOR	4 MINOR-PRIME	☐ Surface dry, even; contrasts with ball and lines (3.1.3)	
☐ Whistles; toss coin; backup stopwatch		☐ Benches and table outside observation area (12.5)	
☐ Alternate uniform needed? (kit similar to charcoal)		☐ Next In Boxes: 4 × 4 ft, level with Entry, clear (4.4.2)	
		☐ Match ball and spare: 8.5 in, ~10 oz, bounce ~65% from 6 ft (3.2)	
-30 ROSTERS AND UNIFORMS		-15 CAPTAINS AND TOSS	
☐ Rosters: 14 players, 7 + 7, entered and locked (4.1.1)		☐ Joint ball inspection with both captains (3.2.2)	
☐ Numbers 0-99, unique, front and back (3.3.4)		☐ Captain's role and challenge signal explained	
☐ Kits, NGL sleeve patch, no gloves (3.3)		TOSS WON BY	GRID ADVANTAGE 1ST HALF
☐ Kit clash resolved: away team changes (3.3.4)			
CAPTAIN A	CAPTAIN B	☐ Toss result confirmed in console	
		☐ Grid Advantage Starters received (4.2.2)	
-10 SYSTEMS CHECK		-5 CREW BRIEFING	
☐ Console setup steps 1-7 complete		☐ Sides and primary quadrants (Handbook 6.2)	
☐ Arena display · crash recovery · sync		☐ Court defects and how to rule them	
☐ Clock and horn tested		☐ Team history; players on warning	
☐ Each whistle heard at the table		☐ Medical staff and injury plan	
☐ Practice mode off		☐ Replay available? Yes ☐ No ☐	
☐ Backup scoresheet ready; spotter briefed		☐ Review and sign-off (step 8); Signal 01	
NOTES			
HEAD OFFICIATOR SIGNATURE		TIME	

15.2 Signals Quick Card

 01 START OF QUARTER	 02 END OF QUARTER	 03 PRIME SERVE	 04 ELIMINATION	 05 GRID HOLD
 06 GRIDLOCK	 07 OUT OF BOUNDS	 08 ILLEGAL SERVE	 09 TIMEOUT	 10 CHALLENGE
 11 UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT	 12 DELIBERATE INTERFERENCE	 13 FOOT FAULT	 14 DOUBLE TOUCH	 15 WARNING
 16 EJECTION	 17 BALL IN	 18 REPLAY	 19 POSSESSION	

15.3 Official Match Scorecard

The NGL Official Match Scorecard (SC-1) is the table's paper record of the match, printed separately and available at nlggridball.com/rules with a worked example and a round log continuation sheet. It replaces the one-page backup scoresheet of earlier revisions.

- **Page 1, the match record:** officials by side, the coin toss, the Grid Advantage Starters for each half, and both rosters with each player's Eliminations, assists, Defensive Plays, Grid Holds, Gridlocks and fouls.
- **Page 2:** the running score, the score by quarter with the Head Officiator's initials at every quarter end (11.4), timeouts, challenges, injury stoppages, each player's fouls by step of the ladder (8.2), notes, the result and the Head Officiator's signature (13.1).
- **The round log:** one line per round with the Grid at the serve, both Next In Players, the Elimination and who forced it, the Prime and Major counts, any award and the score. Rounds are numbered through the whole match; a quarter takes as many lines as it needs, and further log sheets are added as they fill.

With the console running, the spotter keeps pages 1 and 2 and logs each Elimination and its credit. If the console fails (11.5), the spotter keeps every column of the round log from the next serve, so the match continues on paper and is entered in the console afterward. The Scorer's Table Handbook sets out the method in full.

15.4 Incident and Ejection Report

MATCH	DATE	VENUE	HEAD OFFICIAL								
TYPE OF INCIDENT ☐ Ejection ☐ Serious injury ☐ Match suspended ☐ Forfeit ☐ Crowd or venue ☐ Other											
WHEN <table border="1"> <tr> <td>QUARTER / OT</td> <td>CLOCK</td> <td>SCORE A</td> <td>SCORE B</td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </table>				QUARTER / OT	CLOCK	SCORE A	SCORE B				
QUARTER / OT	CLOCK	SCORE A	SCORE B								
PERSON INVOLVED <table border="1"> <tr> <td>NAME</td> <td>TEAM</td> <td>NUMBER</td> <td>ROLE (PLAYER, COACH, OTHER)</td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </table>				NAME	TEAM	NUMBER	ROLE (PLAYER, COACH, OTHER)				
NAME	TEAM	NUMBER	ROLE (PLAYER, COACH, OTHER)								
OFFENSE AND RULEBOOK RULE	OFFENSE COUNT (1ST, 2ND, 3RD)		SIGNALS GIVEN								

WHAT HAPPENED (FACTS ONLY: WHAT WAS SEEN AND HEARD, BY WHOM)

[illegible]**ACTION TAKEN (PENALTY, ROTATION, NEXT IN, MEDICAL, VENUE)**

OFFICIATORS WHO SAW IT

NAME AND SIDE	NAME AND SIDE
NAME AND SIDE	NAME AND SIDE

SUBMISSION

Every ejection is reported to the Commissioner within 24 hours (Rulebook 8.5.1; Handbook 8.5.4). Attach the match record and any statements.

SENT TO COMMISSIONER (DATE, TIME)	HEAD OFFICIATOR SIGNATURE	DATE
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15.5 Crew Evaluation

MATCHDATEVENUE

OFFICIATOR EVALUATEDSIDE (OR HEAD OFFICIATOR)CURRENT LEVEL

Rate each area: 1 well below standard · 2 below · 3 meets the standard · 4 above · 5 exemplary. Numbers in brackets are Handbook references.

AREA	1	2	3	4	5	COMMENTS
Positioning Set at the side midpoint, 2–3 ft out; moves along own side only (6.1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Coverage Primary and secondary calls; owns own boundary line (6.2)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Whistle Timing; Head: serve authorized only when the Grid is set (7.1, 7.2)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Signals Correct signal; stopped, facing the table, held; two parts distinct (9.1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Call sequence Whistle, signal, point or name, confirm with the table (7.1.2)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Rules application Correct ruling and penalty step; restarts; counts (7, 8)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Table protocol Score checks; corrections approved; console cues (11)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Game management Conduct, de-escalation, stoppages, injury (12)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Crew work Conflicts and panel decisions handled cleanly (6.3, 10.3)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Appearance Uniform and equipment; fitness through the match (4, 3.5)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	

OVERALL

☐ Meets the standard for current level

☐ Development needed

☐ Recommended for Level ____

STRENGTHS

DEVELOPMENT POINTS

EVALUATOROFFICIATORDATE DISCUSSED

15.6 Policies Ratified for 2026

The following league policies were ratified with Rulebook Version 3.1 (October 2026); the right-hand coverage rule and the ball reset were ratified with Version 3.4. They apply to every NGL-sanctioned match.

POLICY	HANDBOOK	RULEBOOK
Coverage: the right-hand rule	6.2	9.2.1
Ball reset	7.2.6	6.1.5
Fixed positions, no halftime rotation	6.1.3	9.2.2
Officials Table and benches below Minor and Entry	6.1.2	12.5
Pre-match timeline	5.1.1	—
Officiator uniform and light alternate	4.1	3.4
Serve clock: 10 seconds	7.2.3	6.1.4
Injury replacement in the same quadrant	12.1.2	12.6
Injury stoppages: one uncharged per quarter	12.1.3	12.6
Signal wording	Chapter 9	12.3
Ejection reports within 24 hours	8.5.4, 13.2.2	8.5.1
Forfeits: no effect on point differential	13.2.3	8.5.2
Protests	13.3	9.3.3
Certification levels and seasonal rules test	14.1	9.1.4

OPEN QUESTION

- **Sleeve side markers (4.1.5):** small sleeve patches showing each Officiator's side. Not adopted; decide whether to add them to the uniform.

15.7 Revision History

VERSION	EDITION	PUBLISHED	SUMMARY
1.0	2026 Edition	October 2026	First edition. Crew, coverage, mechanics, 19 signals, table protocol, forms. Written to Rulebook Version 3.1, which ratified its league policies.
1.0 (R3)	2026 Edition	October 2026	Aligned with Rulebook Version 3.2: line faults on quadrant lines (6.2.7, 7.6.1, Signal 17), simultaneous awards (7.5.4, 7.12.3), partner calls and Deliberate Interference (7.7.4).
1.0 (R5)	2026 Edition	October 2026	The game clock starts with the Prime serve, not the serve whistle, which opens the 10-second serve window (7.2.2, 11.3, Figure 7.1; Rulebook 5.1, 6.1.4).
1.0 (R6)	2026 Edition	October 2026	The Official Match Scorecard (SC-1) replaces the backup scoresheet (5.6.2, 11.1.1, Appendix 15.3).

1.0 (R7)	2026 Edition	October 2026	The confirm-back between Officiators and the table: read-backs, "Table set" before every serve, "Table hold" and "Table query" (7.1.2–7.1.4, 7.2.1, 7.5.3, 11.3.1, 11.4.1).
1.0 (R8)	2026 Edition	October 2026	Aligned with Rulebook Version 3.3, the Next In Box: the court check (5.2.1), the boxes in the layout and Figure 6.1 (6.1.2), Officiator 2 watching the boxes and each entry (6.2.8), the table reading both Next In numbers before "Table set" and "Table hold" for an empty box (7.1.3, 7.1.4, 7.2.1), entry from the box, exit path and Time Wasting (7.4), and injury replacement from the box (12.1.2).
1.0 (R9)	2026 Edition	October 2026	Aligned with Rulebook Version 3.4: the Head Officiator is Officiator 1 on the Prime-Major side, opposite the table (2.1.2, 6.1.2, 6.2.6); coverage becomes the right-hand rule, with Officiator 4 secondary on the serve (6.2, Figure 6.1); the court check is Head and Officiator 2 (5.1, 5.2.1); captains' script (5.5.1); new ball reset after every Elimination and restart (7.2.6, 7.4).
1.0 (R10)	2026 Edition	October 2026	Aligned with Rulebook Version 3.5. The spotter calls out the foul step (8.2.2); Officiator 3 runs the score check and the Head confirms (2.2.1, 7.10.3, 7.11.2, 11.4.1); the calling Officiator checks the walk-off (6.2.8); the ball reset is made by whoever made the call, crossing the Grid at a dead ball, and by the Head after a timeout (7.2.6, 7.4); "Table hold" for a Next In change after "Table set" (7.1.4).
1.0 (R11)	2026 Edition	October 2026	Aligned with Rulebook Version 3.6, contact: hands and forearms only (7.3.2), Illegal Touch (7.3.5), Hinder (7.3.6, Signal 18) and a ball that hits a player in flight (7.3.7).