



OFFICIAL RULEBOOK

— 2026 EDITION · VERSION 3.6

Own the Grid™. Own the Game.



National Gridball League™

Official Rulebook — Version 3.6 · 2026 Edition

© 2024–2026 National Gridball League, LLC. All rights reserved. National Gridball League, Own the Grid and the NGL logo are trademarks of National Gridball League, LLC.

No part of this rulebook may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of National Gridball League, LLC, except for brief quotations and use in organized play. This notice covers the text, illustrations and design of this rulebook. Anyone is free to play Gridball.

All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

This rulebook is the official version as of 2026. The NGL reserves the right to amend, modify, or supplement these rules at any time. The most current version will be maintained at nlggridball.com.

For permissions and inquiries:

National Gridball League, LLC
nlggridball@gmail.com

Version: 3.6 · 2026 Edition · Publication Date: October 2026

Foreword

Dear Gridball Enthusiasts,

Welcome to the Official Rulebook of the National Gridball League (NGL), Version 3.6 (2026 Edition). As the founder of this sport, I am proud to present this updated edition — a document that reflects not just the rules of a game, but the foundation of a movement.

Gridball was born from a simple idea: take the energy and joy of playground games like four square and boxball, and build something professional, competitive, and worthy of elite athletes. What began as a concept has grown into a fully structured sport with its own court, its own metrics, its own championship, and its own world.

This version of the rulebook incorporates feedback, clarifications, and refinements that make the game tighter, fairer, and more compelling at every level. Every change in this edition was made deliberately — to serve the integrity of competition, the safety of players, and the experience of fans.

Gridball belongs to everyone. The sport itself is in the public domain — free to be played, taught, and organized by anyone, anywhere. What the NGL provides is the professional standard: the framework within which the best players in the world compete for the NGL Championship Cup.

Own the Grid. Own the Game.

Jaylon G. Ballard

Founder, National Gridball League

What's New in the 2026 Edition

Version 3.0 replaced Version 2.1.4 (2025 Edition). Version 3.1 ratifies the officiating procedures of the NGL Game Officials Handbook; those changes are listed under Officiating (Version 3.1). Version 3.2 adds five rulings on play and conduct, under Rulings (Version 3.2). Version 3.3 defines where and how the Next In Player waits, under Next In Box (Version 3.3). Version 3.4 makes the Head Officiator Officiator 1 and adds the ball reset, under Officiating (Version 3.4). Version 3.5 settles the ball reset and who keeps the counts, under Clarifications (Version 3.5). Version 3.6 limits play to the hands and forearms and settles a ball that hits a player in flight, listed last, under Contact (Version 3.6). Rule numbers from Version 2.1.4 are kept, so earlier section references still point to the same rule; new rules take new numbers. Changed text is marked with a bar in the margin, as below.

GAMEPLAY

- Rounds:** a round begins with the Prime serve and ends only at an Elimination. Fouls, stoppages, timeouts and replays do not end it (7.3).
- Rotation:** every player below the vacated quadrant advances one quadrant, whichever team they are on; players above it stay. The eliminated team's Next In Player enters at Entry (2.4.1, 4.2.1, 6.3.2, 6.4.1).
- Occupancy:** each team has exactly two players on the Grid. The Grid Advantage team starts each half in Prime and Major; after that either team may hold any quadrant (2.4, 4.1).
- Serve target:** the serve must go to a quadrant held by an opponent, never a teammate. Rallies keep the legal-return rule (2.4, 2.6.3, 6.1.1).
- Officiator signals:** Out of Bounds, Illegal Serve and Timeout redesigned so no two signals look alike; new signals for Warning, Ejection, Ball In, Replay and Possession (12.3).
- Court color:** no single league color; each club sets its home court's hardwood finish, with NGL approval and clear contrast with the ball and lines (3.1.3).
- Overtime:** continues the fourth quarter, sudden death, from the final Grid position, with Grid Hold, Gridlock and foul counts carried over; the Prime player serves. First to a 2-point lead in total score wins (5.2, 6.1.3).
- Game clock:** runs only while a round is in play. A rally under way at the buzzer is finished and its Elimination counts (5.1, 5.1.1).
- Timeouts:** only between rounds; at most 2 per quarter and 2 in overtime (5.3).
- New rules:** legal contact, no catching or closed fist (6.2.4); Outer Boundary line is in and outside interference means a replay (6.5.1, 6.5.3); restart after a non-eliminating foul (6.6.1); uniform numbers (3.3.4); team captain (4.6).

SCORING

- Grid Hold and Gridlock counts:** they belong to the player, advance at each round end, reset only on Elimination or leaving the quadrant, restart at zero after an award and reset at the start of each quarter but carry into overtime. Double-fault and loss-of-serve conditions removed (7.1.3, 7.2.2, 7.2.3).
- Score floor:** a team's score cannot fall below zero (8).

FOULS & PENALTIES

Section 8 preamble: now explains penalty totals, per-player offense counts, penalty Eliminations, "gains possession" and the score floor.

Illegal Serve: replaces the old Fault and loss-of-serve rule (6.1.1, 8.2.2). Foot Faults are penalized only under 8.1.1(6.2.1, 6.3.1).

Unsportsmanlike Conduct: third offense removed (8.3.1). Deliberate Interference: second offense awards 2 points and possession; third offense is ejection (8.3.2).

Uniform and equipment: Uniform Violation third offense awards no points (8.4.1). Equipment Malfunction first offense is a 75-second stoppage not charged to timeouts (8.4.2).

Ejection: an ejected player on the Grid is removed as an Elimination with standard rotation; no points (8.5.1).

OFFICIATING

Officiators: four, one per side of the Grid; one is named Head Officiator (9.1, 9.2.1). Jurisdiction and scoring corrections run to the Head Officiator's sign-off (9.1.3).

Challenges: signaled by the Head Coach. An overturned call costs nothing; a call that stands costs the challenge and one timeout from the match total (not the per-quarter limit). Challenges do not reset for overtime (9.3.1, 12.4).

TERMINOLOGY

Officiator: replaces "referee" throughout, including the hand signals (12.3).

Z-path: replaces Z-Formation. Grid, Elimination, Grid Hold, Gridlock and Next In Player are used consistently.

Roster: 7 male-identifying and 7 female-identifying players, with no gender requirement on the Grid. A non-compliant roster is reported to the league; forfeit applies only below 7 eligible players (4.1.1, 8.5.2).

EDITORIAL

Edition and copyright: edition statement (1.3, 1.4), non-commercial reproduction of the rules allowed with attribution, contact by email only. Glossaries merged into Section 13 (12.1 now points there). League Structure framed as the planned format (11). Index and Revision History updated. Kit wording (3.3.1) and ball inflation (3.2.2) clarified.

- **New layout:** clickable contents, PDF bookmarks, redrawn diagrams (Figures 2.1, 3.1, 6.1), signals table and revision history.

OFFICIATING (VERSION 3.1)

Coverage: each Officiator stands 2–3 ft outside the midpoint of their side and owns that side's Outer Boundary line and one primary quadrant; every quadrant has a secondary. The Head Officiator has Prime and serve legality; Officiator 3 is the table liaison (9.2.1). Sides and quadrants as revised in Version 3.4.

Fixed positions: Officiators keep their sides for the whole match; no halftime rotation (9.2.2).

Officials Table: below Minor and Entry on the Minor–Entry baseline, with a team bench on each side (12.5).

Injury: if a player cannot continue within 75 seconds, the Next In Player replaces them in the same quadrant, with no rotation or points; one uncharged injury stoppage per team per quarter (12.6).

Signals: descriptions now match the Handbook illustrations, including the whistle with Prime Serve and Grid Hold above the head (12.3).

Serve clock: Prime serves within 10 seconds of the serve whistle (6.1.4).

New rules: protests (9.3.3), Officiator certification (9.1.4) and uniform (3.4). Forfeits do not affect point differential (8.5.2); ejections are reported within 24 hours (8.5.1).

RULINGS (VERSION 3.2)

Returns: a return may go to any other quadrant, including a teammate's. Only the serve that opens each round must go to an opponent (6.1.1, 6.2.1).

Line fault: a serve or return that lands on a Quadrant Line, one of the inner lines that divide the Grid, is a line fault. The player who struck it is eliminated and the opponents get 1 point. The Outer Boundary line is still in (6.5.1).

In-place substitutions: only between quarters or during a team's timeout. The substitute takes the same quadrant, with no rotation and no points, and that quadrant's count starts again at zero (4.3.1).

Simultaneous awards: every Grid Hold and Gridlock count that reaches four at a round-end is awarded, to one team or to both. In overtime, all of them are added before checking for the 2-point lead (5.2, 7.2.2, 7.2.3).

Partner and decoy calls: 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 going to the opponents, and imitating an Officiator's whistle or call are Deliberate Interference (8.3.2).

NEXT IN BOX (VERSION 3.3)

Next In Box: each team has a marked 4 × 4 ft Next In Box on the Major–Entry side, just outside the out-of-bounds area and level with Entry. The two boxes sit side by side, the same distance from Entry, away from both benches, the Officials Table and the Officials' working area (4.4.2, 12.5).

Designation: the player in a team's box is its Next In Player. The Officials Table confirms the number before saying "Table set"; the designation is locked from "Table set" until the round ends (4.4, 4.4.2).

Entry and exit: the Next In Player walks from the box straight into Entry; an eliminated player leaves across the nearest Outer Boundary line of their quadrant, without crossing another quadrant, and returns to the bench (6.3.2).

Time Wasting: an empty Next In Box when the table is ready, or a slow entry, is Time Wasting (4.3.2, 6.4.2, 8.1.2).

Fixed sides: teams keep their benches and Next In Boxes for the whole match (4.4.2).

OFFICIATING (VERSION 3.4)

Head Officiator: now Officiator 1, on the Prime–Major side, straight across the Grid from the Officials Table. Primary quadrant Prime, with serve legality; secondary Major (9.2.1).

Coverage: each Officiator's primary quadrant is now the one on their right as they face the court: Officiator 1 Prime, Officiator 2 Major, Officiator 3 Entry, Officiator 4 Minor. Officiator 2 still watches the Next In Boxes; Officiator 3 is still the table liaison (9.2.1).

Ball reset: the Head Officiator hands the ball to Prime at the start of each quarter and after every stoppage. After an Elimination, the Officiator who made the call resets it, or, if the ball left the Grid, the Officiator on that side (6.1.5).

CLARIFICATIONS (VERSION 3.5)

Ball reset: at a dead ball an Officiator may cross the Grid; the reset is a hand-off or a bounce pass, never a lob over players' heads. The Officiator who made the call resets, whoever that is; after a timeout that follows an Elimination, the Head Officiator makes the restart (6.1.5).

Counts: the table keeps the Grid Hold and Gridlock counts; Officiators confirm each award with the scorekeeper (9.1.1).

CONTACT (VERSION 3.6)

Legal contact: the ball is struck only with one or both open hands or the forearms (below the elbow), never caught, held, carried or thrown, and never with a closed fist. Two hands or both forearms used together are one strike (6.2.4).

Illegal Touch: after the ball bounces in a player's quadrant, it may touch that player only on the hands or forearms. Touching any other part of the body (upper arm, shoulder, torso, head, legs or feet) is not a legal return, and the player is eliminated (6.2.5, 6.3.1).

Hinder: a ball that bounces and then strikes the receiver's head or face when they were not trying to play it is replayed from a new Prime serve, with no penalty. Aiming at an opponent's head may be penalized as Unsportsmanlike Conduct (6.2.6, 8.3.1).

Ball in flight: a return that touches a player before it lands eliminates the striker, unless the player touched moved into its path or tried to play it, in which case that player is eliminated. A serve that touches a player is an Illegal Serve (6.2.7).

Contents

	FOREWORD	3
	WHAT'S NEW IN THE 2026 EDITION	4
1	INTRODUCTION	11
1.1	Purpose and Scope	11
1.2	Overview of Gridball	11
1.3	Evolution of the Sport	11
1.4	How to Use This Rulebook	12
2	THE GAME OF GRIDBALL	13
2.1	Origins and Concept	13
2.2	Core Concept	13
2.3	Objective	13
2.4	Basic Gameplay	14
2.5	Grid Advantage	14
2.6	Key Elements	15
2.7	Spirit of the Game	16
3	COURT AND EQUIPMENT	17
3.1	The Gridball Court	17
3.2	The Gridball	19
3.3	Player Equipment	19
3.4	Officiator Uniform	20
4	TEAMS AND PLAYERS	21
4.1	Team Composition	21
4.2	Player Positions	21
4.3	Substitutions	22
4.4	Next In Player Mechanic	23
4.5	Coaching and Staff Roles	24
4.6	Captain	25
5	GAME STRUCTURE	26
5.1	Quarters and Time	26
5.2	Overtime	26
5.3	Timeouts	27
5.4	Possession Rules	27
6	GAMEPLAY RULES	28
6.1	Serving	28
6.2	Ball Movement	29
6.3	Eliminations	30
6.4	Rotation System	31
6.5	Out-of-Bounds	32
6.6	Restarts	32

7	SCORING	33
7.1	Points System	33
7.2	Scoring Methods Explained	33
7.3	Continuous Rounds Scoring	34
8	FOULS AND PENALTIES	35
8.1	Minor Infractions	35
8.2	Moderate Infractions	36
8.3	Severe Infractions	36
8.4	Technical Infractions	37
8.5	Ejections and Forfeitures	37
9	OFFICIATING	38
9.1	Role of the Officiators	38
9.2	Officiator Placement and Duties	39
9.3	Handling Disputes and Challenges	39
10	PLAYER AND TEAM METRICS	41
10.1	Grid Performance Rating (GPR)	41
10.2	Average Grid Performance Rating (AGPR)	42
10.3	Grid Time Distribution (GTD)	43
10.4	Games Played (GP)	43
10.5	Interpretation and Use of Metrics	43
10.6	Team Performance Index (TPI)	43
10.7	Official Record Keeping	44
11	LEAGUE STRUCTURE	45
11.1	Season Format	45
11.2	Playoffs and NGL Championship Cup	46
11.3	Team Ranking and Progression	46
11.4	Team Expansion and Franchise Guidelines	47
12	APPENDICES	48
12.1	Official Terminology Guide	48
12.2	Example Scenarios	48
12.3	Officiator Hand Signals	49
12.4	Challenge and Replay Review Procedures	50
12.5	League Guidelines for Stadium Setup	50
12.6	Injury Protocols	51
13	GLOSSARY	52
14	INDEX	55
	REVISION HISTORY	57

SECTION 01

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Scope

1.2 Overview of Gridball

1.3 Evolution of the Sport

1.4 How to Use This Rulebook

1.1 Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this rulebook is to provide a comprehensive, authoritative guide to the game of Gridball as played in the National Gridball League (NGL). It defines all rules, regulations, and standards required for official NGL play at every level — from league matches and playoffs to the NGL Championship Cup.

This rulebook applies to all NGL-sanctioned events and supersedes all previous versions. Players, coaches, Officiators, franchise operators, and league officials are bound by the standards set forth herein.

1.2 Overview of Gridball

Gridball is a dynamic, team-based sport played on a 24-foot by 24-foot court divided into four equal quadrants: Prime, Major, Minor, and Entry. Teams consist of 14 players — exactly 7 male-identifying and 7 female-identifying athletes — with 2 players from each team active on the Grid at any time.

The objective is to outscore the opposing team through Eliminations, Grid Holds, and Gridlocks, while managing rotations, serving strategy, and positional control. Gridball rewards athleticism, tactical intelligence, and team coordination in equal measure.

1.3 Evolution of the Sport

Gridball was conceived by Jaylon G. Ballard, drawing inspiration from four square and boxball — playground games played by generations of children around the world. His vision was to take the accessibility and joy of those games and build something worthy of professional competition.

This 2026 Edition (Version 3.6), effective October 2026, supersedes all prior versions.

Court dimensions are set at 12×12 feet per quadrant for Version 3.6. The NGL reserves the right to revisit court size in future editions based on playtesting data with elite athletes.

1.4

How to Use This Rulebook

This rulebook is organized sequentially from foundational concepts through detailed regulations. The Table of Contents provides a high-level overview. The Glossary defines all key terms. The Appendices provide reference materials for officials, franchise operators, and players.

For Officiators and league officials, this rulebook is a procedural manual. For players and coaches, it is the definitive competitive guide. For franchise operators, it establishes the operational and structural requirements of NGL membership.

All revisions are incorporated directly into the body of this document. This 2026 Edition (Version 3.6), effective October 2026, supersedes all prior versions.

SECTION 02

2 The Game of Gridball

2.1 Origins and Concept

2.2 Core Concept

2.3 Objective

2.4 Basic Gameplay

2.5 Grid Advantage

2.6 Key Elements

2.7 Spirit of the Game

2.1 Origins and Concept

Gridball evolved from four square and boxball — two of the most universally played playground games in the world. These games require quick reflexes, spatial awareness, and strategic positioning, all within a compact playing area. Gridball takes those core elements and builds a professional sport around them: adding team dynamics, a rotation system, a comprehensive scoring structure, and a competitive framework designed for elite athletes.

2.2 Core Concept

At its core, Gridball is about control and elimination. Two players from each team occupy the four quadrants of the Grid simultaneously. Using serves and returns, players attempt to force opponents into errors — failed returns that result in Eliminations, rotating them off the Grid and earning points for the opposing team.

Control of the Prime and Major quadrants is the central strategic objective. Teams that dominate these positions dictate the pace of play and have the greatest opportunity to accumulate bonus scoring through Grid Holds and Gridlocks.

2.3 Objective

The objective of Gridball is to outscore the opposing team across four quarters of play. Points are earned through three mechanisms:

- **Eliminations** — forcing an opponent off the Grid through an unreturnable ball.
- **Grid Holds** — maintaining control of the Major quadrant for four consecutive rounds.
- **Gridlocks** — maintaining control of the Prime quadrant for four consecutive rounds.

The team with the higher score at the end of four quarters wins the match. If the score is tied, overtime is played.

2.4 Basic Gameplay

A Gridball match features two teams of 14 players each. Each team has exactly two players on the Grid at all times. At the start of each half the Grid Advantage team occupies Prime and Major. After that, quadrant occupancy follows the rotation and either team may hold any quadrant. The remaining 12 players on each team serve as substitutes.

Each round begins with the player in the Prime quadrant serving the ball. The ball must bounce once in the Prime quadrant before being directed to a quadrant occupied by an opponent. The receiving player must return the ball after one bounce, directing it to any other quadrant. Play continues until an Elimination occurs.

2.4.1 Rotation and Elimination

When a player is eliminated, the following sequence occurs immediately:

- The eliminated player leaves the Grid.
- Every player in a quadrant below the vacated quadrant on the Z-path (Entry → Minor → Major → Prime) advances one quadrant, regardless of team. Players above the vacancy do not move.
- The eliminated team's Next In Player then enters at Entry.

This rotation system ensures continuous play and requires all players to be prepared to occupy any quadrant at any time.

2.5 Grid Advantage

Grid Advantage is the strategic benefit of beginning a half with your team's players in the Prime and Major positions — the two most powerful quadrants on the Grid.

2.5.1 Determining Grid Advantage

Prior to the start of the match, a coin toss is conducted at center court. The home team's captain calls heads or tails. The winner of the coin toss chooses whether to hold Grid Advantage for the first half (Quarters 1 and 2) or the second half (Quarters 3 and 4). Grid Advantage automatically goes to the other team for the remaining half.

2.5.2 Grid Advantage Application

At the start of each half, the team holding Grid Advantage for that half places their two designated Grid Advantage Starters in Prime and Major. Their opponents begin in Minor and Entry. This positioning applies only at the start of each half — Quarters 2 and 4 carry over whatever Grid positioning existed at the end of the preceding quarter.

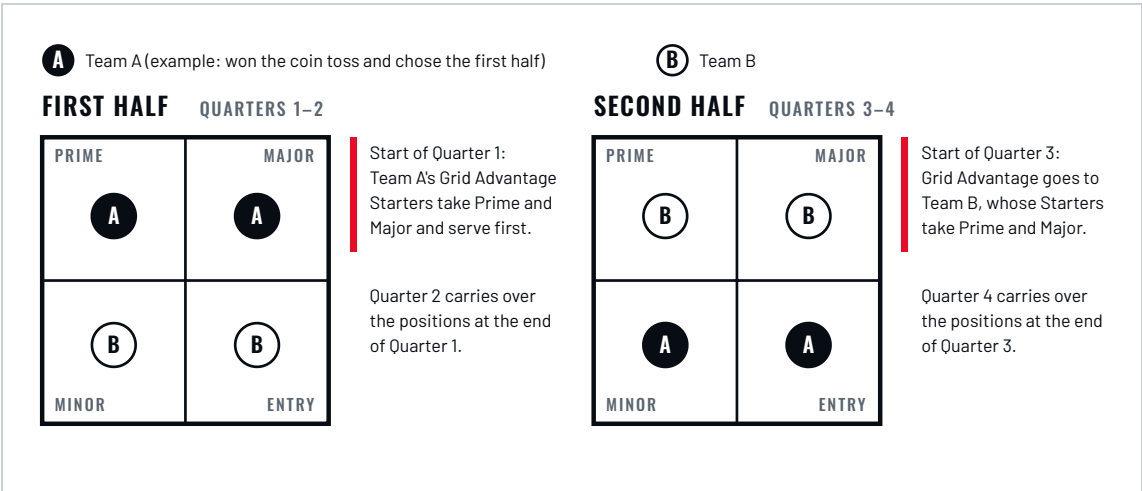


Figure 2.1 – Grid Advantage by Half Grid Advantage sets starting positions at the top of each half only (Sections 2.5.1–2.5.2).

2.6 Key Elements

2.6.1 The Grid

The Grid is the playing surface: a 24-foot by 24-foot square divided into four equal quadrants of 12 feet by 12 feet each. The quadrants are:

- **Prime** — Upper-left quadrant. The serving position and most strategically powerful location on the Grid.
- **Major** — Upper-right quadrant. Strong offensive position supporting Prime.
- **Minor** — Lower-left quadrant. A transitional position requiring defensive awareness.
- **Entry** — Lower-right quadrant. The position where the Next In Player enters the Grid after an Elimination.

2.6.2 Player Positions and Quadrant Confinement

Each active player is assigned to one quadrant and must remain within that quadrant's 12×12-foot boundary during play. Players may not cross into another quadrant while the ball is in play. Crossing a quadrant boundary while striking the ball constitutes a Foot Fault.

Players may move freely within their assigned quadrant. The 12×12-foot space is intentionally designed to challenge professional athletes — requiring rapid lateral movement, precise positioning, and anticipation within a confined area.

2.6.3 The Serve

Every round begins with the Prime player serving the ball. The serve must be executed underhand, with the ball bouncing once in the Prime quadrant before traveling to an opponent's quadrant. The serve must be directed to a quadrant occupied by an opponent, never to a teammate's quadrant.

2.6.4**Eliminations**

A player is eliminated when they fail to make a legal return. Specific elimination criteria are defined in Section [6.3](#). Upon Elimination, the rotation system activates immediately and play resumes without delay.

2.6.5**Continuous Play**

Gridball is designed for continuous action. Play stops only for Eliminations, fouls, timeouts, and official stoppages. The speed of rotations and the fast-paced nature of the game demand endurance, focus, and rapid decision-making from all players.

2.7**Spirit of the Game**

Gridball is built on the values of competition, sportsmanship, and inclusivity. Players, coaches, and officials are expected to compete with intensity while maintaining respect for opponents, Officiators, and the integrity of the sport.

The co-ed structure of the NGL – with every team required to field both male-identifying and female-identifying athletes – reflects the league's foundational belief that Gridball is a sport for everyone, and that the best teams will be those that develop every player to their full potential regardless of gender.

SECTION 03

3 Court and Equipment

3.1	The Gridball Court	3.3	Player Equipment
3.2	The Gridball	3.4	Officiator Uniform

3.1 The Gridball Court

The court, referred to as The Grid, is the central playing surface of Gridball. It is a precisely dimensioned square divided into four equal quadrants, surrounded by an out-of-bounds area and spectator facilities.

3.1.1 Dimensions

The Gridball court is a square measuring 24 feet by 24 feet (7.32 meters by 7.32 meters), divided into four equal quadrants. Each quadrant measures 12 feet by 12 feet (3.66 meters by 3.66 meters).

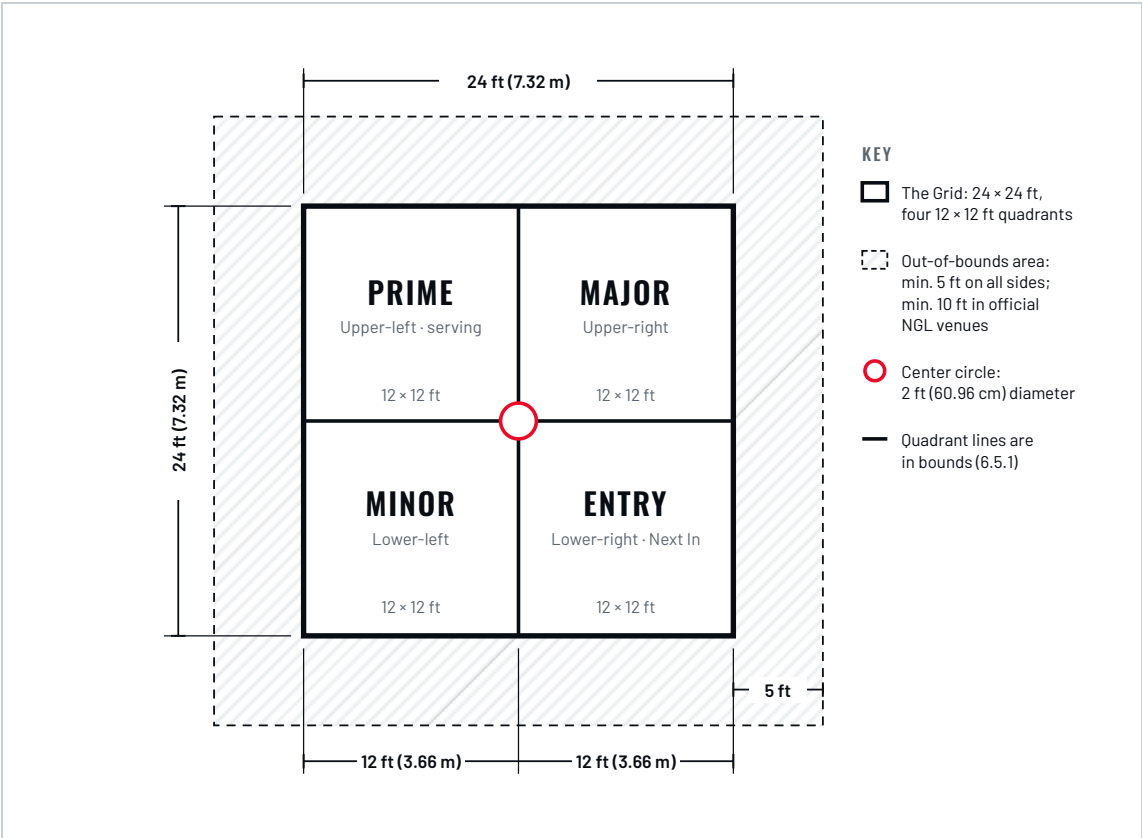


Figure 3.1 – Official Gridball Court Schematic Official Gridball Court – 24 ft × 24 ft (7.32 m × 7.32 m) · Each Quadrant: 12 ft × 12 ft

Note: Specifications may be amended with notice.

3.1.2 Quadrant Names and Positions

Each quadrant has a designated name, position, and strategic function:

- **Prime** — Upper-left. The serving quadrant and primary position of strategic control.
- **Major** — Upper-right. Secondary offensive position; eligible for Grid Hold bonus scoring.
- **Minor** — Lower-left. Transitional defensive position.
- **Entry** — Lower-right. Entry point for the Next In Player following an Elimination.

3.1.3 Surface

The playing surface must be hardwood flooring or an approved hardwood equivalent, treated for consistent ball bounce and player traction. The surface must be smooth with slight texture to provide grip for players while maintaining predictable ball speed. There is no single league court color: each club sets the finish color of its home court, subject to NGL approval. Whatever the finish, the Grid must contrast clearly with the ball and with the boundary markings.

3.1.4 Court Markings

All court markings must be clearly visible and precisely applied:

- **Outer Boundary** — Solid line marking the full perimeter of the 24×24-foot Grid.
- **Quadrant Lines** — Solid lines dividing the Grid into four equal 12×12-foot quadrants.
- **Service Lines** — 1-foot (30.48 cm) lines marking legal serving positions within the Prime quadrant.
- **Center Circle** — A 2-foot (60.96 cm) diameter circle at the intersection of all four quadrants, used for pre-game coin toss ceremonies.
- **Quadrant Labels** — Each quadrant must be labeled with its official name (Prime, Major, Minor, Entry) in lettering visible to players and officials.

3.1.5 Out-of-Bounds Area

A clear out-of-bounds area must surround the Grid on all sides:

- **Minimum standard:** 5 feet on all sides.
- **Official NGL venue requirement:** Minimum 10 feet on all sides.
- The out-of-bounds area must be visually distinct from the playing surface through a change in color, texture, or both.
- The out-of-bounds area serves as the Officiator observation zone and player transition space during rotations. The two Next In Boxes sit just outside it on the Major-Entry side (Section [4.4.2](#)).

3.1.6

Spectator Areas

In professional NGL venues, spectator seating must provide unobstructed sightlines to the entire Grid from all positions. Designated media areas must be positioned to allow broadcast coverage without interference with play or officiating. Player bench areas for both teams, the Next In Boxes and the Officials Table must be positioned outside the Officiator observation area, as specified in Appendix 12.5.

3.2

The Gridball

The Gridball is the official ball of the sport, specifically designed to balance speed, control, and durability at the professional level.

3.2.1

Specifications

- **Diameter:** 8.5 inches (21.59 cm)
- **Material:** Rubber or approved rubber composite
- **Weight:** Approximately 10 ounces (283 grams)
- **Surface:** Textured for consistent grip
- **Bounce Standard:** When dropped from 6 feet onto the court surface, the ball must return to approximately 65% of its original height (3.9 feet)
- **Color:** Bright, high-visibility color — approved colors to be specified by the NGL for each season

3.2.2

Ball Inspection and Replacement

Prior to each match, the Head Officiator and team captains jointly inspect the match ball. A ball that is improperly inflated, fails the bounce standard, shows visible damage, or does not meet NGL specifications shall be replaced before play begins. If a ball becomes damaged or improperly inflated during play, the Head Officiator may call a stoppage to replace it at their discretion.

3.3

Player Equipment

3.3.1

Uniforms

Each player is issued four uniforms per season by their franchise:

- Home Short Sleeve
- Home Long Sleeve
- Away Short Sleeve
- Away Long Sleeve

The short- and long-sleeve uniforms of a kit (home or away) must be identical in color, number placement, sponsor placement, and NGL compliance. The only variable between them is sleeve length.

Sleeve length is the player's individual choice on a game-by-game basis. Each team wears its designated kit for the match; teammates may wear different sleeve lengths.

Uniform specifications:

- Jersey numbers must be clearly visible. Minimum height: 6 inches on the back, 4 inches on the front.
- The NGL official logo patch must appear on the sleeve of all uniforms — this is non-negotiable.
- Matching athletic shorts in the team's color scheme are required.
- Court shoes with appropriate hardwood traction are required.

Franchise operators control all aspects of uniform design beyond these minimums, including color scheme, logo placement, and sponsor arrangements.

3.3.2 Protective Gear

Elbow pads and knee pads are optional but recommended, particularly for players in defensive positions. Headbands and wristbands are permitted for sweat management. All protective gear must be soft and non-restrictive.

3.3.3 Prohibited Equipment

Gloves and grip-enhancing devices are prohibited. Any equipment deemed by the Head Officiator to provide an unfair competitive advantage or to pose a safety risk to any player shall not be permitted.

3.3.4 Uniform Numbers

Jersey numbers run from 0 to 99, are unique within a team and are worn throughout the match. If kits clash, the away team changes; the Head Officiator decides.

3.4 Officiator Uniform

All four Officiators wear the same uniform: a charcoal long-sleeve collared polo with thin turquoise piping, charcoal trousers and black court shoes, with GAME OFFICIATOR across the back. No cap or other headwear is worn indoors. When a team's kit is similar to charcoal, the crew wears a light alternate uniform; the Head Officiator decides.

SECTION 04

4 Teams and Players

4.1 Team Composition

4.2 Player Positions

4.3 Substitutions

4.4 Next In Player Mechanic

4.5 Coaching and Staff Roles

4.6 Captain

4.1

Team Composition

Each NGL team roster consists of exactly 14 players. Each team has exactly two players on the Grid at all times. At the start of each half the Grid Advantage team occupies Prime and Major. After that, quadrant occupancy follows the rotation and either team may hold any quadrant. The remaining 12 players serve as substitutes, waiting to enter as the Next In Player following an Elimination or during a coaching substitution.

4.1.1

Co-Ed Roster Requirement

Each team's registered roster consists of exactly 14 players: 7 male-identifying and 7 female-identifying. There is no gender requirement for the two players on the Grid or for the Next In Player; deployment is a coaching decision.

This is a foundational rule of the National Gridball League and may not be waived under any circumstances.

Any combination of players from the 14-person roster may be fielded, provided all other substitution and rotation rules are followed. The co-ed requirement applies to roster composition only, not to in-game deployment.

Roster compliance is verified by league officials prior to each match. A roster that does not comply is reported to the league. A team forfeits before the match only if it cannot field 7 eligible players (Section [8.5.2](#)).

4.2

Player Positions

All players must be prepared to occupy any of the four quadrant positions. While players may develop specializations in practice, the rotation system requires versatility from every member of the roster.

- **Prime** — Upper-left quadrant. The serving position and primary position of strategic control. The Prime player initiates every round.
- **Major** — Upper-right quadrant. Offensive support position. Eligible for Grid Hold bonus scoring.
- **Minor** — Lower-left quadrant. Transitional defensive position. No bonus scoring eligibility.
- **Entry** — Lower-right quadrant. The entry point for the Next In Player. Requires rapid adaptation to ongoing game action.

4.2.1 Z-path Rotation

Player positions rotate along the Z-path following every Elimination:

Entry → Minor → Major → Prime.

Every player in a quadrant below the vacated quadrant on the Z-path advances one quadrant, regardless of team. Players above the vacancy do not move. The eliminated team's Next In Player then enters at Entry. This rotation is immediate and automatic — play resumes as soon as the Next In Player is in position.

4.2.2 Grid Advantage Starters

Grid Advantage Starters are the two players designated by the coaching staff to occupy Prime and Major at the start of any half in which their team holds Grid Advantage. This designation is made fresh by the coaching staff before each qualifying half and must be communicated to the Head Officiator prior to the start of that half.

Grid Advantage Starters represent the highest-profile strategic designation a coaching staff makes in a given match. The choice of which players to place in Prime and Major at the start of each half directly shapes the team's opening strategy, serving approach, and early rotation sequence.

Grid Advantage Starters are subject to all standard substitution and rotation rules once the half begins. The designation applies only to the starting positions at the top of each half.

4.3 Substitutions

4.3.1 Regular Substitutions

There is no limit to the number of substitutions per match. A team changes players on the Grid in two ways:

- **After an Elimination:** the eliminated player leaves the Grid and the team's Next In Player enters at Entry (Section [4.4](#)).
- **In-place substitution:** between quarters, or during one of the team's timeouts, the Head Coach may replace a player on the Grid who has not been eliminated. The substitute takes the same quadrant. No rotation occurs and no points are awarded. Grid Hold and Gridlock counts belong to the player, so the substitute starts that quadrant's count at zero (Sections [7.2.2](#) and [7.2.3](#)).

In-place substitutions may not be made at any other time. A player who has been substituted or eliminated may return later, including as the Next In Player for the very next round.

4.3.2 In-Game Substitutions

In-game substitutions occur automatically when a player is eliminated. The Next In Player waits in the team's Next In Box (Section [4.4.2](#)) and enters the Grid at Entry immediately upon their teammate's Elimination. An empty Next In Box when the Officials Table is ready, or any delay in the Next In Player taking position, is Time Wasting under Section [8.1.2](#).

4.4 Next In Player Mechanic

The Next In Player is the player designated to enter the Grid at the Entry quadrant following an Elimination of a teammate. A team designates its Next In Player by placing that player in its Next In Box (Section 4.4.2) before each round begins. The Head Coach may change the designation at any dead ball until the Officials Table says "Table set"; from then until the round ends it is locked.

4.4.1 Strategic Use

Coaches may use the Next In Player designation strategically:

- **Defensive scenarios** — designating a strong defensive player when facing an aggressive opponent in Prime.
- **Protecting a count** — designating a strong defender as Next In when a teammate's Grid Hold or Gridlock count is building, since the Next In Player's first ball usually arrives at Entry.
- **Fatigue management** — rotating fresh players in high-intensity periods to maintain energy and execution.

4.4.2 The Next In Box

Each team has one Next In Box: a marked area 4 × 4 feet (1.22 × 1.22 m) on the Major–Entry side of the Grid, just outside the out-of-bounds area and level with the Entry quadrant. The two boxes sit side by side with 1 foot between them, centered on the line through the middle of Entry, so both are the same distance from Entry. Team A uses the box nearer the Minor–Entry baseline and Team B the box nearer Major. Each box is marked in its team's color or labeled, and may hold one seat.

- **Staged:** a Next In Player is staged when inside the team's Next In Box. Only the Next In Player may be in the box.
- **Designation:** whoever is in the box is the team's Next In Player. Before every serve the Officials Table confirms each team's Next In Player by number, then says "Table set" to tell the Head Officiator the Grid and both Next In Players are ready; only then is the serve whistled (NGL Game Officials Handbook 7.1.4).
- **Changing:** the Head Coach may send a different player to the box at any dead ball before "Table set"; the player leaving the box returns to the bench. No change may be made from "Table set" until the round ends.
- **Entering:** when a teammate is eliminated, the Next In Player walks directly from the box into Entry, outside the other quadrants, and takes position as the rotation completes (Section 6.3.2). The box then stays empty until the Head Coach sends the next Next In Player, and must be filled before the table can say "Table set".
- **Conduct:** the Next In Player must not touch a ball in play, interfere with play or with an Officiator, or leave the box except to enter the Grid or to return to the bench when replaced.
- **Fixed sides:** teams keep their benches and Next In Boxes for the whole match, including overtime.

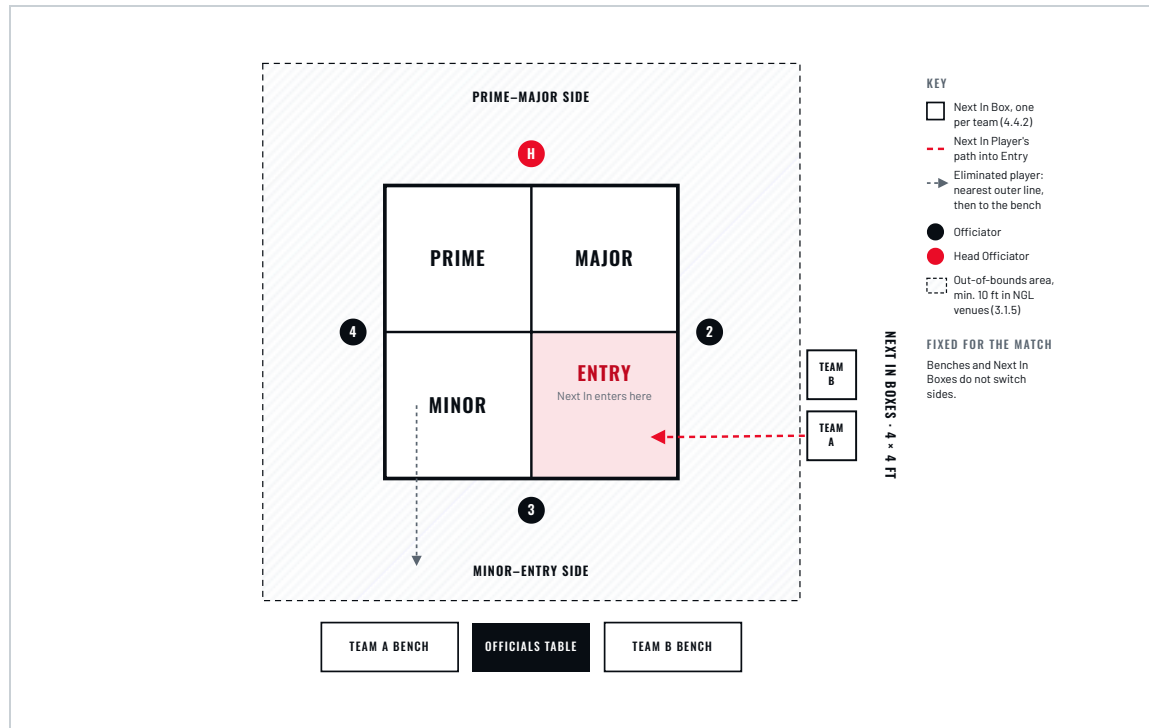


Figure 4.1 – Officials Table, Team Benches and Next In Boxes The Officials Table and both benches sit along the Minor-Entry side; the two Next In Boxes sit side by side on the Major-Entry side, level with Entry, outside the out-of-bounds area.

4.5 Coaching and Staff Roles

4.5.1 Head Coach

The Head Coach is the primary decision-maker for the team. Responsibilities include managing rotations and substitutions, designating Grid Advantage Starters, calling timeouts, managing challenges, and directing in-game strategy.

4.5.2 Assistant Coaches

Assistant Coaches support the Head Coach with specialized focus areas such as offensive systems, defensive positioning, or individual player development. They may communicate with players during timeouts and between quarters.

4.5.3 Strength and Conditioning Coach

Responsible for player physical preparation, injury prevention, and in-game recovery management. Works closely with medical staff to monitor player readiness.

4.5.4 Medical Staff

Medical staff are responsible for player health and safety during all matches and practices. They have authority to remove a player from competition for medical evaluation at any time, in coordination with the Head Officiator. See Appendix 12.6 for Injury Protocols.

4.5.5 Analyst / Scout

Responsible for opponent analysis, game footage review, and performance data interpretation. Provides coaching staff with strategic intelligence before and during matches.

4.5.6 Team Manager

Manages administrative and logistical operations including scheduling, travel, equipment, and league compliance documentation.

4.5.7 Mental Performance Coach (Optional)

Some franchises may employ a Mental Performance Coach to support player focus, resilience, and team cohesion. This role is optional and not required for NGL membership.

4.6**Captain**

Each team names one rostered captain before the match. The captain calls the toss and is the only player who may ask the Head Officiator to explain a ruling.

SECTION 05

5 Game Structure

5.1 Quarters and Time**5.2** Overtime**5.3** Timeouts**5.4** Possession Rules

5.1 Quarters and Time

A standard Gridball match consists of four quarters of continuous play. Each quarter is 16 minutes in length. A 2-minute break separates each quarter, with a 12-minute halftime break between the second and third quarters.

The game clock runs only while a round is in play. It starts with each Prime serve and stops at every Elimination, timeout, challenge and official stoppage. At the conclusion of the fourth quarter, if the score is tied, overtime is played.

5.1.1 Time Expiring During a Rally

If time expires during a rally, play continues until that rally ends. An Elimination and any award it completes count. No new round begins.

5.2 Overtime

If the match is tied at the end of the fourth quarter, overtime is played in sudden-death format. Overtime has no time limit. The first team to achieve a 2-point lead in total score wins the match. When several awards complete on the same round-end, for one team or both, all of them are added before the lead is checked.

5.2.1 Overtime Possession

Overtime continues the fourth quarter from its final Grid position; the player in Prime serves. There is no reset to Prime and Major and no new lineup. Grid Hold and Gridlock counts and foul counts carry over from the fourth quarter; only the clock does not continue.

5.2.2 Overtime Scoring

Overtime scoring follows the same structure as regulation play. All standard scoring mechanics — Eliminations, Grid Holds, and Gridlocks — remain active. Clutch Play designation applies to all plays during overtime. The match concludes the moment one team achieves a 2-point lead in total score.

5.3

Timeouts

Each team is allocated 7 timeouts per match. Timeouts are 75 seconds in duration. A timeout may be called only between rounds: after an Elimination and before the next Prime serve. A team may use at most 2 of its 7 match timeouts in any quarter, and at most 2 in overtime.

Teams begin each quarter with their remaining match timeouts, subject to the 2-per-quarter maximum.

5.4

Possession Rules

Possession in Gridball refers to which team occupies the Prime quadrant. The team whose player holds Prime controls the serve and initiates each round. Possession shifts through the Elimination and rotation system throughout each quarter.

At the start of each half, possession is determined by Grid Advantage. The team holding Grid Advantage for that half begins with their Grid Advantage Starters in Prime and Major, giving them the opening serve.

SECTION 06

6 Gameplay Rules

6.1	Serving	6.4	Rotation System
6.2	Ball Movement	6.5	Out-of-Bounds
6.3	Eliminations	6.6	Restarts

6.1 Serving

6.1.1 Prime Serve

Every round begins with the Prime player executing the serve. The serve must be made underhand. The ball must bounce once within the Prime quadrant before traveling to a quadrant occupied by an opponent, never to a teammate's quadrant. Rallies after the serve follow the legal-return rule (Section 6.2.1).

A serve that does not bounce in Prime, fails to reach an opponent's quadrant, or is made overhand is an Illegal Serve and is penalized under Section 8.2.2.

6.1.2 Serve Rotation

The team holding Grid Advantage controls the opening serve at the start of each half. Within each quarter, serve transfers naturally through the Elimination and rotation system — whenever a team gains the Prime position, their player in Prime holds the serve for the next round.

6.1.3 Overtime Serve

Overtime continues from the final Grid position of the fourth quarter; the player in Prime serves (Section 5.2.1).

6.1.4 Serve Clock

Prime must serve within 10 seconds of the Head Officiator's serve whistle. A delay is Time Wasting (Section 8.1.2).

6.1.5 Ball Reset

Before every serve, an Officiator puts the ball in the Prime player's hands:

- **Start of play and restarts:** the Head Officiator resets the ball at the start of each quarter and of overtime, and at every restart after a stoppage, including a timeout, a challenge or review, an injury stoppage, a re-serve after a non-eliminating foul (Section 6.6.1) and a replay (Section 6.5.3).
- **After an Elimination:** the Officiator who made the call (normally the primary of the eliminated quadrant) resets the ball once the call is complete. If the ball has left the Grid, the Officiator on the side where it went out resets it instead (Section 9.2.1). When a timeout follows the Elimination, the ball goes to the Head Officiator, who makes the restart.

- **Method:** the ball is handed or bounce-passed to the Prime player. At a dead ball an Officiator may cross the Grid to fetch or return it; never while the ball is in play. The ball is never lobbed over players' heads.

The Head Officiator whistles the serve only once Prime has the ball and the Grid is set (Section 4.4.2).

6.2 Ball Movement

6.2.1 Legal Return

Once the ball has been served and bounces in a receiving player's quadrant, that player must return it. A legal return must:

- Be struck after the ball bounces exactly once in the player's quadrant.
- Land in a different quadrant from the one it was struck from.
- Be executed while the player is within the boundary of their assigned quadrant.
- A return may be directed to any other quadrant, including a teammate's. Only the serve that opens each round must go to an opponent (Section 6.1.1); after it, teammates may play the ball to each other to set up an Elimination (see Assist, Section 10).

A return that lands in the same quadrant it was struck from, or fails to bounce at all before being struck, is an illegal return and results in an Elimination. A player who strikes the ball while outside their quadrant boundary commits a Foot Fault (Section 8.1.1).

6.2.2 Quadrant Confinement During Play

Players must remain within the 12×12-foot boundary of their assigned quadrant at all times during play. Players may move freely within their quadrant to position themselves for optimal returns. A player may not reach across a quadrant boundary to play a ball.

A Foot Fault is called when a player strikes the ball while any part of their body is outside their quadrant boundary. Foot Fault penalties are defined in Section 8.1.1.

6.2.3 Strategic Play

Within the rules of legal returns and quadrant confinement, players are encouraged to use the full range of shot-making available to them: sharp angles, low-bounce shots, high-velocity drives, and soft touch returns. Strategic deception and coordinated team play between the two active Grid players are core elements of high-level Gridball.

6.2.4 Legal Contact

The ball must be struck, not caught, held, carried or thrown, with one or both open hands or the forearms (below the elbow). A strike with a closed fist is illegal. Two hands, or both forearms, used together count as a single strike.

6.2.5**Illegal Touch**

After the ball bounces in a player's quadrant, it may touch that player only on the hands or forearms. If it touches any other part of the player's body (the upper arm, shoulder, torso, head, legs or feet), it is an Illegal Touch. An Illegal Touch is not a legal return, and the player is eliminated (Section [6.3.1](#)), except as provided in Section [6.2.6](#).

6.2.6**Hinder**

If, after the ball bounces in a player's quadrant, it strikes that player's head or face when the player was not attempting to play it, play is stopped and the rally is replayed from a new Prime serve with no penalty, as for outside interference (Section [6.5.3](#)). Deliberately aiming the ball at an opponent's head may be penalized as Unsportsmanlike Conduct (Section [8.3.1](#)).

6.2.7**Ball Striking a Player in Flight**

If a returned ball touches any player (including the head or face) before it lands, the player who struck it is eliminated: the return did not land in a different quadrant (Section [6.2.1](#)). If the player touched moved into the ball's path or attempted to play it, that player has struck the ball before it bounced and is eliminated instead. A serve that touches a player before landing is an Illegal Serve (Section [8.2.2](#)). The Officiator decides.

6.3**Eliminations****6.3.1****Elimination Criteria**

A player is immediately eliminated if they:

- Fail to return the ball after it has bounced once in their quadrant.
- Allow the ball to bounce more than once in their quadrant.
- Return the ball out of bounds (outside the 24×24-foot Grid).
- Return the ball into their own quadrant.
- Commit a third Foot Fault (Section [8.1.1](#)).
- Strike the ball illegally under Section [6.2.4](#) (a closed fist, or a catch, hold, carry or throw), or commit an Illegal Touch (Section [6.2.5](#)).
- Return a ball that touches a player before it lands, or move into the path of a ball in flight or play it before it bounces (Section [6.2.7](#)).
- Commit any foul that carries an Elimination penalty under Section [8](#).

6.3.2**Result of Elimination**

When a player is eliminated, the following occur in order:

- The opposing team is awarded 1 point.
- The eliminated player exits the Grid immediately, across the nearest Outer Boundary line of their quadrant without crossing another quadrant, and returns to the team bench outside the out-of-bounds area.

- Every player in a quadrant below the vacated quadrant on the Z-path (Entry → Minor → Major → Prime) advances one quadrant, regardless of team. Players above the vacancy do not move.
- The eliminated team's Next In Player then enters at Entry from the team's Next In Box (Section 4.4.2).
- The round ends and a new round begins with a Prime serve.

6.4

Rotation System

6.4.1

Rotation Mechanics

The Z-path rotation is the structural engine of Gridball. Every Elimination triggers a rotation. The sequence is always Entry → Minor → Major → Prime, and only players below the vacancy move (Section 2.4.1). No quadrant may be left unoccupied during play. If a rotation would leave a quadrant empty, a new Next In Player enters at Entry before play resumes.

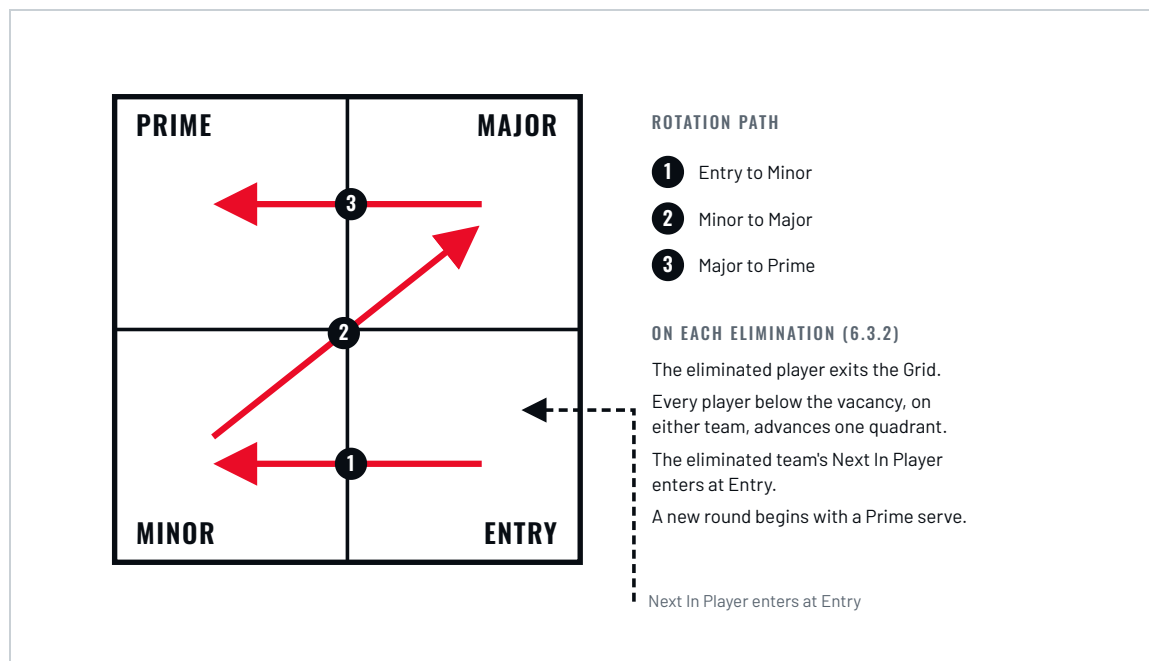


Figure 6.1 – Z-path Grid Rotation Player Rotation Sequence: Entry → Minor → Major → Prime (Z-path)

6.4.2

Continuous Rotation

The rotation system operates continuously throughout each quarter. Each team must have its Next In Player in its Next In Box before each round (Section 4.4.2). An empty Next In Box when the Officials Table is ready is a Time Wasting infraction under Section 8.1.2.

6.5 Out-of-Bounds

6.5.1 Defining Out-of-Bounds

A ball is out of bounds when it lands outside the 24×24-foot Grid boundary — that is, outside the Outer Boundary line as defined in Section 3.1.4. The out-of-bounds area surrounding the Grid is not part of the playing surface.

Note: A ball touching the Outer Boundary line is in. A serve or return that lands on a Quadrant Line (the lines dividing the Grid into quadrants) is a **line fault**: the player who struck it is eliminated, with standard rotation and 1 point to the opposing team. Out of bounds is decided only by whether the ball has landed beyond the Outer Boundary of the full 24×24-foot Grid.

6.5.2 Out-of-Bounds Returns

If a player returns the ball out of bounds, that player is immediately eliminated. The out-of-bounds call is an automatic Elimination — no warning or graduated penalty applies. The opposing team is awarded 1 point and the standard rotation is triggered.

6.5.3 Outside Interference

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

6.6 Restarts

6.6.1 Restart After a Non-Eliminating Foul

When play is stopped for a foul that does not eliminate a player, the round continues: the ball is re-served from Prime and no counts change.

SECTION 07

7 Scoring

7.1 Points System**7.3** Continuous Rounds Scoring**7.2** Scoring Methods Explained

7.1 Points System

Gridball's scoring system rewards three categories of achievement: direct Eliminations, sustained positional dominance through Grid Holds, and superior positional control through Gridlocks. The balance between these scoring opportunities drives both offensive aggression and defensive strategy.

7.1.1 Eliminations

1 point. See Section [7.2.1](#).

7.1.2 Grid Holds

3 points. See Section [7.2.2](#).

7.1.3 Gridlocks

7 points. See Section [7.2.3](#).

A Gridlock is the most difficult scoring achievement in Gridball. The same player must remain in Prime for four consecutive rounds to earn the Gridlock bonus.

7.2 Scoring Methods Explained

7.2.1 Elimination Points

Eliminations are the primary and most frequent scoring mechanism. Every Elimination awards 1 point regardless of which quadrant the eliminated player occupied. Only one Elimination occurs in a round, because the Elimination ends the round.

Elimination points accumulate rapidly during strong runs of play, creating momentum shifts that can swing a quarter's outcome significantly.

7.2.2 Grid Hold Points

A Grid Hold is achieved when the same player remains in the Major quadrant for four consecutive complete rounds. The count belongs to the player. It advances by one each time a round ends with that player still in Major, and resets only when that player is eliminated or leaves the quadrant. On the fourth count the team is awarded 3 points and the count restarts at zero. All counts reset at the start of each quarter; counts carry into overtime (Section [5.2.1](#)). 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.

Grid Hold tracking is maintained by the official scorekeeper and communicated to the Head Officiator. Players and coaches are responsible for tracking their own round counts.

7.2.3

Gridlock Points

A Gridlock is achieved when the same player remains in the Prime quadrant for four consecutive complete rounds. The count belongs to the player. It advances by one each time a round ends with that player still in Prime, and resets only when that player is eliminated or leaves the quadrant. On the fourth count the team is awarded 7 points and the count restarts at zero. All counts reset at the start of each quarter; counts carry into overtime (Section 5.2.1). 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.

A round is complete only when an Elimination occurs (see Section 7.3).

The Head Officiator signals a confirmed Gridlock per the hand signal in Appendix 12.3.

7.3

Continuous Rounds Scoring

A round begins with the Prime serve and ends only when a player is eliminated. A non-eliminating foul, stoppage, timeout or replay does not end the round; play resumes within the same round with a new Prime serve. Rounds occur continuously within each 16-minute quarter. The game clock runs as set out in Section 5.1.

The continuous nature of rounds creates compounding scoring opportunities. A team on a dominant run can accumulate Elimination points, Grid Hold points, and Gridlock points within the same sustained period of control — creating scoring surges that can dramatically shift the match score in a short window of time.

SECTION 08

8 Fouls and Penalties

8.1 Minor Infractions

8.2 Moderate Infractions

8.3 Severe Infractions

8.4 Technical Infractions

8.5 Ejections and Forfeitures

Gridball's foul and penalty system is designed to deter violations, maintain fair play, and protect the integrity of competition.

Infractions are categorized by severity, with escalating penalties for repeated offenses.

- **Points:** the points listed are the total awarded for that offense, including any Elimination point.
- **Offense counts:** kept per player, per foul type, for the whole match (overtime included). 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.
- **Penalty Elimination:** uses standard rotation and the eliminated team's Next In Player.
- **Gains possession:** after rotation, the awarded team's player highest on the Z-path moves into Prime and exchanges quadrants with the player there. The scorer confirms the move. Both moved players' Grid Hold and Gridlock counts reset.
- **Score floor:** a team's score cannot fall below zero.
- **Restart:** a foul that does not eliminate a player does not end the round (Section [6.6.1](#)).

8.1 Minor Infractions

8.1.1 Foot Faults

A Foot Fault is called when a player strikes the ball while any part of their body is outside the boundary of their assigned quadrant.

- **First Offense:** Warning issued by an Officiator.
- **Second Offense:** The offending team loses 1 point.
- **Third Offense:** The offending player is eliminated. The opposing team is awarded 1 point. Standard rotation applies.

8.1.2 Time Wasting

Time Wasting occurs when a player takes an unreasonable amount of time to serve, when a team's Next In Box is empty when the Officials Table is ready or its Next In Player is slow to enter at Entry (Section [4.4.2](#)), or when any player unnecessarily delays the resumption of play.

- **First Offense:** Warning issued by an Officiator.

- **Second Offense:** The opposing team is awarded 1 point.
- **Third Offense:** The offending player is eliminated. The opposing team is awarded 2 points and gains possession (Prime serve). Standard rotation applies.

8.2 Moderate Infractions

8.2.1 Double Touch

A Double Touch occurs when a player strikes the ball twice consecutively before it reaches another quadrant.

- **First Offense:** The opposing team is awarded 1 point.
- **Second Offense:** The offending player is eliminated. The opposing team is awarded 2 points.

8.2.2 Illegal Serve

An illegal serve includes any serve that does not bounce in the Prime quadrant, fails to reach an opponent's quadrant, is executed overhand, or otherwise violates Section [6.1.1](#).

- **First Offense:** Warning issued by an Officiator.
- **Second Offense:** The opposing team is awarded 1 point.
- **Third Offense:** The offending player is eliminated. The opposing team is awarded 2 points.

8.3 Severe Infractions

8.3.1 Unsportsmanlike Conduct

Unsportsmanlike Conduct includes aggressive behavior, taunting, disrespectful gestures, verbal abuse directed at opponents, officials, or spectators, or any act deemed disrespectful by the officiating crew.

- **First Offense:** The offending team loses 1 point.
- **Second Offense:** The offending player is ejected from the match (Section [8.5.1](#)).

8.3.2 Deliberate Interference

Deliberate Interference is any intentional action to obstruct, impede, or interfere with an opponent's ability to play the ball or to move within their quadrant.

Players may communicate with their own partner at any time, including decoy calls. A player may not direct words at an opponent while the ball is in play, make a line or out call on a ball traveling toward the opponents, or imitate an Officiator's whistle or call. Doing so is Deliberate Interference. Line and out calls belong to the receiving side and the Officiators only.

- **First Offense:** The opposing team is awarded 2 points.
- **Second Offense:** The offending player is eliminated. The opposing team is awarded 2 points (including the Elimination point) and gains possession. Standard rotation applies.
- **Third Offense:** The offending player is ejected (Section [8.5.1](#)).

8.4 Technical Infractions

8.4.1 Uniform Violations

A uniform violation occurs when a player's equipment does not comply with Section [3.3](#).

- **First Offense:** Warning issued. Player must correct the violation immediately.
- **Second Offense:** The offending team loses 1 point.
- **Third Offense:** The offending player is eliminated (no points awarded) and may not re-enter the Grid until the violation is corrected.

8.4.2 Equipment Malfunction

Equipment malfunction includes a broken shoe or any equipment failure that disrupts play. A ball problem is handled under Section [3.2.2](#).

- **First Offense:** An equipment stoppage of up to 75 seconds, not charged to either team's timeouts. No penalty.
- **Second Offense (if issue persists beyond reasonable time):** The opposing team is awarded 1 point.

8.5 Ejections and Forfeitures

8.5.1 Ejection Rules

A player who accumulates sufficient infractions or commits a severe single offense may be ejected by the Head Officiator. An ejected player leaves the Grid immediately and is ineligible for the rest of the match. If on the Grid, they are removed as an Elimination with standard rotation and the Next In Player enters; no points are awarded for the ejection itself. The team continues with its remaining eligible players.

The Head Officiator reports every ejection to the Commissioner within 24 hours.

8.5.2 Forfeiture Rules

Forfeiture occurs under two distinct circumstances:

- **Pre-Match Forfeiture:** If a team cannot field a minimum of 7 eligible players at the time of scheduled match commencement, they forfeit the match before play begins.
- **Mid-Match Forfeiture:** If a team is reduced to fewer than 2 eligible players at any point during a match — due to ejections, injuries, or any other cause — they forfeit the match immediately.

In all forfeiture cases, the opposing team wins by default. The forfeit counts as a win for the opposing team and a loss for the forfeiting team in the official standings, and does not affect either team's point differential. The forfeiting team is subject to any additional league disciplinary review at the Commissioner's discretion.

SECTION 09

9 Officiating

9.1 Role of the Officiators

9.3 Handling Disputes and Challenges

9.2 Officiator Placement and Duties

9.1 Role of the Officiators

Officiators are the on-court authorities responsible for enforcing all rules, managing game flow, and ensuring the integrity of every NGL match. Four Officiators work each match, one per side of the Grid (Prime-Major, Major-Entry, Entry-Minor, Minor-Prime). One is designated Head Officiator before the match.

9.1.1 Officiator Responsibilities

- Monitor all gameplay within their assigned quadrant zones.
- Call Eliminations, Foot Faults, Double Touches, Illegal Serves, and all other infractions as they occur.
- Manage the serve clock and Time Wasting infractions.
- Confirm each Grid Hold and Gridlock award with the official scorekeeper. The table keeps the counts.
- Handle challenges and initiate replay review when applicable.
- Communicate decisions clearly to players, coaches, and the scorekeeper.

9.1.2 Officiator Authority

Officiators hold final on-court decision-making authority. Their rulings are binding except where overturned through the formal challenge and replay review process defined in [Section 9.3](#). Arguing with Officiator decisions, outside of the formal challenge process, constitutes Unsportsmanlike Conduct under [Section 8.3.1](#).

9.1.3 Jurisdiction

Officiators' jurisdiction runs from the ball inspection to the Head Officiator's sign-off. Scoring errors may be corrected until sign-off.

9.1.4 Certification

Every Officiator must be certified by the NGL at Level 1 (Community), Level 2 (Certified) or Level 3 (Championship). The Head Officiator must hold Level 2 or higher. Officiators keep their level by passing a rules test every season. Requirements for each level are set out in the NGL Game Officials Handbook.

9.2 Officiator Placement and Duties

9.2.1

Officiator Positions

Four Officiators, one per side of the Grid, each standing 2–3 feet outside the midpoint of their side. Each Officiator owns the Outer Boundary line of their side and one primary quadrant: the quadrant on their right as they face the court.

- **Officiator 1** — Prime–Major side. The Head Officiator, straight across the Grid from the Officials Table. Primary quadrant: Prime, with responsibility for serve legality.
- **Officiator 2** — Major–Entry side. Primary quadrant: Major. Also watches the Next In Boxes and each Next In Player's entry (Section 4.4.2).
- **Officiator 3** — Entry–Minor side. Primary quadrant: Entry. Table liaison at the Officials Table (Section 12.5).
- **Officiator 4** — Minor–Prime side. Primary quadrant: Minor.

Every quadrant also has a secondary Officiator: the one on the other side that touches it, who backs up the primary. Officiator 4 is secondary on Prime and the serve. After an Elimination, the primary Officiator of the eliminated quadrant resets the ball (Section 6.1.5). Officiating procedure is set out in the NGL Game Officials Handbook (Chapter 6).

9.2.2

Fixed Positions

Officiators keep the same side and primary quadrant for the whole match, overtime included. There is no halftime rotation.

9.2.3

Communication

Officiators communicate with each other through official hand signals (see Appendix 12.3), earpiece systems where available, and pre-established protocols. Synchronized decision-making between Officiators is required for Elimination calls that span multiple quadrants.

9.3 Handling Disputes and Challenges

9.3.1

Challenge System

Each team is permitted 2 challenges per half. Challenges may be used to dispute calls related to Eliminations, scoring events, or fouls. The Head Coach must signal a challenge within 15 seconds of the disputed play. Teams must have at least one timeout remaining to initiate a challenge. A team with no timeouts remaining may not challenge. 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; that timeout comes off the 7 match timeouts and does not count toward the 2 timeouts a team may call in a quarter. Challenges do not reset for overtime.

9.3.2

Replay Review

In official NGL venues equipped with replay technology, the Head Officiator may consult video footage to adjudicate challenges. The review process is as follows:

- The Head Coach signals a challenge within 15 seconds of the disputed play.
- The Head Officiator calls a stoppage and initiates replay review.
- The Head Officiator reviews available footage and announces a final decision within 60 seconds.
- The decision is announced to both teams and is final. No further dispute is permitted.

In venues without replay technology, challenges are adjudicated by a panel of all four Officiators by majority vote, with the Head Officiator casting the deciding vote in the event of a tie.

9.3.3

Protests

Only the misapplication of a rule may be protested, never a judgment call. The captain must notify the Head Officiator before sign-off, and the protest is noted on the match record. The written protest is due to the league within 24 hours of the match. The Commissioner decides the protest, and the decision is final.

SECTION 10

10 Player and Team Metrics

10.1	Grid Performance Rating (GPR)	10.5	Interpretation and Use of Metrics
10.2	Average Grid Performance Rating (AGPR)	10.6	Team Performance Index (TPI)
10.3	Grid Time Distribution (GTD)	10.7	Official Record Keeping
10.4	Games Played (GP)		

The NGL employs a comprehensive performance metrics system designed to evaluate individual players and teams with precision and consistency. These metrics inform awards, contract evaluations, team strategy, and official league records.

PERFORMANCE METRICS AT A GLANCE

GPR — GRID PERFORMANCE RATING (SINGLE-GAME)

$$GPR = (E \times 1) + (GH \times 3) + (GL \times 7) + (A \times 2) + (DP \times 1) + (CP \times 2) - (F \times 2)$$

E = Eliminations · GH = Grid Holds · GL = Gridlocks · A = Assists · DP = Defensive Plays · CP = Clutch Plays · F = Fouls
Note: GPR may be negative if foul penalties exceed scoring contributions. No floor on GPR.

AGPR

Avg Grid Performance Rating

$$\text{Sum of GPRs} \div \text{Games Played}$$

GTD%

Grid Time Distribution

$$(\text{Time in quadrant} \div \text{Total game time}) \times 100$$

GC%

Grid Control

$$(\text{Rounds holding Prime \& Major} \div \text{Total rounds}) \times 100$$

TPI — TEAM PERFORMANCE INDEX

$$TPI = (PD \times 0.4) + (AGPR \times 0.3) + (GC \times 0.2) + (TPP \times 0.1)$$

PD = Point Differential (0.4) · AGPR = Team Average GPR (0.3) · GC = Grid Control % (0.2) · TPP = Team Play Points (0.1)

10.1

Grid Performance Rating (GPR)

The Grid Performance Rating is the primary metric for evaluating a player's performance in a single game. GPR captures all significant in-game contributions — positive and negative — in a single numerical value.

10.1.1

GPR Formula

$$GPR = (E \times 1) + (GH \times 3) + (GL \times 7) + (A \times 2) + (DP \times 1) + (CP \times 2) - (F \times 2)$$

10.1.2

Component Definitions

- **E** — Eliminations: Number of times the player successfully forced an opponent off the Grid.

- **GH** — Grid Holds: Number of Grid Hold completions (fourth consecutive count in Major; Section 7.2.2).
- **GL** — Gridlocks: Number of Gridlock completions (fourth consecutive count in Prime; Section 7.2.3).
- **A** — Assists: See definition below.
- **DP** — Defensive Plays: See definition below.
- **CP** — Clutch Plays: See definition below.
- **F** — Fouls: Number of penalized infractions committed during the game.

Assist (A) — An Assist is credited when a player's legal return directly forces an opponent into a compromised position from which the player's teammate scores an Elimination on the immediately following play, with no intervening touches by any other player. The Head Officiator has final authority on all Assist designations.

Defensive Play (DP) — A Defensive Play is recorded when a player successfully returns a ball that, in the official judgment of the Head Officiator, carried significant elimination potential — including but not limited to sharp-angle returns, low-bounce shots, or high-velocity serves returned under pressure. Standard returns made under routine game conditions do not qualify. The Head Officiator has final authority on all Defensive Play designations.

Clutch Play (CP) — A Clutch Play is automatically credited for any Elimination, Grid Hold completion, or Gridlock completion achieved during the final 2 minutes of any quarter, or during any round of overtime. Clutch Play designation requires no Officiator discretion — all qualifying plays within the defined time window are automatically recorded as Clutch Plays by the official scorekeeper.

Note on Negative GPR: A player's GPR may be negative if foul penalties exceed scoring contributions. Negative GPR is informative — it signals a foul-heavy, low-contribution performance — and is published openly in official statistics. There is no floor on GPR.

10.2

Average Grid Performance Rating (AGPR)

The Average Grid Performance Rating measures a player's consistent performance across multiple games.

$$\text{AGPR} = (\text{Sum of GPRs}) \div (\text{Number of Games Played})$$

10.2.1

Calculation Periods

- **Full season AGPR** — calculated across all games played in the regular season.
- **Rolling 10-game AGPR** — calculated across the most recent 10 games played.

10.2.2 Minimum Games Requirement

A player must have participated in a minimum of 5 games for their AGPR to be officially recognized in league statistics. Players below this threshold are listed as 'qualifying' until the minimum is reached.

10.3 Grid Time Distribution (GTD)

GTD reflects the percentage of game time a player spends in each quadrant, providing insight into player role and positional versatility.

$$\text{GTD}\% = (\text{Time in quadrant} \div \text{Total game time}) \times 100$$

GTD is reported as four percentages — one per quadrant — totaling 100%. Example: Prime 30%, Major 28%, Minor 22%, Entry 20%. GTD is tracked and reported by the official scorekeeper.

10.4 Games Played (GP)

Games Played is a count of the number of matches in which a player has participated. A player must have entered the Grid at least once during a match to be credited with a GP. GP provides context for all other metrics and indicates player availability and durability across a season.

10.5 Interpretation and Use of Metrics

- **GPR** — Game MVP selection, single-game performance evaluation, post-match analysis.
- **AGPR** — Season awards, contract negotiations, overall player rankings, trade valuations.
- **GTD** — Positional analysis, player development planning, strategic preparation.
- **GP** — Durability tracking, context for all other metrics, playing time management.

10.6 Team Performance Index (TPI)

The Team Performance Index evaluates overall team success, combining individual player metrics with team-wide statistics.

10.6.1 TPI Components

- **PD** — Point Differential: The difference between points scored and points allowed across all games in the calculation period.
- **AGPR** — Team Average GPR: The average of all players' AGPRs, reflecting the collective consistent performance of the roster.
- **GC** — Grid Control: The percentage of total rounds in which the team occupied both Prime and Major simultaneously (see [10.6.2](#)).

- **TPP** – Team Play Points: The sum of all Assists and Defensive Plays recorded by the team per match, reflecting collaborative and defensive execution.

10.6.2

Grid Control (GC) Definition

Grid Control is calculated as the percentage of total rounds in which a team's two active players simultaneously occupied both the Prime and Major quadrants.

$$\text{GC\%} = (\text{Rounds team held both Prime and Major}) \div (\text{Total rounds played}) \times 100$$

GC is tracked by the official scorekeeper on a per-round basis. At the conclusion of each round, the scorekeeper records whether the team held both Prime and Major at the time of the serve. Example: A team holds both Prime and Major for 47 of 80 total rounds in a match → GC = 58.75%.

10.7

Official Record Keeping

All metrics are officially recorded and verified by NGL-certified statisticians. Franchises receive detailed statistical reports following each match. Season-long statistics are publicly available through official NGL channels. Any disputes regarding official statistics must be submitted to the league office within 48 hours of the match in question.

SECTION 11

11 League Structure

11.1	Season Format	11.3	Team Ranking and Progression
11.2	Playoffs and NGL Championship Cup	11.4	Team Expansion and Franchise Guidelines

This section sets out the league format: the planned structure of NGL competition. It describes the intended format, not a league currently in operation.

11.1 Season Format

The NGL season is structured to maximize competitive engagement while avoiding conflict with major established sports leagues. The season runs from late July through early December.

11.1.1 Regular Season Game Count

- **Year 1 (Inaugural Season):** 36 games per team — 18 home, 18 away.
- **Year 2 and beyond:** 48 games per team — 24 home, 24 away.

The reduced Year 1 schedule allows inaugural franchises to establish operations, build local fanbases, and stress-test league logistics before transitioning to the full schedule in Year 2.

11.1.2 Conference Structure

The NGL is organized into two conferences: the Atlantic Conference and the Pacific Conference. Each conference consists of 8 franchises. Franchise placement within conferences is determined by the Commissioner's office based on geographic market, competitive balance, and franchise operational readiness.

The NGL shall begin with 16 franchises, 8 per conference. Future expansion will be managed by the Commissioner's office in accordance with [Section 11.4](#).

11.1.3 Schedule Distribution

In the Year 1 regular season of 36 games per team:

- **24 Conference Games** — 3 games against each of the 7 other teams in the same conference, plus 1 additional rivalry game determined by the Commissioner's office prior to the season.
- **12 Interconference Games** — distributed across all 8 teams in the opposing conference, with exact matchup distribution determined by the Commissioner's office prior to each season.

In Year 2 and beyond, with 48 games per team, the Commissioner's office will establish the updated schedule distribution and communicate it to all franchises no later than 60 days before the regular season begins.

11.2 Playoffs and NGL Championship Cup

11.2.1 Playoff Qualification

Eight teams qualify for the postseason — the top 4 teams from each conference, ranked by regular season record. In the event of tied records, tiebreakers are applied in the following order: head-to-head record, point differential, and TPI ranking.

11.2.2 Playoff Format

The NGL Playoffs are single-elimination throughout all conference rounds.

All conference playoff rounds are single-elimination — one loss ends the season. The NGL Championship Cup is the sole best-of-series round in the postseason.

11.2.3 NGL Championship Cup

The NGL Championship Cup is a best-of-three series between the Atlantic Conference Champion and the Pacific Conference Champion. The series is played at a neutral site, with the host city rotating annually.

- **Format:** Best-of-three. The first team to win 2 games wins the NGL Championship Cup.
- **Site:** Neutral, rotating host city selected by the Commissioner's office.
- **Designation:** Each Championship is designated by Roman numeral corresponding to the season number (NGL Championship Cup I, NGL Championship Cup II, etc.).
- **Trophy:** The NGL Championship Cup trophy is presented to the winning team at the conclusion of the final game of the series.

Home court advantage within the NGL Championship Cup series is awarded to the team with the better regular season record. If records are equal, the team from the conference that produced the higher total combined regular season point differential holds home court.

11.2.4 Optional Play-In Tournament

The Commissioner's office may elect to implement a Play-In Tournament prior to the Conference Quarterfinals. If implemented, the Play-In would involve seeds 3 through 6 from each conference competing for the final playoff positions. Play-In Tournament structure and format will be announced no later than 30 days before the end of the regular season if it is to be used.

11.3 Team Ranking and Progression

Teams are ranked within their conference based on regular season win-loss record. The GPR and TPI metrics are used as tiebreakers and for seeding determinations as described in Section [11.2.1](#).

End-of-season rankings determine playoff seeding, draft positioning (where applicable in future seasons), and schedule weighting for the following season.

11.4 Team Expansion and Franchise Guidelines

The NGL will begin with 16 franchises distributed between the Atlantic and Pacific Conferences. Future expansion will be managed carefully to protect competitive balance and franchise value.

- Expansion criteria include demonstrated fan market demand, ownership group financial stability, venue compliance with NGL court and facility standards, and league-wide competitive balance review.
- New franchises must meet all operational, financial, and infrastructural standards set by the league office prior to receiving final approval.
- **Franchise identity** – team name, colors, logo, and brand – is entirely within the control of the franchise ownership group, subject to NGL approval for compliance with league branding guidelines.
- The NGL retains all rights to league branding. Franchise branding rights are owned by franchise operators within the boundaries of their franchise agreement.

SECTION 12

12 Appendices

12.1 Official Terminology Guide**12.2** Example Scenarios**12.3** Officiator Hand Signals**12.4** Challenge and Replay Review Procedures**12.5** League Guidelines for Stadium Setup**12.6** Injury Protocols

The appendices provide supplementary reference materials for players, coaches, officials, and franchise operators. These materials support the core rules but do not supersede them.

12.1

Official Terminology Guide

Official terms are defined in the Glossary (Section 13), which replaces the separate terminology list of earlier editions.

12.2

Example Scenarios

SCENARIO 1: ELIMINATION AND ROTATION

Team A has Player X in Prime and Player Y in Major. Team B has Player W in Minor and Player V in Entry. Player W fails to return a serve from Player X. Player W is eliminated. Team A scores 1 point. Player V (Team B), the only player below the vacated Minor quadrant, advances from Entry to Minor; Players X and Y are above the vacancy and do not move. Team B's designated Next In Player enters at Entry. Play resumes with Player X serving from Prime.

SCENARIO 2: GRID HOLD

Player X (Team A) has a Grid Hold count of 3 in Major. The next round ends when a Team B player is eliminated, with Player X still in Major. The scorekeeper confirms the fourth count. The Head Officiator signals a Grid Hold. Team A is awarded 3 points for the Grid Hold and 1 for the Elimination, and Player X's count restarts at zero.

SCENARIO 3: GRIDLOCK

Player X (Team A) serves from Prime for 4 consecutive rounds. Each round ends with an Elimination in which Player X stays in Prime. When the fourth round ends, the Head Officiator signals a Gridlock. Team A is awarded 7 points. Player X's Gridlock count restarts at zero.

SCENARIO 4: FAILED CHALLENGE

Team B challenges an Elimination call. The Head Officiator reviews the play. The original call stands. Team B loses 1 challenge (from 2 to 1 remaining for the half) and 1 timeout (from their match allocation of 7). Team B now has 1 challenge and 6 timeouts remaining.

SCENARIO 5: CLUTCH PLAY

With 1 minute and 45 seconds remaining in the 3rd quarter, Player X scores an Elimination. The scorekeeper automatically records this as a Clutch Play. Player X's GPR gains 1 point (Elimination) plus 2 points (Clutch Play)= 3 GPR points for this single action.

12.3

Officiator Hand Signals

The following are the official NGL Officiator hand signals. All four on-court Officiators are required to use these signals consistently during all sanctioned matches. The descriptions match the illustrated signals in the NGL Game Officials Handbook (Chapter 9).

SIGNAL	CALL	SIGNAL DESCRIPTION
01	Start of Quarter	Whistle; one arm straight up, index finger extended.
02	End of Quarter	Arms crossed overhead in an X, then lowered to the sides.
03	Prime Serve	Whistle; arm extended toward Prime, pointing at the court.
04	Elimination	Point at the eliminated player, then wind the forearms around each other (rotation).
05	Grid Hold	Thumbs and index fingers form a diamond above the head.
06	Gridlock	Arm at a right angle (an L), then fists pressed together (the lock).
07	Out of Bounds	Both forearms raised vertically in front of the shoulders.
08	Illegal Serve	Arm extended forward at waist height, palm down (the serve must bounce in Prime).
09	Timeout	Hands form a T, then point to the team.
10	Challenge	Fist raised to shoulder height, repeating the coach's signal, then point to that team's bench.
11	Unsportsmanlike Conduct	Grasp the wrist at chest level with the opposite hand.
12	Deliberate Interference	Arms crossed at the chest, then spread wide at hip height.
13	Foot Fault	Bend and point at your own foot.
14	Double Touch	Palms apart, then clap together; give it twice.
15	Warning	Point at the player, then raise a palm toward them (stop).
16	Ejection	Point at the player, then sweep the arm away from the court.
17	Ball In	Point down at the floor inside the line.

18	Replay	Both thumbs up at shoulder height.
19	Possession	Point at the awarded team, then point toward Prime.

12.4 Challenge and Replay Review Procedures

Challenges must be initiated by the Head Coach within 15 seconds of the disputed play. The coach signals a challenge using the official challenge signal (clenched fist raised). Challenges may not be initiated by players on the Grid.

Upon receiving a challenge signal, the Head Officiator calls a stoppage. In venues with replay technology, the Head Officiator reviews footage and announces a decision within 60 seconds. In venues without replay technology, all four Officiators confer and reach a majority decision, with the Head Officiator casting the deciding vote in the event of a tie. Outcomes: Successful challenge – call overturned, team retains challenge and timeout. Failed challenge – original call stands, team loses one challenge and one timeout (from the match total; not counted toward the per-quarter limit). No further dispute of the reviewed call is permitted.

12.5 League Guidelines for Stadium Setup

- **Court Placement** – The Grid must be positioned centrally within the venue with a minimum of 10 feet of out-of-bounds space on all four sides in official NGL venues.
- **Team Benches** – Team A Bench and Team B Bench, one on each side of the Officials Table along the Minor-Entry baseline, outside the out-of-bounds area and the Officiator observation area.
- **Officials Table** – Directly below the Minor and Entry quadrants, along the Minor-Entry baseline, outside the out-of-bounds area. Officiator 3 is the table liaison (Section 9.2.1).
- **Next In Boxes** – Two 4 × 4 ft boxes, side by side with 1 foot between them, on the Major-Entry side just outside the out-of-bounds area, centered level with the middle of Entry; Team A's nearer the Minor-Entry baseline, Team B's nearer Major. Nothing else may be placed in or in front of them (Section 4.4.2, Figure 4.1).
- **Camera Positions** – Four cameras positioned at the four corners of the outer boundary, outside the out-of-bounds area, for full court coverage.
- **Spectator Seating** – Must provide unobstructed sightlines to the full Grid from all seating positions.
- **Media Areas** – Designated positions that do not encroach on the Officiator observation area, player bench areas or the Next In Boxes.
- **Sponsor Signage** – Permitted on all four sides of the outer boundary area and on the court surface outside the Grid, per NGL sponsor placement guidelines.

12.6

Injury Protocols

Player safety is the NGL's highest operational priority. All injury protocols supersede competitive considerations.

- **Injury Stoppage** — The Head Officiator stops play for any injury. If the injured player cannot continue within 75 seconds, the Next In Player replaces them in the same quadrant: there is no rotation, no points are awarded, 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.
- **Injury Stoppage Allowance** — Each team has one injury stoppage per quarter that is not charged to its timeouts. Any further injury stoppage for that team in the quarter is charged as a timeout.
- **Medical Evaluation** — Any player showing signs of a serious injury must be evaluated by the team's medical staff before being cleared to return to competition. The Head Officiator may suspend play to allow evaluation at any time.
- **Concussion Protocol** — Any player suspected of suffering a concussion must be removed from the match immediately and undergo a formal concussion assessment before any return to competition. No same-day return to play is permitted for a confirmed or suspected concussion.
- **Emergency Protocol** — In the event of a serious injury requiring emergency medical attention, the Head Officiator has authority to suspend the match indefinitely. Match resumption, rescheduling, or forfeiture determination will be made by the Commissioner's office.

SECTION 13

13 Glossary

Key terms used throughout this rulebook, listed alphabetically.

AGPR (Average Grid Performance Rating) – A player's average GPR across all games played. Minimum 5 games for official recognition.

Assist – GPR metric. Credited when a player's return directly forces an opponent into a position from which the player's teammate immediately scores an Elimination, with no intervening touches.

Ball Movement – The motion of the Gridball through legal returns across quadrants during a round.

Ball Reset – Putting the ball in the Prime player's hands before a serve: by the Head Officiator at the start of each quarter and after a stoppage, otherwise by the Officiator who called the Elimination (Section 6.1.5).

Challenge – A formal request by a team's Head Coach to review an Officiator's call. Each team has 2 challenges per half.

Captain – The rostered player named by each team before the match to call the toss and ask the Head Officiator to explain a ruling.

Clutch Play – GPR metric. Automatically credited for any Elimination, Grid Hold, or Gridlock in the final 2 minutes of any quarter or during overtime.

Co-Ed Roster Requirement – The mandatory NGL rule requiring each team roster to include exactly 7 male-identifying and 7 female-identifying athletes. There is no gender requirement for the players on the Grid.

Defensive Play – GPR metric. Recorded for a successful return of a ball carrying significant elimination potential per Head Officiator judgment.

Elimination – The removal of a player from the Grid after failing to make a legal return or committing a qualifying foul.

Entry – The lower-right quadrant. The position where the Next In Player enters the Grid.

Foot Fault – Infraction for striking the ball while outside the boundary of one's assigned quadrant.

GC (Grid Control) – TPI metric. Percentage of rounds in which a team held both Prime and Major simultaneously.

GP (Games Played) – The number of matches in which a player has entered the Grid.

GPR (Grid Performance Rating) – Single-game individual performance metric. Formula: $(E \times 1) + (GH \times 3) + (GL \times 7) + (A \times 2) + (DP \times 1) + (CP \times 2) - (F \times 2)$.

Grid Advantage — The strategic benefit of beginning a half with players positioned in Prime and Major. Awarded by coin toss prior to the match.

Grid Advantage Starters — The two players designated by the coaching staff to occupy Prime and Major at the start of a half when their team holds Grid Advantage.

Grid Hold — 3-point scoring event. Awarded on a player's fourth consecutive round-end count in Major. Counts reset at the start of each quarter and carry into overtime.

Gridlock — 7-point scoring event. Awarded on a player's fourth consecutive round-end count in Prime. Counts reset at the start of each quarter and carry into overtime.

Head Officiator — The Officiator designated before the match to lead the crew, rule on reviews and sign off the result.

Hinder — A ball that, after bouncing in a player's quadrant, strikes that player's head or face when the player was not attempting to play it. The rally is replayed from a new Prime serve with no penalty (Section 6.2.6).

Illegal Touch — The ball touching a player anywhere other than the hands or forearms after it bounces in that player's quadrant. Not a legal return; the player is eliminated (Section 6.2.5).

GTD (Grid Time Distribution) — Metric reflecting the percentage of game time a player spends in each quadrant.

Major — The upper-right quadrant. Grid Hold eligible.

Minor — The lower-left quadrant. Transitional position. No bonus scoring eligibility.

Next In Box — A marked 4 × 4 ft area for each team on the Major-Entry side, level with Entry, where the Next In Player waits (Section 4.4.2).

Next In Player — The player in a team's Next In Box, who enters the Grid at Entry following a teammate's Elimination.

Officiator — One of the four on-court officials, one per side of the Grid (formerly "referee").

NGL Championship Cup — The annual championship series. Best-of-three between the Atlantic and Pacific Conference champions at a neutral rotating site.

Overtime — Sudden-death continuation of the fourth quarter from its final Grid position, with Grid Hold, Gridlock and foul counts carried over. First team to lead by 2 points in total score wins.

Point Differential (PD) — The difference between a team's total points scored and total points allowed across a defined period.

Prime — The upper-left quadrant. The serving position. Gridlock eligible.

Prime Serve — The underhand serve executed by the Prime player to initiate each round.

Possession — Which team occupies Prime. For "gains possession", see Section 8.

Rotation — After an Elimination, every player below the vacancy on the Z-path advances one quadrant, regardless of team; the eliminated team's Next In Player enters at Entry.

Round — Begins with the Prime serve and ends only when a player is eliminated. A non-eliminating foul, stoppage, timeout or replay does not end the round.

The Grid — The official name for the Gridball playing court. A 24×24-foot square divided into four 12×12-foot quadrants.

Timeout — A 75-second break called by a team between rounds. Maximum 7 per match, 2 per quarter, 2 in overtime.

TPI (Team Performance Index) — Team performance metric. Formula: $(PD \times 0.4) + (AGPR \times 0.3) + (GC \times 0.2) + (TPP \times 0.1)$.

TPP (Team Play Points) — The sum of all Assists and Defensive Plays recorded by a team per match.

Z-path — The rotation route Entry → Minor → Major → Prime. Called the Z-Formation in earlier editions.

SECTION 14

14 Index

Alphabetical reference guide to key topics, rules, and concepts in this rulebook.

A

AGPR (Average Grid Performance Rating) – Section [10.2](#)

Assist – Sections [10.1.2](#), [10.6.1](#), [13](#)

B

Ball Specifications – Section [3.2](#)

Ball Movement – Sections [6.2](#), [13](#)

Ball Reset – Sections [6.1.5](#), [9.2.1](#), [13](#)

C

Captain – Section [4.6](#)

Challenge System – Sections [9.3](#), [12.4](#)

Clock – Sections [5.1](#), [5.1.1](#)

Clutch Play – Sections [5.2.2](#), [10.1.2](#), [13](#)

Co-Ed Roster Requirement – Section [4.1.1](#)

Coaching Staff – Section [4.5](#)

Coin Toss – Section [2.5.1](#)

Court Dimensions – Sections [3.1.1](#), [3.1.2](#)

Court Markings – Section [3.1.4](#)

D

Defensive Play – Sections [10.1.2](#), [13](#)

Double Touch – Section [8.2.1](#)

E

Ejections – Sections [8.3](#), [8.5.1](#)

Eliminations – Sections [2.6.4](#), [6.3](#), [7.1.1](#), [7.2.1](#), [13](#)

Entry Quadrant – Sections [2.6.1](#), [3.1.2](#), [4.2](#), [13](#)

Equipment – Section [3.3](#)

Equipment Malfunction – Section [8.4.2](#)

F

Foot Faults – Sections [6.2.2](#), [8.1.1](#), [13](#)

Fouls – Section [8](#)

Forfeiture – Section [8.5.2](#)

G

Game Structure – Section [5](#)

Games Played (GP) – Section [10.4](#)

GC (Grid Control) – Sections [10.6.2](#), [13](#)

GPR (Grid Performance Rating) – Section [10.1](#)

Grid Advantage – Sections [2.5](#), [5.4](#), [6.1.2](#), [13](#)

Grid Advantage Starters – Sections [4.2.2](#), [13](#)

Grid Hold – Sections [2.3](#), [7.1.2](#), [7.2.2](#), [13](#)

Gridlock – Sections [2.3](#), [7.1.3](#), [7.2.3](#), [13](#)

GTD (Grid Time Distribution) – Section [10.3](#)

H

Halftime – Section [5.1](#)

Head Coach – Section [4.5.1](#)

Head Officiator – Sections [9.1](#), [9.2.1](#), [13](#)

Hinder – Sections [6.2.6](#), [13](#)

I

Illegal Serve – Sections [6.1.1](#), [8.2.2](#)

Illegal Touch – Sections [6.2.5](#), [6.3.1](#), [13](#)

In-Flight Contact – Sections [6.2.7](#), [6.3.1](#)

Injury Protocols – Section [12.6](#)

J

Jurisdiction – Section [9.1.3](#)

L

League Structure – Section [11](#)

Legal Contact – Section [6.2.4](#)

M

Major Quadrant – Sections [2.6.1](#), [3.1.2](#), [4.2](#), [7.1.2](#)

Medical Staff – Sections [4.5.4](#), [12.6](#)

Minor Quadrant – Sections [2.6.1](#), [3.1.2](#), [4.2](#)

N

Next In Box – Sections [4.4.2](#), [12.5](#)

Next In Player – Sections [4.3.2](#), [4.4](#), [4.4.2](#), [6.3.2](#), [6.4.1](#), [8.1.2](#), [13](#)

NGL Championship Cup – Sections [11.2.3](#), [13](#)

O

Officiating – Section [9](#)
Officiator Certification – Section [9.1.4](#)
Officiator Hand Signals – Section [12.3](#)
Officiator Placement – Sections [9.2](#), [12.5](#)
Officiator Uniform – Section [3.4](#)
Out-of-Bounds – Sections [3.1.5](#), [6.5](#)
Outside Interference – Section [6.5.3](#)
Overtime – Sections [5.2](#), [6.1.3](#), [13](#)

P

Player Metrics – Section [10](#)
Player Positions – Section [4.2](#)
Playoffs – Section [11.2](#)
Possession – Sections [5.4](#), [8](#), [13](#)
Prime Quadrant – Sections [2.6.1](#), [3.1.2](#), [4.2](#), [7.1.3](#)
Prime Serve – Sections [6.1.1](#), [13](#)
Protective Gear – Section [3.3.2](#)
Protests – Section [9.3.3](#)

Q

Quadrant Confinement – Section [6.2.2](#)
Quadrant Names – Sections [2.6.1](#), [3.1.2](#)
Quarters – Section [5.1](#)

R

Replay Review – Sections [9.3.2](#), [12.4](#)
Restarts – Section [6.6](#)
Rotation System – Sections [2.4.1](#), [4.2.1](#), [6.3.2](#), [6.4](#)
Round – Sections [7.3](#), [13](#)

S

Score Floor – Section [8](#)
Scoring – Section [7](#)
Season Format – Section [11.1](#)
Serve Clock – Section [6.1.4](#)
Serving – Section [6.1](#)
Spectator Areas – Section [3.1.6](#)
Stadium Setup – Section [12.5](#)
Substitutions – Section [4.3](#)

T

Team Composition – Section [4.1](#)
Team Metrics – Section [10.6](#)
Timeouts – Section [5.3](#)
TPI (Team Performance Index) – Section [10.6](#)

U

Uniform Numbers – Section [3.3.4](#)
Uniforms – Section [3.3.1](#)
Unsportsmanlike Conduct – Section [8.3.1](#)

Z

Z-path Rotation – Sections [2.4.1](#), [4.2.1](#), [6.4](#), [13](#)

Revision History

VERSION	EDITION	PUBLISHED	SUMMARY
1.0	—	—	Established the sport's foundational rules.
2.0	—	—	Refined Version 1.0; added the co-ed roster requirement, Grid Advantage Starters and the updated metrics system.
2.1.4	2025 Edition	2025	Previous edition.
3.0	2026 Edition	October 2026	Rounds, rotation, serving, overtime, timeouts, the game clock, Grid Hold/Gridlock counts and several fouls redefined; new rules on legal contact, restarts, outside interference, uniform numbers, captains and jurisdiction; "Officiator" replaces "referee"; glossaries merged; full redesign. See What's New in the 2026 Edition.
3.1	2026 Edition	October 2026	Officiating procedures ratified: left-hand coverage, fixed Officiator positions, Officials Table placement, injury replacement and stoppages, signal wording, serve clock, protests, forfeits, ejection reports, Officiator certification and uniform. Aligns with the NGL Game Officials Handbook, Version 1.0. See What's New in the 2026 Edition.
3.2	2026 Edition	October 2026	Five rulings: returns may go to a teammate; a ball on a Quadrant Line is a line fault; in-place substitutions only between quarters or in a timeout; simultaneous Grid Hold and Gridlock awards at a round-end, including in overtime; partner and decoy calls legal, with calls aimed at opponents and imitating an Officiator made Deliberate Interference. See What's New in the 2026 Edition.
3.3	2026 Edition	October 2026	The Next In Box: where the Next In Player waits, how a team designates and changes its Next In Player, the lock at "Table set", entry and exit paths, Time Wasting, and fixed benches and boxes. See What's New in the 2026 Edition.
3.4	2026 Edition	October 2026	The Head Officiator becomes Officiator 1 on the Prime-Major side, with Prime and the serve; each Officiator's primary quadrant is now the one on their right; new ball reset rule (6.1.5). See What's New in the 2026 Edition.
3.5	2026 Edition	October 2026	Clarifications: the ball reset (Officiators may cross the Grid at a dead ball, hand-off or bounce pass, the calling Officiator resets, the Head after a timeout) and the table keeping the counts (6.1.5, 9.1.1). See What's New in the 2026 Edition.
3.6	2026 Edition	October 2026	Contact: the ball is played only with the open hands or the forearms (below the elbow); a touch on any other part of the body is an Illegal Touch and an Elimination; a ball that hits a player's head or face when they were not playing it is a Hinder and is replayed; a ball that hits a player in flight eliminates the striker unless the player went for it (6.2.4–6.2.7, 6.3.1). See What's New in the 2026 Edition.