



Cornhole Rules & Handbook©

January 12, 2024

Introduction

Rainbow Sports League was founded with the philosophy that all people are welcome to participate in a safe, social, and inclusive environment. The purpose of RSL is to engage members of the LGBTQ+ community, friends, and allies in healthy, active sports and activities by creating and managing structured games, leagues and tournaments in a safe, consistent, and organized fashion.

Rainbow Sports League follows these principals in order and in precedence. At no time shall any higher ranked principal be compromised for the sake of another by any official, team, or player.

- 1) **Safety:** All measures will be taken so that any and all activities rank safety as the league's number one priority.
- 2) **Participation / Inclusion:** All people are welcome in RSL games and activities, and participation is fundamental to all involved.
- 3) **Respect:** All people affiliated with RSL, its teams or its events shall treat each other with dignity and respect at all times, both on and off the field.
- 4) **Fun:** The purpose of RSL in its core, is to foster a fun, philanthropic, social environment.
- 5) **Honesty / Fair Play:** It is expected that all players, teams and officials shall adhere to a strict honor code at all times.
- 6) **Competition:** While RSL games and activities keep score and award champions, at no time shall any player, team, or official allow the competitive nature inherent in sports take precedence over any of the above founding principles.

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Section I – Conduct & Policies

1. **League Principles**

1.1 **Sportsmanship**

Officials, players and their guests shall conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner at all times, including both on and off the field. RSL expects the highest level of respect from anyone affiliated or attending our events and conduct unbecoming will not be tolerated at any time.

1.2 **Agreement:** By participating in an RSL event or activity, each competitor agrees

- a) To be governed by the rules as presented by RSL, both as written and in the spirit and intent of said rules.
- b) To accept any decisions or penalties imposed by said rules.
- c) To respect all aspects of the league's priorities.
- d) To treat all materials, equipment, and venues with great care including the environment in which we are playing. This includes, but is not limited to, garbage, foul language, smoking, illegal substance, weapons, and alcohol policies and damage to property.

1.3 **Drug & Weapons Policy:** Rainbow Sports League is a drug and weapon-free zone, and any use or distribution of any illegal substances or the possession of any weapons of any kind while attending or engaging in any RSL sponsored events is strictly prohibited.

- a) **Alcohol:** While may or may not be regulated by venue restrictions, any public intoxication will not be tolerated and is subject to disciplinary actions, including ejection from venue for the remainder of the day.

1.4 **Weather:** Outdoor activities may be cancelled or delayed under these guidelines.

- a) Lightning within a 30-mile radius, postpones activities for 30 minutes.
- b) Heavy rain of any kind postpones games for one hour following the conclusion of rain.
- c) If similar conditions return within the postponement periods, activities will then be cancelled for the day and re-scheduled according to the rain date calendar.
- d) Games will be cancelled following a 1-hour continual period of heavy rain.
- e) Activities may proceed if the rain is considered light and variable, and the field conditions are safe.
- f) Should any venue or facility be closed or restricted in use, RSL will advise through e-mail and social media communications as soon as possible.
- g) Canceled days will push the entire schedule back one week (including playoffs), up to a maximum of two weeks. If playoffs cannot be held within 2wks of original date, the winners will be determined by regular season records. Individual game cancellations may be made up by adding additional games to a regular season date.

1.5 **Field / Venue Rules:** All rules and policies put in place by the venue must be respected and will be strictly enforced. (Such as, no pets, no smoking, no loud music, no alcohol, etc.)

1.6 **Discrimination:** RSL has a strict no-discrimination policy. If anyone feels they have been discriminated against for any reason they are to report it to league management immediately. Any person affiliated with an RSL event making racial, ethnic, religious, or sexual orientation slurs or actions are subject to disciplinary proceedings up to and including dismissal from the league.

- 1.7 **Bullying & Taunting:** Teasing, shouting, arguing, cheering against, complaining, name-calling, excessive swearing, verbally or physically abusing or intimidating players or game officials in any way (even if intended as a joke, but not received in that manner) will not be tolerating under any circumstances, regardless if it occurs in person, off venue, or on-line.
- 1.8 **Disciplinary Policies:** Apply to any infraction listed or unlisted that is deemed unsportsmanlike or is contrary to the RSL core philosophy and principals.
- a) Game Referee, staff, or league officials may issue warnings.
 - b) Only Game Referees and league officials can issue Yellow or Red Cards at any time.
 - c) Players receiving a Yellow Card must sit out the remainder of the inning (Kickball) or game in match play sports (Dodgeball, Volleyball, Darts, Cornhole etc.). A five-minute sideline penalty issued for timed “period” sports (Soccer, Hockey, Basketball, etc.)
 - d) Red Cards may be issued for more serious violations, and are not required to follow a Yellow Card.
 - e) Red Card “Levels” will be dependent on the severity of the violation as determined by the Game Referee in consultation with league officials.
 - Level 1 Violation: Removed from field of play for the day
 - Level 2 Violation: Removed from field of play for the day and suspended for the next two game days.
 - Level 3 Violation: Removed from field of play, suspended for the remainder of the season, including playoffs, and suspended from all RSL activities for 6 months.
 - Level 4 Violation: Removed from field of play and banned from all RSL activities indefinitely, including the remainder of the season and playoffs.
 - f) After a Red Card has been issued, any additional infraction within its 6-month window will constitute a charge of gross misconduct and will be subject to long-term suspension or permanent ejection from the league as determined by the GM and League Officials.
 - g) Players receiving suspensions or ejections may apply, in writing, for re-instatement following a 6-month waiting period.
- 1.9 **Injury Policies:** Safety is and will always be the number one priority for Rainbow Sports League and the following polices are in place for everyone’s well-being.
- a) Injured players may be replaced or can exit a game at any time without penalties.
 - b) Any injury that incapacitates a player, even if momentarily, will stop active play immediately at the Game Referee’s discretion.
 - c) Any injury to the head that causes any dizziness or unconsciousness must be reported immediately to the attending league officials who shall stop game play to assess the situation. Emergency medical officials will be called for any head related injuries.
 - d) Any injured player that is actively bleeding must exit the field of play and cannot return until the bleeding has stopped or has been treated and covered.
 - e) The RSL will have, on hand, at least one First Aid kit at every venue for use by its players and officials as needed.
 - f) Injured players that required immediate medical attention must provide a doctor’s note verifying that they are recovered and physically capable prior to returning to active play.

Section II – Cornhole Basics

Part 2: Court & Equipment – (RSL reserves the right to adjust court and equipment specifications as needed based on facility and equipment availability)

2.1 **Court** - RSL is responsible for establishing a safe playing court under the following guidelines.

- a) **Surface:** Flat surface of grass, sand or pavement (outdoor) or flooring (indoor) are all acceptable for this league.
- b) **Court size:** 8'-10' Wide x 40'-45' long. Front edge of the boards are 27' apart.
- c) **Game Referee:** May stop play to correct any improper court set-up and at their discretion may reverse a call or institute a replay.
- d) **Protests:** Any protests regarding improper court set up will not be accepted.

2.2 Equipment

- a) **Boards:** Board top – 24"x48". Front standing height: 3"-4". Rear standing height: 12". Hole Diameter: 6". Top of board to hole: 9". Sides of board to hole: 12".
- b) **Bags:** 6"x6" square. Approximately 1" thick. Weight: 14-16oz.
- c) **Uniforms:** Team uniforms are not required.
- d) **Shoes & Gloves:** Athletic footwear is required at all time, however no cleats or spikes permitted of any kind. Gloves of any kind, with or without fingers, are not permitted. Athletic wrapping for protection or injury is permitted.

Part 3: Players

3.1 **A. Number of Players on Roster:** Minimum of 4 and maximum of 5*. Registered players on a roster. **NOTE this may be adjusted by RSL if needed.*

B. Number of Players on the Court: Minimum of 2 and a maximum of 5 may be in active play on the court per game. A "Fifth" player shall rotate in, replacing an active player after each inning.

3.2 **Player Eligibility:** All players must meet the following criteria:

- a) Must be 21 years or older.
- b) Must have signed liability and conduct forms.
- c) Must have paid registration (or substitution) fees.
- d) All players must have a valid photo ID with them on game days, and are subject to verification at any time. Any player without an ID, shall be removed from the game.

3.3 **Team Captain:** Each team shall have one official "Captain" representing their team. This "Captain" may be substituted should the registered captain be absent. Captain may not necessarily play, but must be registered with the team.

3.4 **All Players Participate:** Each player attending a match shall play. (no sit-outs) However, rotating in and out between games or innings is permitted.

3.5 **No Show:** Players who no-show, with no warning or contact, twice during a regular season are subject to removal and replacement by the team captain. Players removed from a roster for this reason are not eligible for refunds.

- 3.6 **Absenteeism:** Players who miss three or more regular season game days, regardless of the reason, are subject to removal and replacement by the team captain. Players removed from a roster for this reason are not eligible for refunds.
- 3.7 **Injury:** Players no longer able to play due to injury may apply for a pro-rated refund.
- 3.8 **Substitutions:** May play on any team under these restrictions:
- a) Regular season matches only (not tournaments).
 - b) They must not be a registered member of any team in the league.
 - c) They must sign a waiver and pay a \$10 “per match” fee prior to playing.
 - d) The team has less than 4 players in attendance
 - e) Each team may only have a maximum of two subs during any regular season match.

Part 4: Teams

(League may be split into two divisions, Competitive & Recreational – all rules apply to both divisions)

- 4.1 **Team Names:** While may be suggestive or double entendre may not be deemed offensive or disrespectful in any way.
- 4.2 **Team Events:** May organize chat rooms, social media accounts, practices, or events, however, the Rainbow Sports League code of conduct extends to those locations as well and must be followed in the same manner.

Section III Cornhole Game Play

Part 5: Fundamental Rules

- 5.1 Matches:** Consist of as many games that are completed within the time limit. (There may be two divisions, Competitive & Recreational)
- 5.2 Time Limits:** There is no individual game time limit; however, there is a 40-minute designated match time limit. The Referee or staff shall attempt to provide 5 minute and 2 minute “warnings” but failure to do so shall not be cause for redress. At the end of the time limit, the game in progress ends and the team with the most points is awarded the win. Should the game be tied, one more inning shall be instituted, and the winner of that inning is awarded the game win. No new innings will be started after the 2-minute warning.
- 5.3 Scoring:** RSL will be using Cancellation Scoring as described by the ACA – Rule 5.12 (j) below. Each game won within a match is awarded a winning “point”.
- 5.4 Match Winning:** The team that wins the most games wins the match. Should the result end in a number-of-games-won tie at the time limit, teams will play sudden death half-innings until one team reaches 5 points to break the tie. If still tied at 5 points, half-innings are played until one team takes a lead, thus breaking the tie.
- 5.5 Tie Games:** There shall be no tie games. Each game must play until a winner is declared.
- 5.6 Warm-Ups:** Each team is entitled to a 5-minute warm up prior to the first game.
- 5.7 Season Standings:** Determined by number of matches won (W/L record). In case of a tie, it is broken by head-to-head records. In case of a further tie, it is broken by total games won throughout the season. There shall be no ties in final season standings.
- 5.8 Home & Visitor Assignments:** IE: Choice of Side vs. throwing honors (first toss), will be determined by a coin toss, Rock-Paper-Scissors shoot out, or other random method provided by the Referee. Sides are switched after every inning. Following the completion of the inning, honors (first toss) is awarded to the team scoring most points in the inning. If the inning results in equal number of points, honors remain with the same team as previous inning.
- 5.9 Referees:** Games will be self-monitored with no referees. However, a designated staff member will be on-site to officiate any disputes. All members of the league accept that the final say on all calls goes to the designated staff.
- 5.10 Rosters:** Prior to the beginning of each match, each team shall submit to the attending staff an attendance roster indicating who from their team will be playing during the match.
- 5.11 Forfeits:** A team not ready at game time forfeits game one. A team not ready at the 5-minute mark, forfeits game 2, and this continues at 5-minute intervals. A team not ready at the 15-minute mark forfeits the match. Teams must have a minimum of 2 players to count.

5.12 Game Play: Games are played under these conditions.

- a) Positions:** Players from the same team, are situated directly across from each other, next to the corresponding board. Players remain on their same side throughout each game but may switch with their team-mates between games.
- b) Bags:** Each team has four bags – with one side designated as the starting side.
- c) First Toss:** The “honors” team tosses one bag, followed by the “home” team. Bags are tossed alternatively until all eight bags are tossed. With four players, the two teammates on each side alternate tosses. That order remains the same between teammates during each game but may switch with their teammates between games. Once all eight bags are tossed from the first side, that point is the end of the top of the first inning.
- d) Receiving:** The “receiving” team keeps score. Once all eight bags are tossed in their direction, the bottom of the inning begins with the same “honors” team starting the toss.
- e) Innings:** At the end of the bottom of the inning, all eight bags are on the same side as the starting point. The “Honors” or first toss, goes to the team with the greatest points from that previous inning. If both teams score the same points for that inning, honors remain with the original team.
- f) Tossing:** All tosses must be underhand. Each toss must take place within a 30 second time limit from the previous toss. Failure to do so may result in the toss being considered a foul.
- g) Foul Line:** Players must not step ON or OVER the foul line, extending from the leading edge of the accompanying board. Bags tossed while ON or OVER the foul lines are considered fouls. No points are scored, and the bag is removed from the court prior to the next toss.
- h) Points:** “Woody” = 1pt – Bag In-The Count (ITC), which is a bag that comes to rest wholly on the board (no part is touching the ground). “Cornhole” = 3pts – Hole In (HI), which is a bag that is tossed or knocked fully into and through the hole. All other bags = 0 pts.
- i) Foul Bags:** Any bag that: Touches the ground before reaching the board, Touches any ancillary object (tree limb, table, beer can, etc.), Is tossed from outside / in front of the foul line, tossed after the 30-second time limit, or... Is touched or removed from the board before the final toss or before scoring is tallied from that half-inning. In that case, the offending (touching) team loses all points from that part of the inning and non-offending team gets awarded 12 points.
- j) Cancellation Scoring:** Cornhole points from either ITC’s (1) or HI’s (3) cancel each other out at each half-inning. IE: When one team scores a point of either type, and the other scores the same point, then no points are awarded for those throws. Different points (ITC’s vs HI’s) do not cancel each other. Only non-canceled points count toward a team’s total.

5.13 Game Ends: When one team reaches 21 at the end of a half-inning. No completion of the second half-inning once a team reaches 21. No “2-point winning margin” needed. No games end in a tie, play continues until one team ends a half-inning with more points than their competitor.

5.14 Subsequent Games: The next game is played immediately following the previous game. Teams play as many games as possible within the time limit.

5.15 Game Schedules: Game schedules, matchups, times, and dates are set by RSL management and are not subject to custom requests or adjustments.

5.16 Skunks (Mercy Rule): If a team scores 7 points before their opponent scores any points (7-0) game ends.

Part 6: Time Outs & Challenges

6.1 Team Captains: Only team captains may challenge calls. Team players arguing, questioning, or challenging any call are subject to disciplinary policies.

6.2 One Per Match: Captains get one official challenge per match. A captain attempting to challenge additional calls during a game will forfeit the game currently being played.

6.3 Time Stop: Time shall be stopped for a maximum of one-minute per challenged call.

6.4 Rules Questions & Clarifications: Captains may request a rules clarification only between games, but it will not change a call made during a previously finished game.

6.5 Intentional Delay of Game: Not permitted under any circumstances and may be subject to game penalties or disciplinary actions.

6.6 Time Outs: Each team is permitted one “Time Out” per match lasting no longer than one minute. However, should an injury occur; the teams may agree to pause play in order to assess the situation or allow assistance to a player.

Section IV Cornhole Tournament Regulations

Part 7: Tournament Details: *(Tournaments may be split into two or more divisions, Competitive & Recreational – at the sole discretion of RSL and may or may not break divisions evenly. All rules apply to both divisions)*

7.1 Timing: Following each regular season, and on special occasions, The Rainbow Sports League may host a special tournament under these guidelines.

7.2 Rules: Tournaments shall follow the same on-court rules and regulations as the regular season. See Sections 1-8.

7.3 Eligibility: To play in the tournaments, each player must qualify under these guidelines.

- a) **Play on the competing team:** Either as a regular roster player, a roster replacement player, or a sub, for at least 1/3 of the regular season matches.
- b) **Roster:** Must be on the team's roster submitted prior to the tournament.
- c) **Tournament Substitutions:** There are no on-site / last-minute substitutions during the season ending tournaments that don't fit the above criteria.
- d) **Roster Replacement Players:** After a season begins, if a player has been removed from a team's roster either by injury or by any other reason, that player may be replaced by another player added to the roster.

D1: The player "dropping off" of the roster does not receive a refund.

D2: The replacement player must pay the full, regular rate, registration fee, minus any substitution fees paid, had they played previously on the same team during that season.

7.4 Seeding: Tournament seeds will be based on regular season (or pool play) placings. Every team makes the playoffs – single elimination standard bracket format.

Ties are broken (for seeding purposes):

- A1) First by direct Game-to-Game record.
- A2) Then, if the same, by greatest point differential (among all teams).
- A3) Then, if the same, by smallest points scored against (among all teams).
- A4) Then, if the same, by coin toss.

7.5 Game Tie Breakers: All games play until a winner is declared.

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