

# MCPS Team Handball Rules

The team handball rules for Montgomery County Public Schools' (MCPS), are primarily based on the rules established by the International Handball Federation (IHF), with modifications appropriate for MCPS students and facilities. These rules embrace the mission of the MCPS athletics program to teach and reinforce in student-athletes values relating to wholesome competition, positive sportsmanship and fair play.

1. **General Description:** Team handball is a sport in which two teams of seven players each (six court players, and a goalkeeper) pass a ball using their hands with the aim of throwing it into the goal of the other team. A standard game consists of two 30 minute periods, and the team that scores the most goals wins. Team handball is part of the MCPS corollary sports program. The primary objective of corollary sports is to increase interscholastic athletic participation opportunities for all students, in particular students with disabilities. Corollary sports strive to achieve an approximately even ratio of students with and without disabilities in the realm of competition.
2. **Field of Play** (See Figure 1)
  - A. Games will be conducted in the main gymnasium
  - B. The playing court shall be a rectangular surface 84 feet in length by 50 feet in width the same measurement as most high school basketball courts.
  - C. The boundary lines for the basketball court will be the boundary lines for team handball
  - D. The goal area on each end of the court will be a semicircle 19 feet 9 inches from the center of the baseline – the same measurement as the three-point line in basketball.
  - E. The free throw line will be a straight line formed by the service end line of the volleyball court.
  - F. The penalty line shall be the top of the basketball three-point arc at 19 feet 9 inches from the front of the goal. The center circle of the basketball court shall be used for a “throw off”.
  - G. The substitution area is the area in front of the scorer’s table or the area between the two team benches.
  - H. The coach’s area (box) during game play is from the coach’s team edge of the scorer’s table to the penalty line of the team’s bench side of the court
  - I. The goal line is the basketball end line.

**Note: Basketball baskets within or adjacent to the court should be raised and all doors at the ends of the court should be closed during the game for safety purposes.**

**Situation:** *Team A’s coach leaves his/her designated coaching area to question or gain the attention of the referee:*

- **Ruling:**
  - *If Team A is in possession of the ball, the coach’s action will result in a turnover and a free throw is awarded to Team B from where the ball is located at the time of the whistle stopping play.*
  - *If Team B is in possession of the ball, Team B will be awarded a penalty throw.*

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## 3. Lineup

- A. A team handball game will consist of two teams of 7 players each (one goalie and six court players) on the court. Ideally, and in the spirit of corollary sport, the team shall be comprised of an equal ratio of students with and without disabilities.
- B. No official game will begin with less than 7 players per team on the court.
- C. A team unable to field 7 players by the scheduled start time of the contest, will forfeit to their opponent.
  - 1. Upon forfeit an exhibition game may be played upon agreement of both teams/ coaches/schools.

**Note: Referees should warn the coach who left the coaching area that subsequent violations of this rule will result in a two minute suspension or his/her disqualification.**

- 2. Once an exhibition game is started it cannot be re-designated an official game.
- D. Two (2) female athletes must be on the court at all times

**Note: Forfeited games may not be rescheduled.**

## 4. Game Equipment/Uniforms

- A. Only the yellow Sportime Super-Safe Elite Model Jr. Handball, Model 009579, shall be used.
- B. Balls shall be inflated to a diameter of 6.25 inches (circumference of 19.75 inches), as stated in the ball specifications.
- C. Goals shall consist of two posts approximately 6 feet high and 9 feet apart connected at the top by a crossbar (such as the *Rage-Cage* or *Bownet* team handball goals). The goals should be light/portable in nature (30-75 pounds). Nets must be properly attached to the goals.
- D. Team uniforms shall consist of a t-shirt and loose fitting shorts. Players of each team must be uniformly dressed, including numbers on the front or back of the team jersey.
- E. Goalkeepers of each team must wear distinctive colors, different from the court players of both teams.
- F. Goalies are required to wear proper protective eyewear or goggles that meet the most current ASTM Specification Standard F803 for women's lacrosse, are tested by an accredited testing facility approved by US Lacrosse, and are listed on the US Lacrosse website. The Cascade *Iris* goggle meets these requirements and is currently on the MCPS bid list.

**Note: Sportime makes 4 different sizes of the Super-Safe Elite Model Team Handball, all with the same model number: 009579**

## 5. Game Personnel

- A. *Coaches*
  - 1. Each team will have an MCPS stipend coach.
  - 2. Coaches will remain in their respective coach's area while the ball is in play.
- B. *Referees*
  - 1. There will be two referees with equal authority.

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2. Both referees shall be responsible for keeping score and recording all warnings, suspensions, and ejections.
3. Only the referees may determine when the playing time should be interrupted, resumed, or ended. This includes awarding time outs, stopping the game because of injury,
4. Referees will submit an MCPS Sportsmanship Evaluation Form within 24 hours of conclusion of the contest by completing:
  - a. The home-team provided, MCPS Sportsmanship Evaluation Form via the US Mail or
  - b. Electronically using the form found at:  
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfIGI5Wm6E1g8JA5PsJd3aBYq4m8U-EpmXkhhb1o7wW3CcaDhw/viewform>
5. Decisions and judgment calls by referees are final and may not be appealed. (Appeals may only be made when there is a question pertaining to the referee's proper application of the rules). There is one timer and one scorer who assist the referees.

### C. *Timer*

Responsible for:

1. Keeping the playing clock
2. Monitoring suspensions time
3. Keeping track of timeouts

### D. *Scorekeeper*

Responsible for:

1. Checking the team roster on the score sheet
2. Making necessary notations
  - a. Goals
  - b. Warnings
  - c. Suspensions
3. Ensuring that substitutions are made properly.

## 6. **Length of Games**

- A. A regulation game shall consist of two 30-minute halves and a 10 minute half-time period.
- B. Overtime will be played to break a tie at the end of regulation play. Overtime shall consist of two 2-minute periods with a 1 minute intermission between periods.
- C. If a tie still exists after the two overtime periods, the game will be declared a tie.
- D. The clock will run continuously during regulation until two minutes remain in each half (except for time-outs or injuries). When two minutes remain in the half (and during the two overtime periods) the clock will stop for fouls, goals, out of bounds, time-outs and injuries. The clock stops on an official's whistle and restarts when the ball is touched after being properly put into play.
- E. Each team will receive one 1-minute timeout per half.
- F. Injury timeouts will not count against a team's timeout per half.
- G. A timeout not taken during the first half is NOT carried into the second half.
- H. An additional 1-minute timeout is given to each team during overtime.
- I. If the goal differential between the two competing teams is 15 or more, the clock will run continuously at all times except stopping at time outs and half-time.

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**Situation:** Team A leads by 15 goals with less than 2 minutes remaining in the game. Team B scores.

- **Ruling:** The referee should signal to the timer to stop the clock because the point differential is now less than 15 goals.

### 7. Goal Area

- Only the goalkeeper is allowed on or inside the goal area line.
- The only time an offensive player is permitted inside the goal area line is if he/she takes off from outside the goal area line and shoots the ball at the goal before landing. A goal shall not be awarded unless the player releases the ball before landing in the goal area. That player must exit the goal area as directly and as quickly as possible upon landing.
- If an offensive player steps into the goal area or on the goal area line, the defensive team is awarded a free throw from the spot of the violation
- If the defense gains an advantage against an opponent with the ball by being in the goal area, a penalty throw is awarded to the offense.

**Situation:** Player B is aligned above the goal area and steps into it while playing defense.

- **Ruling:**
  - If, in the judgment of the referee Player B gains advantage, a penalty throw is awarded.
  - If the goal area violation does not advantage Player B and the player immediately moves out of the goal area upon warning by the referee, then play should continue.

### 8. The Goalkeeper (goalie)

- Only one designated goalkeeper is allowed in the goal area.
- The goalkeeper may move freely in his/her own goal area.
- The goalkeeper may leave the area provided he/she is not in possession of the ball.
  - Once out of his/her goal area, the goalkeeper may move in the same way as a court player and is subject to the same rules.
  - The goalkeeper may not reenter the goal area with the ball.
- Any goalkeeper may substitute for a court player. Any court player may substitute as a goalkeeper.
- From the moment the goalkeeper takes control of the ball with the hands when playing as a goalkeeper within his/her own penalty area, he/she has five seconds in which to release the ball into play.
- A goalkeeper may contact the ball with his/her lower legs or feet in the process of making a save.
- A goalkeeper **may not** receive a pass from his/her teammate while in the goal area. This infraction results in a penalty shot for the other team.
- A goalkeeper may shoot from the goal area on the opposing team's goal.

**Situation:** A player on Team A while in possession of the ball passes the ball to Team A's goalie.

- **Ruling:** Team B is awarded a penalty shot

# MCPS Team Handball Rules

## 9. Playing the Ball

- A. A player may throw, hit or punch the ball in virtually any direction using the hands, arms, head, back, thighs, or knees.
- B. A player may not touch the ball with the lower legs (below the knee) or feet
- C. A player is allowed to run three steps with the ball or hold it for three seconds.
- D. Dribble: There are no time restrictions for dribbling the ball. As soon as the ball is held with one or both hands, it must be released after three steps or within three seconds.
- E. Double Dribble: A player may run three steps, dribble any number of times, pick the ball up and run three more steps. If the player dribbles again a double dribble is called. A double dribble shall result in a free throw for the opponent.
- F. Air Dribble: An air dribble will be called when a player throws the ball in the air with the intention of catching it again. An air dribble will result in a free position for the other team.
- G. A player may not dive for a ball that is rolling or lying on the ground
- H. A player may not throw the ball across the sideline or across one's own goal line outside the goal.
- I. A player in the act of shooting can step into the goal area only after the ball is released and must immediately exit the goal area without making any play on the ball while in the goal area.

**Situation:** *Player B dribbles the ball while taking several steps, stops moving but continues to dribble the ball, and then proceeds to take several more steps.*

- *Ruling: Continue play. The player never stopped dribbling the ball. (9.D)*

## 10. Game Play

- A. *Goal*
  - 1. A goal is scored when the entirety of the ball crosses the goal line.
  - 2. A goal scored after a whistle stops play will not count.
- B. *Throw-off*
  - 1. A throw-off occurs:
    - at the start of the game
    - the start of the second half
    - after a goal has been scored
  - 2. The player taking the throw-off is located in the center court circle (basketball center court circle).
  - 3. Each time a throw-off occurs, the referee will hand the ball to the team taking the throw-off and blows the whistle, signaling the ball is in play.
  - 4. Once the referee signals the ball is in play, the player taking the throw-off has three seconds in which to pass or shoot the ball.
  - 5. The player taking the throw-off cannot run or dribble prior to passing or shooting.
  - 6. All opponents must be at least 3 meters from the player making the throw.
  - 7. A throw-off can lead directly to a goal.

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## C. *Throw-in*

1. A throw-in is awarded if the ball crosses the sideline.
2. A throw-in is awarded if a defensive player (other than the goalkeeper) last touched the ball before it crossed the outer goal line. This throw-in is taken from the corner of the court on the side of the goal where the ball crossed the goal line.
3. A throw-in is taken without a whistle and may be taken by any player of the team in possession. The player taking the throw-in must place one foot on the sideline.
4. The defense must be at least 3 meters away when the ball is thrown in.
5. A goal can be scored directly from a throw-in.

## D. *Goal Throw ("Goalie Ball")*

1. A goal throw is taken when the ball passes over the goal line due to the actions of the attacking team or the goalkeeper.
2. The goal throw is taken by the goalkeeper from within the goal area without a whistle from the referee (NOTE: If the goalkeeper takes possession of the ball in his/her goal area, the ball remains in play).
3. A goal can be scored directly from a goal throw.

## E. *Free Throw*

1. A free throw is awarded in the following situations:
  - A player exhibiting prohibited behavior towards an opponent.
  - The ball is played improperly.
  - The goal area line is touched or crossed.
  - A player or coach behaves in an unsportsmanlike manner.
  - A team deliberately stalls.
  - A player is substituted incorrectly.
  - A goalkeeper crosses the goal area line with control of the ball.
  - When the game is interrupted for situations other than rules violations (i.e. player injury).
  - When an offensive team takes a free throw or penalty throw in an illegal manner.
  - If play is interrupted because the ball touched the ceiling or a fixture above the court, and the ball stays within the playing court, the game is restarted with a free throw for the team which did not last touch the ball. The free throw is taken, after the whistle signal, from the place below where the ball touched the ceiling or fixture.
  - If a player intentionally plays the ball into his own goal area and the goalkeeper touches the ball.
  - When the goalkeeper brings the ball back into the goal area.
2. Free throw mechanics
  - The thrower must have one foot continuously in contact with the court
  - The player taking the free throw must release the ball within three seconds.
  - If the infringement by the defense occurred between the goal area and free-throw line lines, the free throw is taken from a point outside the free-throw line closest to the spot where the foul was committed and players of the offensive team must be outside the opposing team's free-throw line, while the defense must remain at least 3 meters away from the ball.
  - A goal may be scored directly from a free throw.

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## F. Penalty Throw

1. A penalty throw is awarded in the following situations:
  - When a clear chance for scoring a goal is prevented by a rule infringement anywhere on the court. For example, at the goal area line, a defensive player grabs an offensive player's arm from behind as he/she is preparing to shoot.
  - When a player deliberately enters his/her own goal area to stop the ball or gain other advantages over an attacking player in possession of the ball.
2. A penalty throw must be taken as a shot at the goal within three seconds of the referee's whistle signal.
3. A penalty throw is taken behind the penalty line. This line may not be touched by the player taking the penalty throw at any time during the act of taking the penalty throw.
4. The thrower must keep one foot in contact with the floor until the ball is released.
5. All of the other players must stand behind the free-throw line, and opposing player must remain at least 3 meters from the thrower.
6. The goalkeeper can position him/herself anywhere between the goal and the 4 meter (volleyball end line) line.

**Situation:** Player A is awarded a penalty shot. Upon releasing the ball, Player A steps over the foul line.

- Ruling: No goal. (10.F.3)

**Situation:** Player A is awarded a penalty shot. Player A passes ball to team mate instead of shooting at goalie.

- Ruling: Possession is awarded to Player B goalie. (10.F.2)

## G. Out-of-bounds

1. Out-of-bounds occurs when the ball or a player in possession of the ball crosses, sideline and will result in a throw in.
2. A shot ball that crosses the backline, regardless of where it crosses the backline and regardless of whether the goalie touched the ball before it went over the backline, is a goal throw.
3. A shot that rebounds off the goalie and goes out over the sideline without contacting a player from the team who initially shot the ball, will be awarded a throw-in for the team who initially shot the ball.

**Situation:** Team A shoots. The shot is deflected by Team B's goalie over the backline outside the goal area.

- Ruling: Team B gains possession - goal throw

**Situation:** Team A shoots. The shot is deflected by Team B's goalie and exits the court over the sideline adjacent to the goal area.

- Ruling: Team A is awarded the ball at the spot the ball exited the court.

## H. Playing Behavior Exhibited Toward An Opponent (Fouls)

1. Permissible Behavior (Defense)
  - Using the flat of the hand to lift the ball upward from an opponent.
  - Using their body (not arms) to obstruct an opponent either with or without the ball
  - Extending arms to block or deflect a shot or pass

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2. Prohibited Behavior (Defense)
  - Pulling, hitting, or punching the ball out of the hands of an opponent
  - Endangering, pushing, holding, tripping, or hitting an opponent in any way
  - Grabbing either the ball or the player
  - Diving to gain possession of the ball
  - Extending arms horizontally to impede a player on offense
3. Prohibited Behavior (Offense)
  - Double Dribble: A player may run three steps, dribble any number of times, pick the ball up and run three more steps.
  - Air Dribble: An air dribble will be called when a player throws the ball in the air with the intention of catching it again.
  - Diving to gain possession of the ball A player may not throw the ball across the sideline or across one's own goal line outside the goal.
  - Charging into a defensive player.
  - When taking a shot, offensive players must make a bona fide attempt to avoid hitting defenders. However, a defensive player's task is to block shots, and a player shall not be penalized if the defender is actively involved in the play unless the shot is deemed dangerous by the referee.
  - Not move while executing a pick.
  - Dangerous shot. A shot is considered dangerous when it is intentionally or unintentionally strikes an opponent and the referee deems it was not directed at the goal or the shot was directed at an opponent other than the goalkeeper.

**Situation:** *Player A runs towards crease, jumps, and shoots. In the process, Player A uses his/her body to force Player B into the Crease.*

**Ruling:** *Charge – no goal can be scored. Team B gains the ball.*

**Situation:** *A player from Team A commits an offensive charge while simultaneously a player from Team B commits a grabbing foul.*

**Ruling:** *No goal can be scored. In the instance of multiple fouls, Team A retains possession.*

### 11. Rules of Play

- A. **Coin Toss:** A coin toss will be held prior to start of the game. The winner of the toss has the option of selecting which goal to defend or take possession of the ball.
- B. **Change of sides**
  1. Teams shall change sides/directions and alternate possession
    - For the second half
    - At the start of overtime
    - For the second half of overtime
- C. **Timeouts**
  1. Each team is permitted one 60-second timeout per half.
  2. A timeout must be requested by a player or the team coach.
  3. A team may request timeout only when it has possession of the ball (in play or out of play).
  4. Injury timeouts will not count against a team's 1 timeout per half



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**Situation:** *The team without possession calls timeout. Should the timeout be awarded?*

- *Ruling: The timeout should not be awarded. (11.c.iii; A team may request timeout only when it has possession of the ball (in play or out of play)).*

## D. Substitutions

1. Substitutions shall only be made when there is a “dead ball” stoppage of play. “Dead ball” situations include out of bounds, fouls, goals, injuries, and time-outs.
2. There is no limit on the number of substitutions permitted.
3. Substitutions shall occur in front of the scorer’s table in the area marked by an “X” on the sideline.
4. If a timeout is called for an injured player, that player must be substituted. After play has resumed, the injured player may return to the game, using normal substitution procedures.
5. A faulty substitution results in a two minute suspension for the entering player.

## 12. Additional Timer Information

- A. If a referee awards a free throw or penalty throw before the end of either half of the game and the time expires, the timer shall wait until the throw has been made before he/she gives the signal to conclude play.
- B. If the ball becomes not readily available e.g. lodged under the bleachers, or exits the gym through an open door, the referee may direct the timer to stop the clock. The clock will re-start on the referees signal.

## 13. Warnings and Suspensions

### A. Warnings.

1. A warning can be issued by the referees for any conduct that negatively effects the safety, sportsmanship, or timely conduct (flow) of the contest.
2. Warnings can be issued to:
  - Players
  - Coaches
  - Game personnel
  - Spectators
3. Warnings may or may not be noted by the referees in the Sportsmanship Evaluation Form or via correspondence with the MBLOA commissioner, based on the type and party garnering the warning.

### B. Suspensions

1. Players, coaches, or game officials exhibiting any behaviors that jeopardizes the safety or sportsmanship of the contest may receive a suspension without warning.
  - Safety
    - i. Any play considered deliberate or otherwise dangerous or reckless
  - Unsportsmanlike conduct
    - i. Unusually rough play
    - ii. Intentionally repeated personal fouls including:
    - iii. Delay of game
    - iv. Improper substitution
    - v. A team repeatedly commits violations when the opponent is taking a throw

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- vi. After a player has been given a warning or a previous suspension, and he/she commits another foul of any type.
  - vii. Each time a player commits a foul after his/her team has been given three warnings for any type of rule infraction.
2. All suspensions are for two-minutes.
  3. A suspension may be given without any previous warning.
  4. During a suspension penalty, the suspended player's team must play with one less player.
  5. If a coach or game personnel receive a suspension, a player from the coach's or game personnel's team will serve the suspension.
  6. If needed, the two-minute suspension will carry over to the second half of the game. The same applies from regulation time to overtime, and during overtime.
  7. The suspension time begins once the referee blows the whistle to signal the resumption of play. At the conclusion of two minutes, the timer shall inform the player or coach, and the player may return to competition.
  8. The referee should only give one warning to a player, coach or game personnel and a total of three warnings to a team. Two-minute suspensions are given if either of these limits is exceeded.
  9. If a player who has just received a two-minute suspension for an infraction on the playing court then commits an unsportsmanlike conduct infraction, either while leaving the court, or in the substitution area before the game has restarted, the player shall be given an additional two-minute suspension. If the initial two-minute suspension is the player's second suspension, the additional (third) suspension leads to disqualification.
  10. If, however, the initial suspension is already the player's third suspension, thus leading in itself to a disqualification, then the team will be charged with an additional suspension (which is not to be recorded for any particular player).

### 14. Disqualifications, Ejections

#### A. *Player*

1. A player is disqualified from further play and ineligible for the next contest in the following instances:
  - After receiving a total of three, two-minute suspensions in one game.
  - When he/she commits a serious physical foul against another opponent especially one that results in the opponent's injury.
  - When he/she commits a flagrant violation, including initiating a fight or physical confrontation and/or committing a flagrant foul.
2. The excluded player's team may not insert a substitute for the disqualified player for the remainder of the game.
3. A suspension and/or disqualification being served by a player for a coach or game personnel, is excluded from the next contest disqualification rule.

#### B. *Coach or Game Personnel*

1. A coach or game personnel's disqualification or ejections will be served by a player
2. A coach or game personnel's disqualification or ejections may result in ending the contest or a forfeit.

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### C. Referees

1. Will immediately report all disqualifications or ejections to the MBLOA commissioner
2. Will complete the Sportsmanship Evaluation Form within 4 hours of the contest's completion

**Situation:** *A player from Team A is called for charging. Upon leaving the court he commits a second foul.*

- *Ruling: Team A plays man-down for 4 minutes. Team B is awarded the ball and a goalie throw is taken.*

**Situation:** *Team A's coach is cited for unsportsmanlike behavior.*

- *Ruling: A player on the court for Team A is removed from play for 2 minutes.*