

# Rules of Play



Illinois Shuffleboard Association

Version 1.2

Ratified Nov 19, 2025

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<b>1. Playing Shuffleboard.....</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1 Game.....	2
1.1.1 Object.....	2
1.1.2 Game Types.....	2
1.1.3 Divisions.....	3
1.1.4 Amendments.....	3
1.2 Equipment.....	3
1.2.1 Discs.....	3
1.2.2 Cues.....	3
1.2.3 Courts.....	4
1.3 Score.....	5
1.3.1 Scoring a Frame.....	5
1.3.2 Judging a Disc.....	7
1.3.3 Error In Scoring.....	8
1.3.4 Tie Games.....	8
<b>2. Rules.....</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1 Spirit of the Game.....	8
2.2 Penalty Enforcement.....	8
2.2.1 Severe Penalty.....	9
2.3 Order of Operations.....	9
2.3.1 Determining Color and Player Placement.....	9
2.3.2 Lag.....	10
2.3.3 Practice.....	10
2.3.4 Shooting Order.....	10
2.3.5 Error in Color Lead.....	11
2.4 Play Area.....	11
2.4.1 Standing Area.....	11
2.4.2 Shooting Area.....	11
2.5 Shot Delivery.....	13
2.5.1 Touching Court.....	13
2.5.2 Hesitation Shot.....	13
2.5.3 Hook Shot.....	13
2.5.4 Consecutive Discs.....	14

2.6 Dead Discs.....	14
2.6.1 Types of Dead Discs.....	14
2.6.2 Rebounds.....	14
2.7 Other Rules.....	14
2.7.1 Code of Conduct.....	14
2.7.2 Coaching.....	15
2.7.3 Player Interference.....	15
2.7.4 Delay of Game.....	15
2.7.4.1 On-the-clock.....	15
2.7.5 Substitutes.....	16
2.7.6 Smoking.....	16
2.7.7 Other Improper Action.....	16
<b>3. Definitions.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>4. Code of Conduct.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>5. Acknowledgements.....</b>	<b>18</b>

# 1. Playing Shuffleboard

## 1.1 Game

### 1.1.1 Object

The object of the game is to propel discs, using a cue, toward the scoring area at the opposite end of the court to score, prevent your opponent from scoring, or both.

### 1.1.2 Game Types

There are three types of games, based on the number of players:

- Walking Singles - two individual people compete against one another, playing odd-numbered frames from the head of the court (where the scoreboard is) and even-numbered frames from the foot of the court (the opposite end)
- Non-Walking Singles - two individual people compete against one another, playing from a single end of the court; another match may happen simultaneously on the other end of the court
- Doubles - two teams of two people compete against each other, with one member from team A and B on each end of the court

There are two different game-end scenarios:

- Points Game - a game is complete once a player or team has reached 75 points
- Frames Game - a game is complete once a predetermined number of frames have been played - frame games must have an even number of frames

The player or team with the most points after a game-end scenario has been met is the winner. In the event of a tie, see [Section 1.3.4](#).



### 1.1.3 Divisions

The Illinois Shuffleboard Association does not separate tournaments or leagues by gender or sex.

### 1.1.4 Amendments

The Tournament Director(s) or League Manager(s) may amend any of these rules for the event. Any amendments or omissions will be announced before the event begins.

## 1.2 Equipment

### 1.2.1 Discs

Discs shall be no less than 9/16" and no more than 1" in thickness, 6" in diameter, and no less than 11 1/2 ounces in weight. Four (4) discs shall be colored yellow, four (4) colored black. These eight (8) discs comprise a set. (Other color combinations may be used.) Care should be taken that all discs in a set shall be uniform in weight and thickness.

Players shall not be required to play with discs, new or old, that are not in satisfactory condition. Defective discs will be replaced by good discs, if available. Any change of discs must be made before practice begins.

Players shall take care to ensure the same set of eight discs remain on their court through the entirety of the match.

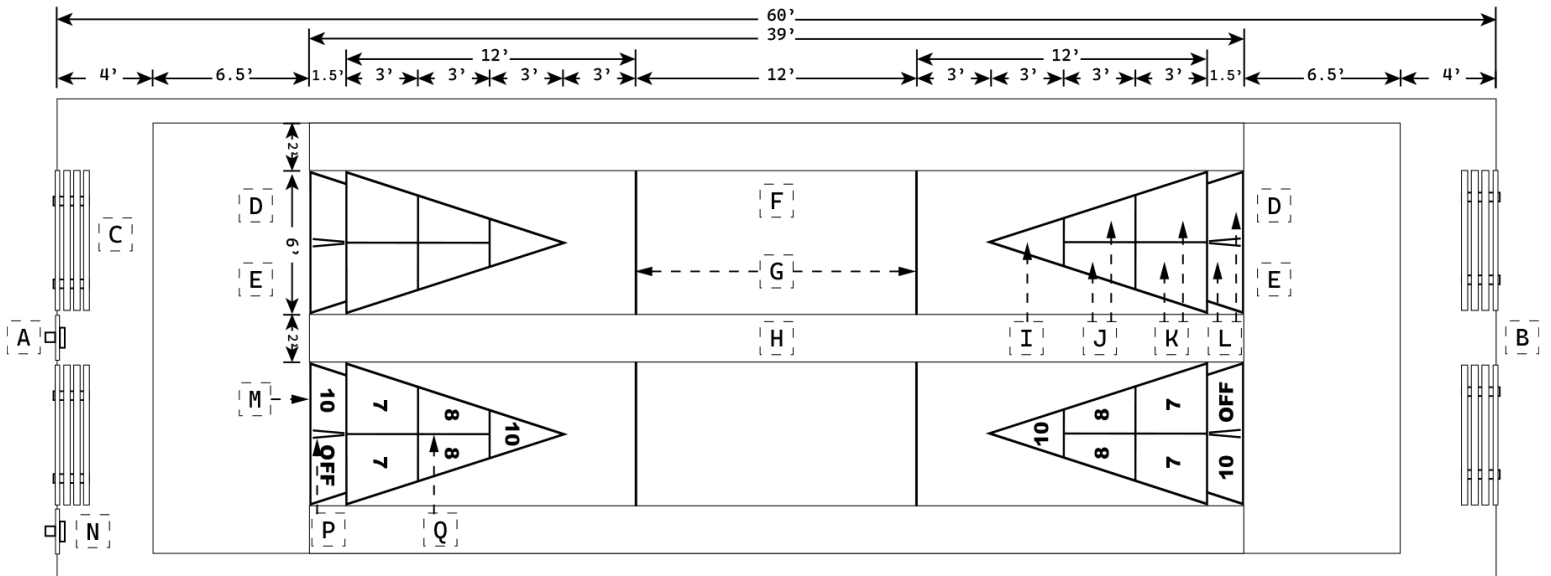
### 1.2.2 Cues

The cue shall not have an overall length of more than six feet, three inches (6'3"). No metal part of the cue shall touch the playing surface of the court.

## 1.2.3 Courts

Courts must be the following dimensions:

### Figure 1.2.3 Shuffleboard Courts



- A. Head of Court (Determined by where the scoreboard is)
- B. Foot of Court
- C. Bench
- D. Black Side
- E. Yellow Side
- F. Dead Zone
- G. Lag Lines
- H. Alley
- I. 10 Scoring Area
- J. 8 Scoring Areas
- K. 7 Scoring Areas
- L. Kitchen
- M. Base Line
- N. Scoreboard
- O. (intentionally unused)
- P. Separator Lines
- Q. Center Line

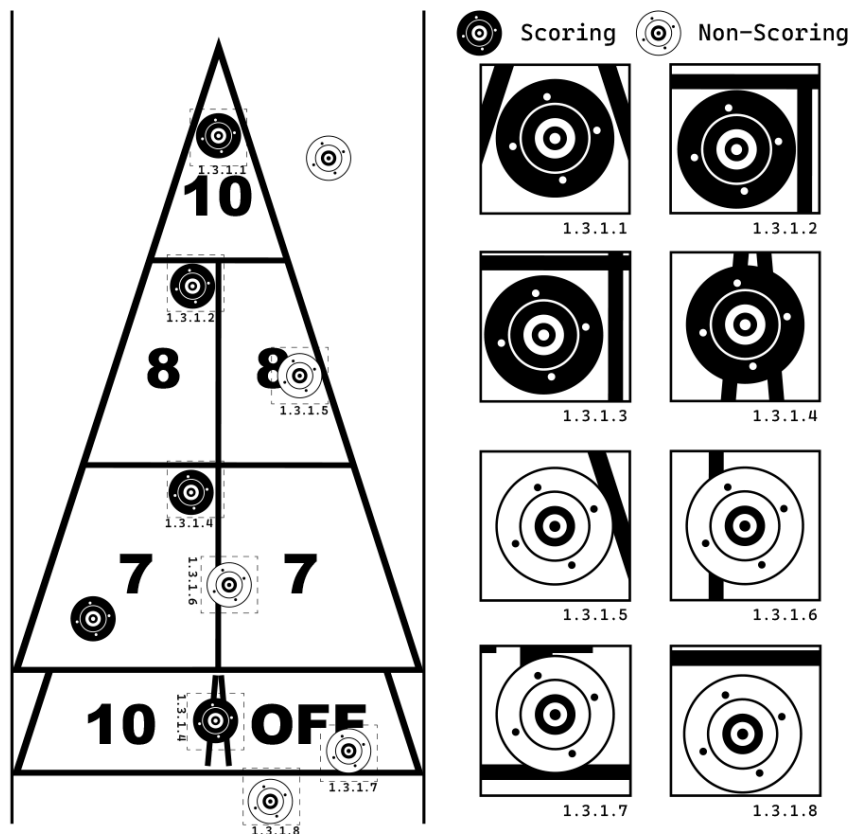
## 1.3 Score

### 1.3.1 Scoring a Frame

A frame is complete when the eighth disc is shot and all discs come to a stop. When a frame is complete, score all discs on the scoring area within, but not touching, the lines. The separation triangle in the 10-Off area is not considered a line. Play continues until all discs have been shot in that frame even if game point has been reached.

Scoring discs do not cancel each other out. If both players have a scoring “8” disc, they both receive 8 points.

Figure 1.3.1 Scoring and Non-Scoring Discs

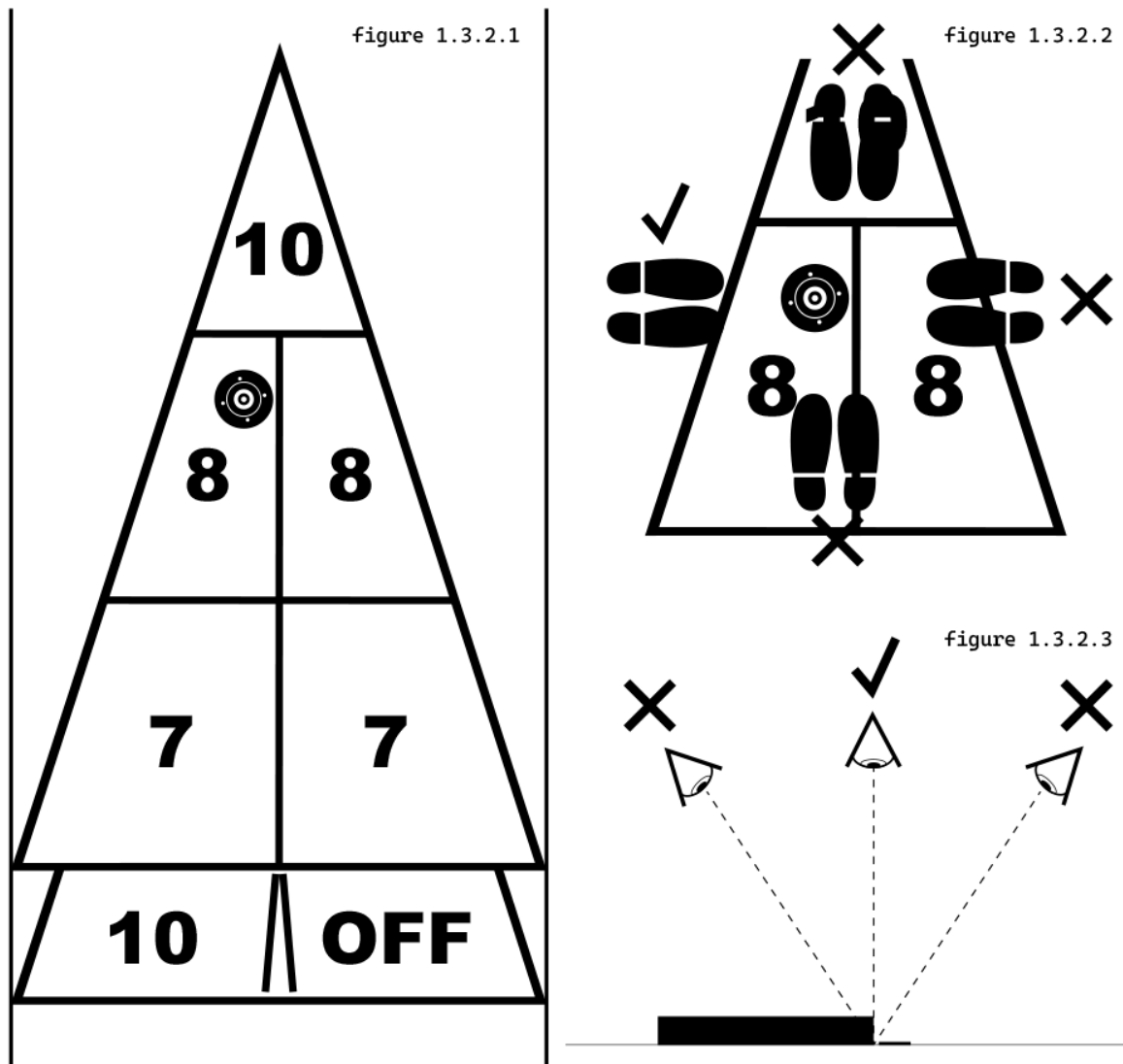


- 1.3.1.1 +10 points. Disc is within all lines.
- 1.3.1.2 +8 points. Disc is within all lines. Must be judged from behind the disc and viewed from directly overhead.
- 1.3.1.3 +7 points. Disc is within all lines.
- 1.3.1.4 -10 points. Discs that land on this triangle DO count. The triangle in the kitchen is there merely to separate shooting areas.
- 1.3.1.5 No score. Disc is touching the interior line.
- 1.3.1.6 No score. Disc is straddling the centerline.
- 1.3.1.7 No score. Disc is touching the interior line along the back of the kitchen.
- 1.3.1.8 No score. Any Disc that has passed entirely through the board and is not touching line should be removed before the next shot is taken.

### 1.3.2 Judging a Disc

When judging a disc in relation to lines, the person shall look directly down over the disc. A mounted disc, or disc resting on top of another disc, happens sometimes when players use excessive force in shooting and shall be counted if within the scoring area. Each disc shall be judged separately according to scoring rules.

**Figure 1.3.2 Calling Discs**



1.3.2.1 A disc close enough to the center line to warrant a check

1.3.2.2 Illustrating where to stand to best judge a close disc- stand OVER the disc

1.3.2.3 Illustrating where to look at a disc to call it. Your eye should be directly OVER the disc edge. Any other angle will risk improper calls.



### 1.3.3 Error In Scoring

If an error occurs in scoring on the scoreboard at the end of the frame and it is discovered before the next frame is completed, the error must be corrected. Otherwise the score as scored on the scoreboard must stand, unless both sides agreed on the correction.

### 1.3.4 Tie Games

If both competitors have the same score after the predetermined number of frames in a frames game, or when their scores are at 75 points or more in a points game, the tie must be broken.

To break the tie, two additional frames will be played, repeating until the score is no longer tied. In a points game, if the tie-breaking frames result in scores below 75 points, the game is still complete.

If there was a color change in the game, players continue to play on the colors they were playing at the end of the game.

## 2. Rules

### 2.1 Spirit of the Game

Shuffleboard is a highly competitive strategy- and skill-based game, but competition should never be at the expense of the joy and respect of all players.

Arrive at your match on-time and well-prepared. Give the match and your competitors your full attention.

### 2.2 Penalty Enforcement

The Illinois Shuffleboard Association's Rules of Play are meant to ensure all players have an agreed-upon set of rules and expectations when competing with each other. If a rule is broken during play, inform your opponent, as they may not be aware of the rule or how they are violating it.

Penalties will only be applied in officiated play.

If the outcome of a frame or match would not have changed due to a rule's first violation, continue play while ensuring all players on the court are aware of the rule moving forward. For any additional violations, or if the outcome could have changed, penalties may be assessed by the tournament director, or any officials they designate. Warnings may instead be given at the tournament director's or their officials' discretion.

## 2.2.1 Severe Penalty

In some cases as noted below, it could be advantageous for a player to intentionally violate a rule and accept the penalty, as it would be more net-positive points than the situation currently in the scoring area. In these cases, a “Severe Penalty” can be assessed by the tournament director or their officials, in addition to the standard penalty. In case of a “Severe Penalty”, all of the following actions will be taken:

- The offender's disc is removed
- If any of the offender’s opponent’s positive scoring discs were displaced, those discs will be:
  - immediately removed from the court
  - noted on the scoreboard as positive points for the offender’s opponent to be added at the end of the frame
- If any of the offender’s 10-Offs were displaced, those discs will be:
  - immediately removed from the court
  - noted on the scoreboard as -10 points each for the offender, to be added at the end of the frame

## 2.3 Order of Operations

### 2.3.1 Determining Color and Player Placement

At the start of a match, competitors will flip a coin or play a game like *Rock Paper Scissors*. The winner either chooses which color to play in the first game of the match or defers to their opponent.

In doubles matches, the team that chose the color decides which of their players will play on each end of each court. The other team then decides where their players will play. Players must continue to play from the same ends of the court in additional games of the match.

#### Example:

Alice and Bob are playing a best-of-3 doubles match against Chris and Diane. Alice and Bob win the coin toss, but decide to defer the color choice. Chris and Diane choose to play as Yellow in game 1, assign Chris to the head of the court, and assign Diana to the foot of the court. Alice and Bob then assign Bob to the head of the court and Alice to the foot of the court. In game 2, Chris and Diana play Black and Bob and Alice play Yellow.

Alternatively, a tournament may pre-determine which color each competitor plays in game 1 and which team places their players first.

If a match has multiple games, competitors change colors at the start of each game, unless it is the last game of a match (i.e. game 3 in a best-of-3 match). In this case in a frame game, players will start on the colors they played in game 1 and change colors halfway through the match. In a points game, *Lag* will be played, and the winner chooses their color for the last game.

### 2.3.2 Lag

Lag is a tie-breaking game played by two opposing players shooting from the head of the court, attempting to shoot a disc as close as possible to, or onto, the far lag line. Yellow shoots a practice disc, followed by black. Both discs are then removed. Practice is repeated with each player's next two discs. The last disc shot by each player shall be left on the court. The disc closest to the far lag line wins. Measurement is from the center of the disc to the center of the lag line. If the last black disc shot touches the yellow disc, the yellow player wins.

### 2.3.3 Practice

Two rounds of practice (eight total practice discs) on assigned color are allowed by each player before the first and second games of a match. If additional games are necessary, no practice is allowed. If a match is a single game with color change, two rounds of practice are allowed before the first frame on a new color.

In walking singles, players still have two rounds of practice: one at the head of the court and one at the foot of the court.

Practice may be skipped or shortened if all players on the court agree.

### 2.3.4 Shooting Order

To start a game, play begins at the head of the court with the first frame. A frame is complete once all eight discs have been shot, in alternating color order (i.e., yellow, black, yellow, black, etc). Yellow shall always be played from right side of the head of court, and left side on the foot of the court.

In Frame 1, yellow shoots the first disc. Play alternates between colors until all discs are shot. In Frames 2 and 3, black shoots the first disc. In frame 4, yellow shoots the first disc. This pattern repeats until the game is complete.

Before a game begins, the scoreboard must have a designation of which color leads, either via a tournament bar on its side or tick marks drawn on the scoreboard.

Figure 2.3.4 Scoreboards

		A	B		
-		-	7		
	-	<del>10</del>	<del>7</del>		
	-	<del>3</del>	<del>15</del>		
	-	4	15		
	-	12	5		
	-	19	12		
	-	19	12		
	-	19	20		

### 2.3.5 Error in Color Lead

Error in color lead shall be corrected if discovered before the frame is completed, and the frame shall be played over. Otherwise play continues in the order started at the beginning of the game.

## 2.4 Play Area

### 2.4.1 Standing Area

The area between the baseline of the court and an imaginary line, even with the back of the bench, and bounded on the sides by the farthest line of each adjoining alley, should be considered part of the court.

Players may stand behind the baseline extension and in the alley between the courts, before or while shooting, but not on an adjoining court. PENALTY: 5 OFF.

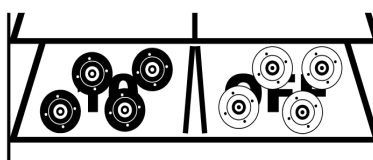
### 2.4.2 Shooting Area

Players shall keep all four (4) of their discs within, but not touching, the lines of their respective half of 10-off area. PENALTY: 5 OFF. Penalty not applied to a player until they have played a disc.

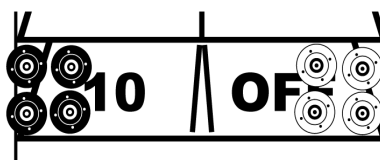
Discs must be played from within the respective half of the 10-off area. If a disc is played while touching the front or back line, PENALTY: 5 OFF.

If a disc is played while touching the side of the 10-off area or dividing triangle, PENALTY: 10 OFF and possible SEVERE PENALTY.

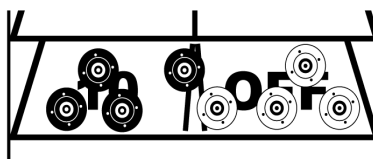
It is common practice with players to jockey or slide the playing disc backward and forward to see if there is any debris which might interfere with the disc sliding evenly. No penalty is to be called on this practice if lines are touched or crossed while jockeying. Discs in motion may cross the outside line. A disc is played when it is completely in the seven area.



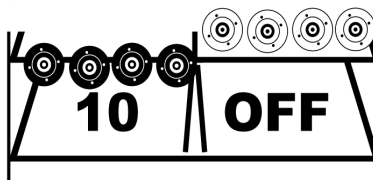
2.4.2.1  
Valid Shooting Position  
All Discs Inside Kitchen



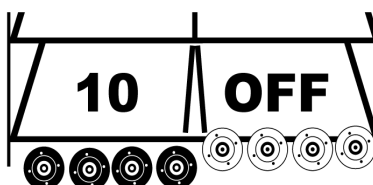
2.4.2.2  
Invalid Shooting Position  
Discs Touching Edge Lines



2.4.2.3  
Invalid Shooting Position  
Discs Touching Shooting Divider



2.4.2.4  
Invalid Shooting Position  
Discs Touching Or Past Kitchen Line



2.4.2.5  
Invalid Shooting Position  
Discs Touching Or Past Baseline

## 2.5 Shot Delivery

### 2.5.1 Touching Court

Players must not touch a foot, hand, knee, or any other part of their body to the court on or over the base line or extension of baseline at any time while executing a shot. PENALTY: 10 OFF.

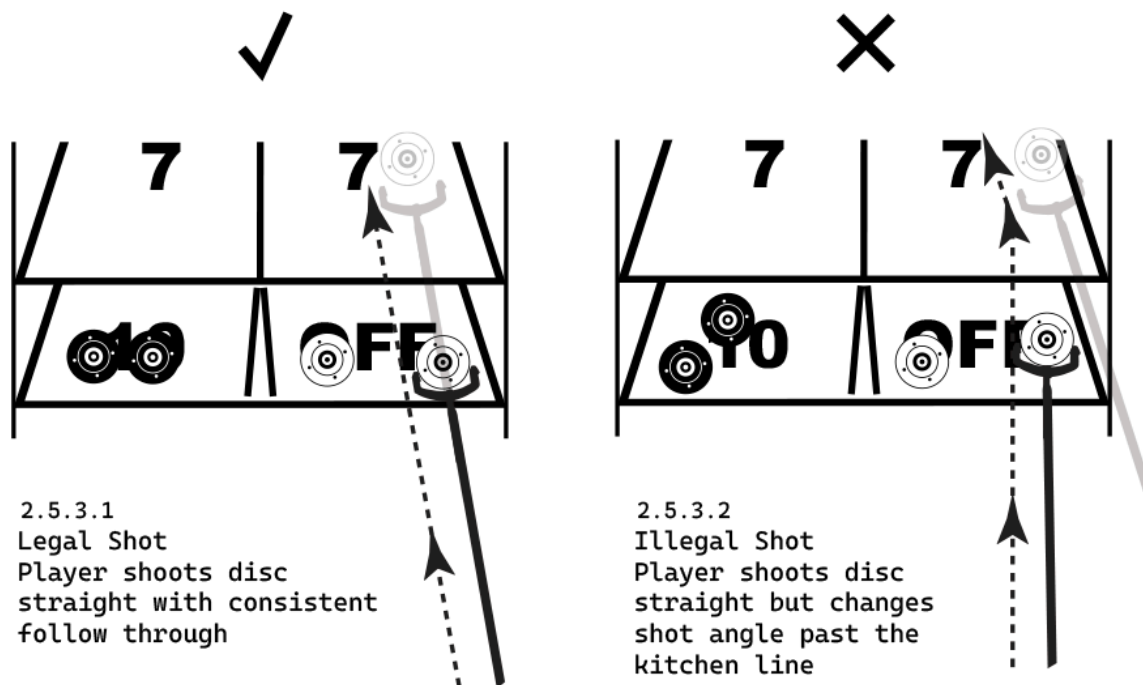
### 2.5.2 Hesitation Shot

Forward motion of a cue and disc must be continuous or accelerated, with no hesitation. PENALTY: 10 OFF.

### 2.5.3 Hook Shot

A shot must be delivered in a straight line with continuous forward motion of the cue and disc. PENALTY: 10 OFF and possible SEVERE PENALTY.

Figure 2.5.3 Hook Shots



### 2.5.4 Consecutive Discs

If a player shoots two discs in a row, without their opponent shooting a disc in between, PENALTY: 10 OFF and possible SEVERE PENALTY.

## 2.6 Dead Discs

### 2.6.1 Types of Dead Discs

- A disc that clearly leaves the court beyond the farthest base line, or goes off the sides of the court is a dead disc.
- If a dead disc stops fewer than 8 inches beyond the farthest baseline, remove it.
- A disc returning to or remaining on the playing area of the court, after having struck any object outside the playing area is a dead disc and shall be removed before play continues.
- A disc that stops in front of the far lag line without touching it shall be removed before play continues.
- A disc that is leaning over the edge of the court and touching the alley shall be immediately removed.

### 2.6.2 Rebounds

If a dead disc rebounds and touches a live disc, or causes another dead disc to touch a live disc on the same court, PENALTY: 5 OFF for the player shooting the offending disc. If this was the last disc of the frame, the score that was on the court immediately before the **rebound** shall count. Otherwise, the players closest to the impact reset discs back to where they were, if possible. If all players on the court agree with this placement, play continues. Otherwise the frame is replayed.

If a dead disc coming from another court touches a live disc, or causes another dead disc to touch a live disc, PENALTY: 10 OFF for the player shooting the offending disc on the other court. The players closest to the impact reset discs back to where they were, if possible. If all players on the court agree with this placement, play continues. Otherwise the frame is replayed.

On some courts, shooting with significant force is sometimes required to fully clear discs from the court. Before shooting forceful shots, inform players at the other end of the court, so that they may help prevent rebounds or prevent discs from striking players.

## 2.7 Other Rules

### 2.7.1 Code of Conduct

All players must follow the Illinois Shuffleboard Association's Code of Conduct, found in [Section 4](#). Players must not talk or make remarks to disconcert their opponent's play. Celebrate your victories; don't celebrate your opponent's misfortunes.

## 2.7.2 Coaching

Any remarks or motions to a teammate that indicates coaching is prohibited. Do not ask anyone on or off the court for advice. PENALTY: 10 OFF.

You may ask players on the other end of the court for clarification of the current game situation, but not in a leading way.

### Examples:

Allowed: asking what the current score is

Prohibited: asking if you should intentionally throw the last disc of the game off the court

Allowed: asking how many and which discs are currently in scoring position

Prohibited: asking for advice on which shot to take

Allowed: asking how many inches over a line a disc is (a disc is 6" in diameter)

Prohibited: asking if there is enough room to replace a disc

Prohibited: pointing out a potential shot to your partner with your cue

## 2.7.3 Player Interference

Players shall not stand in the way of, have a cue in the way of, or interfere with their opponent while they are executing a play. PENALTY: 5 OFF.

If a player touches a live disc at any time, a cue slips from a player's hand and touches a live disc, or a player shoots before their opponent's disc comes to rest, PENALTY: 10 OFF and possible SEVERE PENALTY. The players closest to the live discs reset discs back to where they were, if possible. If all players on the court agree with this placement, play continues. Otherwise the frame is replayed.

## 2.7.4 Delay of Game

A match will be forfeited if a player or team fails to appear within 15 minutes after the announced or scheduled start of a match.

Players must not leave the court during a game without permission, except to gather discs at the end of a frame. PENALTY: 10 OFF. Return to court as quickly as possible.

Players may take a short break between games. Players may not be gone for more than 10 minutes. PENALTY: 10 OFF.

### 2.7.4.1 On-the-clock

Players shall not intentionally delay or stall the game. If an official is available for timekeeping, players or officials may call out "slow play" to put the entire match *on-the-clock*. While a match is on-the-clock, an official will time how long each disc takes to shoot, starting from when the previous disc stops (or players enter the shooting area in case of the first disc), until the disc leaves the cue. Timekeeping will be paused if the player is waiting for an adjacent court to clear the shooting area they wish to use. If a shot takes longer than 45 seconds, the player shooting that disc is penalized:

- 1st observed offense - Warning
- 2nd observed offense - 5-OFF
- 3rd observed offense - 10-OFF
- 4th observed offense - Player or Player's team forfeits the match

The official may cease timekeeping when they feel the match is back on track.

### 2.7.5 Substitutes

Once a tournament starts there will be no substitutes allowed in any match.

### 2.7.6 Smoking

There is to be no smoking on the courts during a match.

### 2.7.7 Other Improper Action

In case of improper action of a player not specifically covered by the rules, the tournament director will ascertain the facts and may assess a penalty. They will also ensure that the offender gains no advantage from their improper action and, in addition, impose a penalty of 10-OFF.

## 3. Definitions

**10-off area** - The part of the scoring area on the opposite end of the court that is worth -10 points, also known as the "kitchen." Players must also shoot all discs from this area on their end of the court.

**Alley** - The area between two courts.

**Apex** - The point at the top of the 10 in the scoring area.

**Baseline** - The line that separates the 10-off area from the standing area.

**Biscuit** - See "disc."

**Cue** - Equipment used to propel discs by players, also known as a "tang." See [Section 1.2.2 Cues](#).

**Dead disc** - A disc that has been shot and needs to be removed from play. See [Section 2.6.1 Types of Dead Discs](#).

**Disc** - Equipment that is propelled by cues, also known as a "biscuit." See [Section 1.2.1 Discs](#).

**Doubles** - A game type where two teams of two people compete against each other, with one member from team A and B on each end of the court. See [Section 1.1.2 Game Types](#).

**End** - The two short sides of the perimeter of the court, where players shoot from. A court has two ends, the head and the foot.

**Foot** - The end of the court that does not have the scoreboard.

**Frame** - A period where each player on a single end of the court shoots four discs each, alternating between each player.

**Frame game** - A game that is complete once a predetermined number of frames have been played. See [Section 1.1.2 Game Types](#).

**Gutter** - See “Alley.”

**Half-round** - Not used in this ruleset. See “frame.”

**Hammer** - The last disc shot in a frame.

**Head** - The end of the court that has the scoreboard. Play begins from the head of the court.

**Kitchen** - See “10-off area.”

**Live disc** - A disc that has been shot, is in play, and has not entered any area that would make it a Dead Disc. See [Section 2.6.1 Types of Dead Discs](#).

**Non-walking singles** - A game type where two individual people compete against one another, playing from a single end of the court; another match may happen simultaneously on the other end of the court. See [Section 1.1.2 Game Types](#).

**Point game** - A game that is complete once a competitor has reached 75 points. See [Section 1.1.2 Game Types](#).

**Scoring area** - The area of the court that players propel discs toward in order to earn points.

**Shufflegram** - See “scoring area.”

**Side** - The half of the court that each competitor’s discs start in. A court has two sides, yellow and black.

**Singles** - A game type where two individual people compete against one another. See [Section 1.1.2 Game Types](#).

**Starting area** - See “10-off area.”

**Out** - i.e. “Yellow is out.” The player that goes first in a frame. See [Section 2.3.4 Shooting Order](#) for which player “is out” in each frame.

**Round** - Not used in this ruleset. See “frame.”

**Tang** - See “Cue.”

**Walking singles** - A game type where two individual people compete against one another, playing odd-numbered frames from the head of the court (where the scoreboard is) and even-numbered frames from the foot of the court (the opposite end). See [Section 1.1.2 Game Types](#).



## 4. Code of Conduct

As per the ILSA Constitution [Article VI](#), ratified on **May 7, 2025** :

The following Code of Conduct represents the policy for the Illinois Shuffleboard Association. It applies to members, elected officials, committee members, instructors, players, referees, and spectators. The Code of Conduct will be enforced. Any member violating the intent of the policy may have their membership revoked.

1. Play the game with a spirit of good sportsmanship and act in a responsible manner. All players should conduct themselves in a manner that will ensure a welcoming, respectful, and comfortable environment for all.
2. Members must acknowledge that we are all representatives of a global shuffleboard community. As such, one must respect the age, spirituality, ethnic background and race, gender, sexual orientation, and disabilities of all persons involved.
3. There shall be no action as an attempt to intimidate, harass or demean opponents, teammates, officials, members, and spectators. This includes; threats, hurtful language, inappropriate disruption of events, unwanted sexual attention, bullying, or stalking - in person, online, or via social media.
4. Be aware of one's surroundings. Be courteous, responsible, and respectful.

## 5. History

The Illinois Shuffleboard Association's Rules of Play were originally drafted at ILSA's founding in 2022 and took much of their influence and spirit from The National Shuffleboard Association's Rules that were in place at the time.