



# GAME RULES

**(VALID FROM APRIL 1, 2020)**



Approved by the ITHF  
Executive Committee

The definitive language for these rules is English. In the event of any differences in meaning between a translated version and the English version, the English version has priority.

**1. Players will act in accordance with the following Players Code of Conduct.** All players shall conduct themselves in a fair and sporting manner at all times. Table hockey is a sport to be played with proper consideration for fairness, ethics and respect.

## **2. Game Model and Game Preparation**

2.1. Stiga games must be used.

2.2. Goal cups must be removed.

2.3. Games must be fastened to the table.

2.4. The speed of the game's surface must be kept the same as the usual factory surface speed.

2.5. A player is allowed to put a puck deflector in the opponent's goal. In this case this player must give the possibility to use the deflector also for his/her opponent, having the second similar deflector for him/her.

## **3. Playing Figures**

3.1. Figures from the Play-off version (all figures have the stick on the same side) of Stiga table hockey games must be used.

3.2. The ITHF can allow the use of other Stiga playing figures when there is good cause.

## **4. Matches**

4.1. Matches last five (5) minutes.

4.2. Time runs even if the puck is out of play.

4.3. An audio timer should be used for all matches.

4.4. A clear, unmistakable audio signal must be made to announce that a match is about to begin. This signal (music or audio warning) must be made any time fifteen to thirty seconds prior to the start of each match. The audio timer must signal at specific intervals (either particular thirds or minutes) by unmistakable sounds and music must measure the last thirty (30) seconds of the match. The match ends with a clear final signal.

4.5. When play resumes after an interruption, both players keep all goals they scored during the interrupted match.

4.6. If a player is not at the game and ready to play thirty (30) seconds after the beginning of the match, he/she automatically loses this match by score stated in tournament rules.

4.7. If any player retires during a match when the opponent insists on continuing, he/she automatically loses all his/her goals scored during the game, while the opponent may add an extra five (5) goals to his/her score.

4.8. During the play-off matches, in the event of a draw at the end of the five (5) minutes, there is an overtime. The overtime starts with a new face-off. The winner is the one who scores the first goal (sudden death).

## 5. Face-offs

5.1. All matches begin with the puck placed at centre spot. Game starts with the opening signal. If any player plays the puck before the signal, face-off is made.

5.2. Face-offs are made by dropping the puck on the centre spot.

5.3. Center forwards and left defenders must stay on their own side of the center red line, outside the central circle before a face-off can be made, and cannot touch the dropped puck before it hits the ice.

5.4. The puck must be visibly released about five (5) cm above the figures' heads and the releasing hand must be still. The flat side of the puck must face down.

5.5. Players must be sure that their opponent is ready before releasing the puck. If the face-off is made wrong the opponent is allowed to ask for a new one or he/she may make a new face-off by himself/herself. If a player makes a lot of bad drops in a play-off match, the opponent can ask for a neutral dropper.

5.6. Three (3) seconds must elapse after each face-off before a valid goal can be scored. This rule is in effect even if a neutral person is making the face-off.

5.7. Before a goal can be counted after a face-off, one of the following must occur:

- (a) The puck touches a sideboard at least 3 seconds after the face-off.
- (b) The puck touches a playing figure other than the attacking center or defending goalkeeper at least 3 seconds after the face-off.
- (c) A deliberate pass is made to the center. If it is unclear whether the center receives the puck from a deliberate pass or by accident, the defending player (or referee, if present) can decide whether the center is allowed to score a direct goal. If it is decided that the center cannot score a direct goal, the center can then only score by complying with (a) or (b).

5.8. When play-off matches result in sudden death overtime, players can ask for a neutral person to make the face-off and they may agree to exercise the following optional method of puck dropping for all face-offs: A neutral person places the puck on the center spot, asks each player to announce "Ready", and then says "Go".

## 6. Scoring

6.1. The puck must stay in the goal cage for the goal to count. In and outs do not count. If the puck goes out from the goal cage, the match continues without interruption.

6.2. The puck must be removed from the puck catcher (if there is any) before the next face off.

6.3. A goal scored by pressing a motionless puck against the attacking player's goal cage or goalie does not count unless the puck touches a sideboard or any of the attacking player's other figures on its way into the goal. This rule also applies if the motionless puck is not touching the goal cage when the pressing motion begins.

6.4. A goal scored by first stabilizing the puck, then hitting it with the body (not the stick) of a figure **and then throwing the puck directly into the goal with this figure does not count unless the puck touches a sideboard or any of the attacking player's other figures** on its way into the goal. However, it is allowed to score a goal with a figure's right foot, if using it as a stick (i.e. by rotation of the figure). A goal scored by the body of a figure is valid if the puck becomes motionless in any other way than stabilizing it with the scoring figure, regardless of whether it hits a figure or sideboard on its way into the goal.

6.5. If a goal is scored when the final buzzer is sounding, the goal is not valid.

6.6. If any figure or goalie breaks when a goal is scored, the goal is valid.

6.7. A goal scored by moving the whole game is not valid.

## 7. Goal Crease Rule

7.1. If the puck is in full rest on the goal line and not touching the goalie, the defending player may call "block" and a new face-off is made.

7.2. If the puck is in full rest in goal crease and is not touching the goal line the defending player must play the puck.

## 8. Possession Rule

8.1. It is not permitted to retain possession of the puck without making any recognizable attempt to score a goal. This is regarded as passive play.

8.2. When a tendency towards passive play is recognized, the opposing player may give a warning signal by saying "passive play". Within 3 seconds after "passive play" is said, the player with the puck must either shoot at goal or pass to their center, otherwise a face-off occurs, whereby the opponent drops the puck. In this situation, other passes may occur before the pass to the center or the shot at goal, as long as these passes also occur within 3 seconds after "passive play" is said.

8.3. If the puck is kept in possession by one figure without passing or shooting, a warning can be given by the opponent after 5 seconds. Within 1 second after a valid "5 seconds" warning, the puck must enter an area where it is possible for one of the opponent's playing figures to touch the puck, otherwise the opponent can say "stop" and do a face-off. If a referee is present, a possession timer can be used, which gives one signal at 5 seconds and another at 6 seconds: here, the referee (or second official) can reset the timer whenever the puck moves from one figure's area to another and can allow the non-offending player a face-off if the 6-second signal sounds.

8.4. If disagreements regarding passive play occur between two opposing players during play-off matches, or if several players in any tournament round accuse one player of passive play, a neutral person agreed by both players (referee) may be called to watch the following match(es). When a referee is called to a match, the players do not give

warning signals themselves, and face-offs due to passive play may only be executed by this referee.

8.5. If a player repeatedly ignores these rules on passive play during a tournament, tournament judges may exercise an option to order affected matches to be replayed and supervised by referees. If number of affected matches is too high (more than three (3)) tournament judges can decide that player will automatically lose all these matches by score stated in tournament rules.

## 9. Interference

9.1. A player can tap down his/her figures only when he/she has complete possession of the puck.

9.2. If a player scores a goal while the opponent is tapping his/her figures, the goal counts.

9.3. If a player notices that any of his/her opponent's figures are raised up on the peg, he/she may stop playing and ask the opponent to tap the figure back down on the peg and the opponent must do it. The player can continue playing when the opponent is ready again.

9.4. If a player passes the puck to another of his/her figures when tapping the figures down, a face-off is made.

9.5. Rough playing that results in shaking of the game and causing the puck to move is forbidden.

9.6. If any figure loses possession of the puck due to shaking of the game, then the puck must be returned back to this figure.

9.7. During play, players are not allowed to position their hands or arms near the ice in any way that can impede play. If a player's hand or arm touches the moving puck during play, the opponent can choose to either place the puck where it would probably otherwise have landed (e.g. in goal or beside playing figure) or demand a face-off, whereby the opponent may drop the puck. If there is any uncertainty about where the puck would otherwise have landed, the decision shall favor the opponent.

## 10. Interruption

10.1. If any major disturbance happens that is clearly evident to both players or makes normal play impossible for one of the players (e.g. broken gear, rod, figure or game support, lights go out, several pucks appear on the game, somebody/something clearly interrupts a player), the match must be immediately suspended. Any goal scored in such an instance does not count. If a minor disturbance occurs that is only evident to one player or only slightly impairs one player (e.g. rubber grip slips off rod, displaced goal cage, bent rod, slightly displaced game support), a player must suspend the game by saying "stop", otherwise any goal scored will count. The match resumes when both players are ready again.

10.2. If a match is interrupted and significant time is lost then the lost time must be added to remaining time and the match continues. If the players stops the game for a medical reason, then this is only a visible injury (cut finger, broken nail or blood). If a

player cannot continue to play in 30 seconds without any visible injury, he loses the game with 0-5. If his opponent does not mind the pause, they continue to play when both players are ready from the same place the game was interrupted.

10.3. Goals scored during an interruption do not count.

10.4. If a player had indisputable control of the puck before the interruption, the match continues with the puck in the place where it was, otherwise a new face-off is made.

10.5. If the timer malfunctions, play must be suspended. It is then necessary to determine how much time (if any) still has to be played, so the total match length is as close to 5 minutes as possible, and to ensure that no goals scored after 5 minutes count. If this cannot be decided via technical means, the organizer is responsible for implementing this rule during group rounds; during play-offs, this is the referee's responsibility, but if there is no referee, the players must agree on how best to implement this rule.

**11. Pass from defender to goalkeeper to defender:** If a player passes the puck from one of their defenders to their goalkeeper in a way that is impossible for the opponent to intercept, the player is not allowed to then pass the puck from their goalkeeper to their other defender in a way that the opponent cannot intercept. If a player makes these two passes in succession, a face-off occurs, whereby the opponent can drop the puck.

**Note:** all changes made by the March 2020 vote of ITHF delegates are highlighted in red.