



Fédération Internationale de Tchoukball
International Tchoukball Federation

OFFICIAL INTERPRETATIONS OF THE RULES OF TCHOUKBALL

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Introduction

The present document presents the official interpretations of the FITB rules of Tchoukball¹. These interpretations are not included in the FITB rules because:

1. the interpretations are not always « rules », but also explanations of how to understand and to apply any given rule, or descriptions of particular playing situations and how to judge them ;
2. these interpretations may change and evolve faster than that which is reasonable for the FITB rules, for example to react at any new problem or question that arises with the rules.

This document must nevertheless be considered as absolutely official and the interpretations contained herein must be applied rigorously, with uniformity, by all players and referees. To make this possible, all players and referees should know these FITB rules' interpretations as they know the FITB rules.

Official interpretations of the rules of the Tchoukball

Rule ²	Interpretation
1.6	<p>Field limits</p> <p>If the ball hits the ceiling, whatever its height above the field, or an object located 7.0 metres or higher above the field, this counts as a fault (outside, hand signal # 8 and then breakdown, hand signal # 14) or a point (outside, hand signal # 8 and then point, hand signal # 16 or # 17)).</p> <p>But if the ball hits an object located lower than 7.0 metres above the field, this should be considered as an “obstruction” (hand signal # 9). In that case, the ball should be given to the last team that had the control of the ball before it hit the object (hand signal # 24). This team is always the attacking team, except if the ball first undergone a “faulty rebound” (rule 8), in which case the breakdown is awarded to the defending team.</p>
4.2.2	<p>Substitution</p> <p>Substitution can only occur after a point has been scored. This point can be a scored point (rule 8.1) or a point conceded to the other team (rule 8.2).</p>
4.2.4 and 4.2.5	<p>Incorrect substitution</p> <p>In case rule 4.2.1 is broken, the players have to replay the substitution immediately, they do not have to wait for the next point to be scored.</p> <p>However, in case rule 4.2.2 is broken, the substitution is cancelled. It means that the players have to wait for the next point to make the substitution.</p>
4.2.6	<p>Substitution after an injury</p> <p>The injured player can leave the field at any time, no matter of the referee has stopped the game or not. The injured player can however be replaced only after a point has been scored. If</p>

¹ ER-01 The rules of Tchoukball

² The number in this column refers to the rule number in the FITB rules of Tchoukball

the injured player left the field right after a point and the restart has not been played, the substitute can enter the field immediately.

The substitute must wait for a point to enter the field in order to avoid:

- a substitution without a point, where the team would pretext an (inexistent) injury
- that the referee have to stop the game each time a player seems to get (even slightly) injured.

If the injured player was not replaced before he has recovered, he can re-enter the field at any time, without waiting for a breakdown or a point.

5.2 **Explanations about role of the referees and about cooperation between referees**

Rule 5.2 give some basic information about the roles of the referees. Some more information and hints may be given:

Roles of the main referee are especially:

- Summoning the captains to toss a coin before the beginning of the game (ER-02, hand signal #22)
- Help the field referees to see the obstructions against defender, especially in second-line defence.
- Control substitutions, number of players on the field.
- Control that the official table works properly, and that injuries and cards are noted on the score sheet.
- Control rule 10.3 (crossing the median line after a restart).

Roles of the field referees are especially:

- Call for all the faults and points.

Basically, the main referee should intervene in the game only if the field referees did not see the fault/point.

Moreover, it should be noted that a good cooperation between the referees may strongly enhance the quality of the refereeing. The referee may especially:

- Give help on shots that fall very near the side lines
- Give help to decide whether a player was inside or outside of the field while defending a ball
- Count the number of passes on fingers when this may not be obvious for the other referees (for example when a short deviation occurs in first line defence). Be aware that this information (on fingers) is intended for the other referees, not for the players.
- And foremost, it is recommended that the main referee does not contradict a decision made by the field referee. If the main referee sees a fault, or any actions which shall be whistled, he shall whistle before the field referee reacts, and not after. The main referee shall be active and officiate on all actions which occur on the field including actions close to the frames, in order to help the field referees.

5.2.2 **Position of referees**

The field referees should switch after each period, i.e. the referee that was behind one back line during the first period goes behind the other back line during the second period, and inversely. The main referee does not switch from position with field referees.

6.2 **Time out**

To ensure that the result of a Tchoukball match will not depend on a time out that would be asked by a coach to break the game of the opponent ("team" or "technical" time out, rule 6.2.3), the FITB, according to the spirit of the game, does not accept any time out during a Tchoukball match except those asked by referees (serious injuries, disciplinary problems, water or blood on the field,...), known as "referee" time out (rule 6.2.2).

In case of a time-out due to an injury, the game restarts as soon as the injured player has left

the field. The referee must not wait for the injured player to come back on the field, even if the injury is not serious.

During a “referee” time-out, the players must stay on the playing area. Within this limit, they can take the opportunity to drink, to discuss together or with the substitutes, with the coach, etc.

7.1.2 Travelling

As long as the player has contacts on the ground with his feet only, there is no need for interpretation. Some clarifications for special situations:

- Catching the ball in the air and landing on both feet count as two contacts.
- Catching the ball with **one or two feet on the ground** counts as **one** contact.
- A player slides or rolls on the ground after having caught the ball. It is almost impossible to decide how to count equivalent footprints for this kind of movement. The following interpretation should be applied: a slide or a roll on the grounds counts as 1 contact, which lets 2 contacts for the player to stand up on his both feet. Arms, hands, elbows or knees should not be counted as contacts. Of course, the referees must be very strict if a player uses this kind of movement in a deliberate way to “travel” on the field with the ball.
- A player touches the ball after a shot (defence), but doesn’t catch it. The ball bounces off. The same defender finally catches the ball after a short run. If he makes more than 3 footprints between the first contact with the ball and the moment when he finally releases the ball (pass), it must be called for travelling, not for a point.
In a general manner, any fault committed while defending (i.e. before the ball is firmly caught in a stabile position) gives a point to the attacking team (for example: step on the line of the forbidden zone, touch the ball with the leg,...). However, it is important to note that a travelling, made during a defence, does not give a point to the attacking team. It only counts as a fault that gives a breakdown to the opposite team.

7.1.4 4 passes

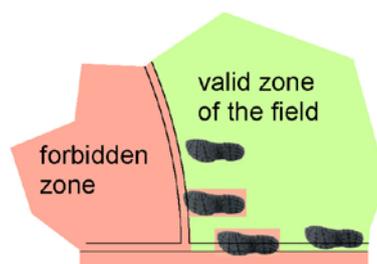
It is important to remind that four passes can also be understood as five contacts. Consequently, if the ball is caught simultaneously by two defenders, the referee should count one pass.

Note also that if the defence needs more than 3 passes to control the ball (the ball is not controlled after pass #3, but is finally caught and does not hit the ground), the referee should call for a fault (4 passes) and not for a point. This is similar to rule 7.1.2.

7.1.5 Player inside/outside the field

7.1.11

A player is considered as being **inside** the field as long as his steps are inside the field. It should be noted that the lines belong to the part of the field they delimit. Thus, the line of the forbidden zone is part of it (i.e. it is not allowed to step on the line), the back and side lines are part of the field (i.e. it is allowed to step on it).



If a player catches the ball in the air, the referee has to know where the player had his last step before he jumped. If the last step was inside the field, the situation is correct. If this last step is outside the field or in the forbidden zone, the player is considered as being **outside** the field, even if he is in the air above a valid zone of the field. It has no importance to know whether the

step before the last one was taken inside or outside the field, as long as the player has not the ball.

This rule and interpretation must be applied both for the base and side lines, as well as for the line of the forbidden zone.

7.1.6 Missed pass or missed shot

8.2.1

It can be called for a given point only if it was a missed shot (no matters if the ball crosses the back line or not, or if the ball falls into the forbidden zone or not). It means that the referee has to judge whether the player attempted to shoot or to pass. If it is a missed pass, the referee has to award a breakdown.

The only exception to that rule is when a missed pass or a missed defence hits the frame or the net. In that case, it must be considered as a shot attempt.

In short:

- missed pass that does not hit the frame : fault (rule 7.1.6)
- missed pass/defence that hits the frame, bounds outside the forbidden zone and is not caught by the other team : point (rule 8.1.1) or frame if a faulty rebound occurs (rule 11.1)
- missed pass/defence that hits the frame but that does not bounds outside the forbidden zone : given point (rule 8.2.2)
- missed shot, defence or attempt to shoot (that does not hit the frame): given point (rule 8.2.1)

Note: the metallic support that allow the rebound frame (the net and its metal edge) to have the right inclination is not to be considered part of the rebound frame for this rule.

7.1.7 Obstruction

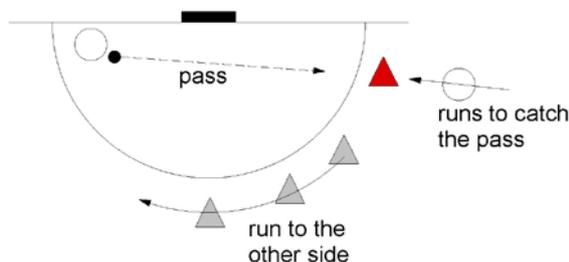
7.1.8

7.1.9

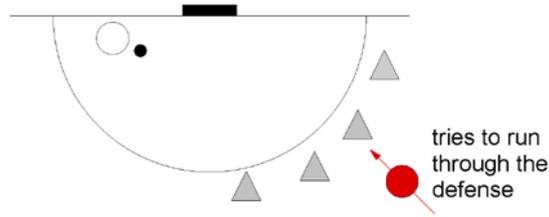
It can be called for an obstruction for a fault committed by the defence as well as for a fault committed by the attack.

Special attention should be paid on following situations:

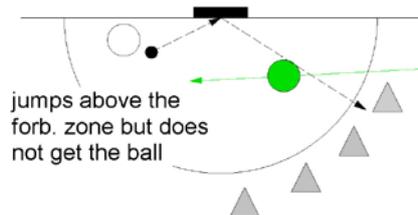
- A player of the attacking team makes an obstruction on a defender who is about to catch the ball. The obstruction can be whistled if the defender moves to catch the ball (obstruction in the movement) as well as if he is static but that the attacker prevents him from receiving the ball (obstruction in the reception of the ball or strong obstruction in the visual appreciation of the trajectory of the ball).
- A defender in first defence line prevents an attacker from passing along the back line to catch a pass from a team mate (switching, the player in red on the figure below commits the obstruction).



However, it should be noted that a player cannot see what happens in his back. The players of the attacking team should take this into account and use free "trajectories", i.e. there is no obstruction if the player tries to use a trajectory that is known for being used by the defence in modern Tchoukball (for example try to run *through* the first line defence).



The rule speaks about movement obstruction in a phase of reception, shooting, passing or positioning, and not of visual obstruction. Consequently, the referee should not whistle an obstruction if a player could not see the ball coming because of the presence from another player **who was in a normal position of attack** (the player in green on the picture below does **not** commit an obstruction). Of course, if the attacker was intentionally there to prevent the defender to see the ball, the referee will observe rule 12.2.1. Moreover, an obstruction may be whistled against an attacker that is not in a normal and logical attacking position and who obstructs the view of the defender.



In addition, an obstruction will be whistled when a player of the team in defence touches, deviates or **involuntarily** blocks a pass between two attackers. If this interception is **voluntary**, rule 12.2.1 applies against the defender. If the attacker throws voluntarily the ball on the defender, rule 12.2.1 also applies, but against the attacker.

Finally, it must be precised that if an attacker wants to shoot at the frame but the ball touches a defender who is in the forbidden zone **before** the ball reaches the frame, the referee has to call for an obstruction. This happens especially when a player A1 shoots, B1 defends and wants to attack directly. Player A1 may not have time to leave the forbidden zone and may thus stand between B1 and the frame when B1 shoots. Note: if A1 is in the forbidden zone and touches the ball **after** the rebound on the frame, then the referee has to give the point to B1 (rule 8.1.4). Of course, if player B1 shoots intentionally on A1 (and not towards the frame!), the referee has to consider rule 12.2.1 (voluntary offence).

7.1.12 Landing

No particular interpretation, but it is important that the rule is strictly applied. In case of doubt, it is recommended not to call for landing. The referee should stop the game only if he is sure of his observation.

7.2 Restarting the game after a fault (breakdown)

Where to restart ? (rule 7.2.1)

The place where to restart the game is indicated by the referee. It is where the fault was committed or the nearest valid place in the field of play if the fault was committed outside the playing area or in the forbidden zone.

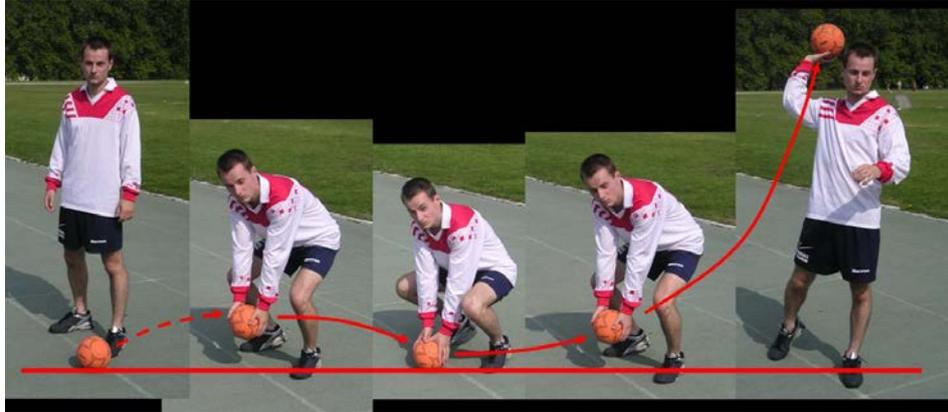
The referee should judge whether the game is not restarted too far from the place where he indicates to restart. Around the forbidden zone, this distance should be less than about 1 metre. Near the centre of the field, this distance should be less than about 3 to 4 metres. It is the distance between the place where **the ball** touches the ground during the breakdown and the place indicated by the referee that counts.

The referees should not be excessively precise and concerned about centimeters. The main thing is to avoid unfairness and uncertainty for the opponents as regards where the breakdown is taken.

How to restart ? (rule 7.2.2)

After a fault (not after a point), the team (player) who gets the ball must :

- take the ball with **both** hands (if the ball is already on the ground, the player should take it off the ground),
- put the ball on the ground with **both** hands on it where the referee asks to do it,
- the game restarts immediately after the player takes the ball off the ground.



From this time on, he must respect all the rules, and especially the 3-steps rule and the 3-seconds rule.

What to do if the game is not restarted in that way ? (rule 7.2.3)

If the game is not restarted in the way described above, the referee must ask the player to make it again, but should **not** give the ball to the other team. The field referees should move along the back lines to see the player during his action. The main referee may help the field referees to decide whether the restart was done correctly if the player turns his back on the nearest field referee.

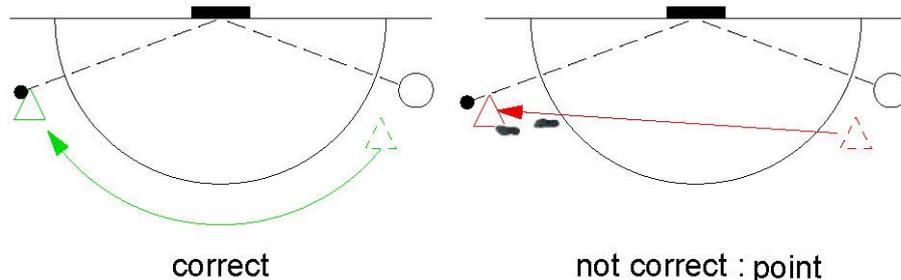
Make at least one pass before shooting at the frame (rule 7.2.4)

It must be noted that this rule is intended to prevent the player who makes the breakdown to shoot directly at the frame. Consequently, it's not sufficient that a team mate of the player that plays the breakdown touches the ball to count a pass. It is necessary that the ball leaves his hands to count the first pass.

8.1.4 Going through the forbidden zone to take a defensive position

In order to go to a defensive position located on the other side of the forbidden zone, the player has to move around this zone (fig. below, left) and should not cross it (fig. below, right).

If the player goes through the forbidden zone to catch the ball and catches or touches it, the referee should give a point for the attacking team.



Note 1: rule 8.1.4 has to be taken into account only if the player has gained an advantage in crossing the forbidden zone to catch the ball. If, while running around this zone, he just steps on the line of the forbidden zone or slightly inside of it, it should not be called for a point.

Note 2: If, after a shoot or a pass, a player stands inside the forbidden zone and the ball is

caught by the other team, he has to leave the forbidden zone as quickly as possible. In this situation, the referee should not apply rule 8.1.4 but should consider rule 7.1.7 (obstruction), if applicable.

8.2.4 **Touching the ball after a team mate's shot**

The word "directly" means "without being touched in-between by an opponent".

If the ball, after the rebound on the frame, is touched by a defender and then touched by a shooter's team mate or the shooter himself, the referee should always call for an obstruction, no matter where the player was standing or where the ball is finally falling. This is governed by rule 7.1.8 (the deviation of the defender is always considered as a pass).

10.1 **Where to play the restart**

In case there is not enough space behind the back line to play the restart, the referee may allow the players to step into the forbidden zone to play it. In this case, the referee must state it clearly to both captains **before** the beginning of the game.

10.3 **Ball crossing the median line after a restart**

After a point, the ball must cross the median line before a team can shoot at the same frame where the last point was scored. The ball has passed the median line if a player has the ball in his hands and is in the good part of the field. It means that the player should have one or both feet in the good part of the field, but no foot in the "wrong" part (see also rule interpretation 7.1.5). If a player has one foot in the good part of the field and one in the other part, the ball is not considered as having passed the median line.

The ball does not need to cross the middle-line on the restart (pass #0). It may also cross this line on the pass #1, 2 or even 3.

Note: the median line is considered as being part of the "wrong" side of the field (i.e. a foot that touches the middle line is considered as being in the "wrong" part of the field).

10.4 **Shoot after a restart**

Rule 10.4 says that the restart does not count as a pass, it can be considered as pass #0. It must be noted that it is not necessary to make pass #1 before a shot at the frame can be attempted. It means that a player can attempt to shoot directly after the restart (after pass #0). Of course he has to respect rule 10.3.

11.2 **Faulty rebound**

After a faulty rebound, the referee should not stop the game if the defending team can catch the ball easily. But if the defending team has difficulties, he should stop the game and give a breakdown for the defending team. The referee should especially stop the game if the defending team needs one or more passes to control the ball.

12.2 **Disrespectful behaviour**

Following situations are examples of "disrespectful behaviour" or of behaviour that violates the spirit of the rules:

- Loosing time.
- Insulting (team mate, opponent, referee, coach, manager, spectator, official,...).
- Rude behaviour.
- Deliberate offences (contact, catching a ball in possession of the other team, obstruction,...).
- Violating the spirit of the game or the spirit of the rule.

The general procedure in such a case is as follow:

1. First the referee shall ask the player (or coach, official), firmly but without aggressivity, to change his behaviour (oral warning, rule 12.2.2 a).
2. If the player does not change his behaviour, the referee shall stop the game (referee time-out, rule #6.2.3, hand signal #2) call the captain of the faulty team as well as the faulty player and give an oral warning. Then the referee should call for a serious or intentional fault (rule 12.2.2 b, hand signal #23) and give the ball to the other team (breakdown in a general case, restart if the time-out was asked before a restart).
3. The referees should try to avoid the use of yellow card. However, if it is really necessary, a yellow (rule 12.2.2 c, hand signal #20) or even a red card (rule 12.2.2 d, hand signal #21) may be given to the faulty player. After giving a yellow or red card, the referee should give a breakdown to the other team, or a restart if the card was given before a restart.

General **Passage from defence to attack**

It is significant to know at which moment a team switches from defence to attack because that can affect the awarding of points. For example, an uncontrolled ball in a phase of attack counts as a missed pass, whereas an uncontrolled ball in a phase of defence counts as a point. In a same manner, a foot on the line of the forbidden zone in possession of the ball counts as a fault in a phase of attack, but as a point in a phase of defence.

In a general manner, the referee has to decide whether the action was a defending or attacking one.

To help in this judgement, he should consider the following:

One **defines** that the team finishes the phase of defence when the ball is firmly blocked (not a deviation) and that the player who blocks the ball is stable (not necessarily stopped, but at least in a position of balance and control).

For example, following situations give a point to the attack (fault committed in defence) :

- The defender blocks the ball but, in his movement, leaves the field or enters the forbidden zone.
- A defender deviates the ball. The ball goes up above the forbidden zone. Another defender jumps and catches the ball but, while doing this, steps on the line of the forbidden zone.

On the other hand, following situation is a fault, and not a point (fault committed in attack) :

- The defender blocks the ball, stands up, takes a step behind to prepare his pass and while doing this, steps on the line of the forbidden zone.

General **Breakdown for the team that had the ball**

In given situations, it is necessary to stop the game even if no fault or point occurred. This can be the case for example when:

- a player get injured and needs medical assistance to leave or before he can leave the playing area,
- the frame is moved (by a player after a shot) in such a way that it is no more possible to play on this frame,
- a second ball enters onto the field,
- the ball hits an object located lower than 7.0 metres above the ground,...

In such case, the referee has to stop the game (whistle; stop the clock if necessary, hand signal # 2). When the game is ready to start again, the referee should give a breakdown for the team that had the ball when the game was interrupted (hand signal # 24). This team is always the attacking team, except if the ball first undergone a "faulty rebound" (rule 8) before the game had to be stopped, in which case the breakdown is awarded to the defending team.

In some exceptional circumstances, the referee can also give a breakdown for the last team that controlled the ball if he couldn't see what happened (ball in or out of the forbidden zone, etc.).

General **What to do when the referee did not see what happened?**

Use sign "not seen" ("blinded"), ER-02, hand signal #26. This is an invitation to other referees to give their opinion (for example with hand signals #4, #8, #19 or #25). He may also take the players' comments into account, provided he can be sure they act with impartiality.

If no decision can be taken, it should be followed by hand signal #24 (breakdown for the team that had the ball).
