

# General Playing Rules

## Rule 1 - The Game

1a. Definition- A game of American Tenpins consists of ten (10) frames. A player delivers two balls in each of the first nine frames unless a strike is scored. In the 10th frame, a player delivers three balls if a strike or spare is scored. Every frame must be completed by each player bowling in regular order.

1b. How Scored

Except when a strike is scored, the number of pins knocked down by the player's first delivery is to be marked next to the small square in the upper right-hand corner of that frame, and the number of pins knocked down by the player's second delivery is to be marked inside the small square. If none of the standing pins are knocked down by the second delivery in a frame, the score sheet shall be marked with a (-). The count for the two deliveries in the frame shall be recorded immediately.

1c. Strike - A strike is made when the full setup of ten (10) pins is knocked down with the first delivery in a frame. It is marked by an (x) in the small square in the upper right-hand corner of the frame where it was made. The count for one strike is 10 plus the number of pins knocked down on the player's next two deliveries.

1d. Double - Two consecutive strikes is a double. The count for the first strike is 20 plus the number of pins knocked down with the first delivery following the second strike.

1e. Triple or Turkey - Three successive strikes is a triple or turkey. The count for the first strike is 30. To bowl the maximum score of 300, the player must bowl 12 strikes in succession.

1f. Spare - A spare is scored when pins left standing after the first delivery are knocked down with the second delivery in that frame. It is marked by a (/) in the small square in the upper right-hand corner of the frame. The count for a spare is 10 plus the number of pins knocked down by the player's next delivery

1g. Open - An open is recorded when a player fails to knock down all 10 pins after two deliveries in a frame.

1h. Split - A split is a setup of pins left standing after the first delivery, provided the head pin is down and at least one pin is down:

1. Between two or more standing pins; e.g., 7-9 or 3-10.
2. Immediately ahead of two or more standing pins; e.g., 5-6.

NOTE: A split is usually designated by a (0), but any other symbol may be used.

## Rule 2 - Delivering the Ball

2a. Legal Delivery - A delivery is made when the ball leaves the player's possession and crosses the foul line into playing territory. Every delivery counts unless a dead ball is declared. A

delivery must be made entirely by manual means. No device may be incorporated in or affixed to the ball that detaches on delivery or is a moving part during delivery.

2b. Special Equipment to Grip the Ball - A player may use special equipment to aid in grasping and delivering the ball if it is in place of a hand, or major portion thereof, lost by amputation or otherwise.

2c. Mechanical Aids to Grip the Ball - Alternating Delivery - A player may, if granted permission by the league Vice President, alternate right/left-handed delivery and/or use special equipment to aid in grasping and delivering the ball. Permission may be withdrawn at any time.

2e. Mid Game Relief – Once a game has started the bowlers are expected to continue bowling for all three games. Should an injury result, the opposing team must agree to replace the player after the end of the game. All resulting frames should be calculated as -10 from their average for the remainder of the game. The Vice President will support any questions or conflicts with this rule. After a game has ended the player may be substituted for another player or sub on their team.

### **Rule 3 - Fouls**

3a. Definition -A foul occurs when a part of the player's body encroaches on or goes beyond the foul line and touches any part of the lane, equipment or building during or after a delivery. A ball is in play after a delivery until the same or another player is on the approach in position to make a succeeding delivery.

When a foul is recorded the delivery counts, but the player is not credited with any pins knocked down by that delivery.

NOTE: The foul line is of infinite length including walls, floors, posts and ball returns. A foul is not committed when foreign objects such as pens, jewelry, coins, cigarettes, etc., drop from a bowler's pocket or fall from a person's body or clothing. (Footwear and clothing are considered part of the body.) A player should request permission to cross the foul line to retrieve any items that have fallen beyond the foul line.

Commonly Asked Questions – Rule 5a.

3a/1 What happens when there is a dispute over a foul call?

According to Rule 10, a provisional ball should be thrown when there is a controversy. A provisional ball or frame shall be bowled when a protest involving a foul cannot be resolved by the two team captains.

When a dispute over a foul occurs, the player shall complete the frame and then bowl one provisional ball. The score sheet or printout and a record of both scores for the frame in which the provisional delivery is made shall be kept. The protest must be referred to the league board of directors for a decision.

3a/2 A player goes over the foul line while retaining possession of the ball. Is this considered a foul?

No. A legal delivery must be executed for a foul to be committed. A legal delivery is made when the ball leaves the player's possession and crosses the foul line into playing territory.

3a/3 A member of a team crosses onto an adjacent approach when making a delivery. Is this considered a foul? A foul is not called when a bowler crosses onto an adjoining approach area. However, if the bowler steps over the foul line on that lane, it is considered a foul.

### 3b. Deliberate

When a player deliberately fouls to benefit by the calling of a foul, the player shall be credited with zero pinfall for that delivery and not allowed further deliveries in that frame. If questions arise, Provisional Ball, should be followed.

### 3c. Foul Detection

In league play, the opposing team captains shall call fouls, or a foul judge may be appointed.

## **Rule 4 - Pinfall**

### 4a. Legal Pinfall

Pins to be credited to a player following a legal delivery shall include:

1. Pins knocked down or off the lane surface by the ball or another pin.
2. Pins knocked down or off the lane surface by a pin rebounding from a side partition or rear cushion.
3. Pins knocked down or off the lane surface by a pin rebounding from the sweep bar when it is at rest on the pin deck before sweeping dead wood from the pin deck.
4. Pins that lean and touch the kickback or side partition. All such pins are termed dead wood and must be removed before the next delivery. No pins may be conceded, and only pins knocked down or moved entirely off the playing area of the lane surface as a result of a legal delivery may be counted.

### 4b. Illegal Pinfall

When any of the following occur, the delivery counts but the resulting pinfall does not:

1. A ball leaves the lane before reaching the pins.
2. A ball rebounds from the rear cushion.
3. A pin rebounds after coming in contact with the body, arms or legs of a human pinsetter.
4. A pin is touched by mechanical pinsetting equipment.
5. Any pin knocked down when dead wood is being removed.
6. Any pin knocked down by a human pinsetter.
7. The player commits a foul.

8. A delivery is made with dead wood on the lane or in the gutter and the ball contacts such dead wood before leaving the lane surface.

9. A delivery is made with dead wood on the lane or in the gutter, and a pin, after coming into contact with the dead wood, knocks down one or more pins.

If an illegal pinfall occurs and the player is entitled to additional deliveries in the frame, the pin(s) illegally knocked down must be respotted where it (they) originally stood before delivery of the ball.

## **Rule 5 - Pins**

### 5a. Improperly Set

It is each player's responsibility to determine if a setup is correct. The player shall insist that any pin(s) incorrectly set be respotted before delivering the ball, otherwise the setup is deemed to be acceptable.

When bowling at a full setup or to make a spare, if it is discovered immediately after the delivery that one or more pins are set improperly, but not missing, the delivery and resulting pinfall count.

No change can be made in the position of any pin(s) left standing after the bowler's first delivery, unless:

1. The pinsetter moved or misplaced any pin(s), or
2. Any standing pin(s) is (are) outside the range of the sweep bar.

Any such pin(s) will be respotted where it (they) originally stood before the delivery.

### 5b. Rebounding

Pins that rebound and stand on the lane must be counted as standing pins.

### 5c. Replacement

Should a pin be broken or otherwise badly damaged during the game, it shall be replaced at once by another pin as nearly uniform in weight and condition with the set in use. The league or tournament officials shall determine whether pins shall be replaced.

A broken pin does not change the score made by the bowler. The pin(s) knocked down are counted, after which the broken pin is replaced.

NOTE: A broken pin is described as, but not limited to, the following:

1. Any pin with the core exposed where it was originally manufactured with a plastic coating.
2. The plastic base broken, loose or cracked.
3. Any breakage of the core.

## **Rule 6 - Dead Ball**

When a dead ball is called, the delivery does not count and the correct pins must be respotted. The player is allowed to rebowl that delivery.

A ball shall be declared dead if any of the following occur:

- a. After a delivery, attention is immediately called to the fact that one or more pins were missing from the setup.
- b. A human pinsetter interferes with any standing pin before the ball reaches the pins.
- c. A human pinsetter removes or interferes with any downed pin before it stops rolling.
- d. A player bowls on the wrong lane or out of turn, or one player from each team on the pair of lanes bowls on the wrong lane.
- e. A player has physical contact with another person or moving object as the ball is being delivered and before delivery is completed. In such case, the player has the option to accept the resulting pinfall or have a dead ball called.
- f. Any pin is moved or knocked down as a player delivers the ball but before the ball reaches the pins.
- g. A delivered ball comes in contact with a foreign obstacle.

Commonly Asked Questions – Rule 8.

- If an individual bowls out of turn does the delivery count?

No, a dead ball would be declared and the correct bowler is then required to continue play.

- A player made the first delivery when the pinsetting machine was set on the second cycle. Seven pins were knocked down and the remaining pins were swept away as the machine reverted to cycle one. Should a dead ball be declared and the pins reset?

Since the bowler made a legal delivery and the pins were properly set, there would be no basis for declaring the first delivery a dead ball. The three pins left standing would be reset for a second delivery.

- On the second delivery, the sweep bar comes down and deflects the ball before it can make contact with the remaining pins. When this happens, what should we do?

According to Rule 8, Item g, a dead ball is declared when a player's ball comes in contact with any foreign obstacle. The

sweep bar is considered a foreign obstacle, and the player is required to have the pin(s) remaining respotted and rebowl

the second ball.

## **Rule 7 - Bowling on the Wrong Lane**

In league or tournament play, a dead ball shall be called and the player or players required to rebowl on the correct lane when:

- a. One player bowls on the wrong lane.
- b. One player from each team on the pair of lanes bowls on the wrong lane.

If more than one player on the same team bowls on the wrong lane in turn, all deliveries stand as bowled. Upon discovery, bowlers shall complete subsequent frames on the correct lanes.

If a player bowls on the wrong lane in a singles tournament where a change of lanes is made, a tournament may by rule require the delivery to stand and the player to finish the frame on the incorrect lane when a strike is not recorded. When a strike is made, a dead ball shall be called and the player required to re-bowl on the correct lane.

### **Rule 8 - Provisional Ball**

A provisional ball or frame shall be bowled when a protest involving a foul, legal pinfall or a dead ball is made and cannot be resolved by the two team captains or a tournament official.

The following procedures apply when a dispute occurs:

a. For the first ball of any frame, or after the second ball in the 10th frame if the first ball was a strike:

1. Foul: The player shall complete the frame and then bowl one provisional ball at a full setup of pins.

2. Illegal Pinfall: The player shall complete the frame and then bowl one provisional ball at the same setup which would have remained standing had the disputed pin(s) not have fallen.

3. Dead Ball: The player shall complete the frame and then bowl a complete provisional frame.

b. On a spare attempt or the third ball of the 10th frame:

1. Foul and Illegal Pinfall: No provisional ball is necessary.

2. Dead Ball: A provisional ball shall be bowled at the same setup which was standing when the disputed ball was bowled.

The score sheet and a record of both scores for the frame in which the provisional delivery was made shall be kept. The protest must be referred to the league Vice President for a decision relating to the protest.

### **Rule 9 - Forfeit - Delay of Game**

No unreasonable delay in the progress of any game is permitted. If a player or team in a league or tournament refuses to proceed with a game after being directed to do so by a league or tournament official, the game or series shall be declared forfeited.

If a team does not show up 30 minutes from the start time of the game, they will forfeit the game.