



WHEELCHAIR RUGBY - RULES OF THE GAME - SUMMARY

NOTE: THESE ARE NOT THE OFFICIAL RULES OF WHEELCHAIR RUGBY. THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN CREATED AS A SUMMARY ONLY. FOR COMPLETE INFORMATION, CONSULT THE INTERNATIONAL RULES FOR THE SPORT OF WHEELCHAIR RUGBY.

Field of Play and Equipment

Wheelchair Rugby is played on a regulation hardwood basketball court measuring 28m by 15m. The court is marked with boundary lines, a centre line, a centre circle, and two key areas.

The centre line divides the court into a front court and back court area. A team's back court includes their goal line and key; teams score in their front court, which includes the opponent's goal line and key area. The centre line is considered to be part of the back court.

The key areas are located on the two end lines. They are 8m wide and 1.75 meters deep. The part of the end line that is in the key area is called the goal line. The ends of the goal line are marked by two cones.

Wheelchair rugby is played with a regulation volleyball. All athletes compete in manual wheelchairs. There are detailed rules specifying the permitted design and construction of chairs. These rules are designed to ensure the safety of the players, and to prevent anyone from gaining an unfair mechanical advantage based on the design of their chair.

Players and Officials

A team consists of up to twelve players. Teams are mixed; men and women can play on the same team.

All players have a classification. The classification is a measure of their functional physical ability, and ranges from 0.5 (the lowest) to 3.5 (the highest). Players with different classifications play different roles on the court. Classification is conducted by doctors, physiotherapists, and other trained medical professionals.

Each team can field four players at one time. The total permitted classification point value of all players on the court is 8.0 per team. This requires teams to field a mix of players with different classification point values. For each female athlete on court, a team is permitted an additional 0.5 points (i.e. a team with one female athlete on court will be permitted a total classification point value of 8.5).

Each team has one or two designated Captains who are responsible to communicate with the game officials.

The game is supervised by two Referees, who are responsible to ensure that the game is decided fairly and within the rules. They are assisted by four table officials: a Scorekeeper, a Timekeeper, a Forty Second operator and a Penalty Timekeeper. The Technical Commissioner supervises the work of the table officials and assists in deciding the outcome of any protests registered by either team.

Timing, Scoring, Starting and Stopping

A game consists of four eight-minute quarters. The game clock is started when the ball goes into play and is stopped at each stoppage in play.

There is a two-minute break between the first and second quarters, a five minute break at half time, and a two minute break between the third and fourth quarters. It takes about one hour and fifteen minutes to play a typical game from start to finish.

The team with the highest number of points at the end of four quarters is the winner. If the score is tied, an over-time period of three minutes is played. The team with the highest number of points at the end of the over-time period is the winner. If the score is still tied, additional periods of over-time are played until one team wins.

The game starts with a tip-off. Two players, one from each team, enter the centre circle and line up on either side of the centre line. The referee tosses the ball into the air between the two players, who try to tip it towards a team-mate. The game clock begins the moment the ball is touched by a player.

During the tip-off, the two players in the centre may touch the ball but they may not take possession of it until it has been touched by another player, or until it has touched the floor.

The team in possession of the ball has 40 seconds to score a goal, failure to do so results in loss of the ball to the opposing team.

An alternating process is used to determine possession of the ball at the start of the second, third, and fourth quarters. An arrow is used to indicate which team will have possession at the start of each quarter. Each period of overtime begins with a tip-off.

A goal is scored when a player carries the ball across the opposing team's goal line. Two wheels of the player's wheelchair must cross the line, and the player must have possession and be in control of the ball at the time. The ball may be held in the hands, on the lap, or against the player's chair.

A throw-in is used to begin play after a goal or other stoppage. The in-bounding player takes a position outside the court on the end line, after a goal, or on the side line, after a stoppage in play. No more than ten seconds can pass from when in-bounding player receives the ball from the referee until the ball is touched by another player on the court.

The in-bounding player may not enter the court until he has released the ball. He may not touch the ball after releasing it until it has been touched by another player on the court.

The ball is considered in play from the time the referee gives it to the in-bounding player and blows his whistle. The ball becomes live when it is first touched by a player on the court; the game clock and the forty second clock start at this time. When the referee blows his whistle to signal a goal or other stoppage in play, the game clock stops and the ball becomes dead.

Each team has four player time-outs and two coach time-outs. Either team may call for a time-out when the ball is dead. When the ball is in play, only a team on which a player has possession of the ball may call for a time-out. The coach of a team can request a time-out at any time which will be awarded at the next dead ball. Coach time-outs are a maximum of one minute in length, a player time-out is thirty seconds in length. The team that calls the time-out may choose to begin play before the time has elapsed for the time-out.

The referees may call a time-out at any time during the game to respond to a fallen or injured player, a damaged wheelchair, an equipment malfunction, or any other situation affecting the game or the safety of the players. If there is a safety concern, play is stopped immediately. In other situations, if a team is in a position to score the referee will normally wait until a goal has been scored or until the scoring opportunity no longer exists.

If a time-out is called due to an equipment malfunction, the affected team has one minute to correct the problem. If they cannot correct the problem within one minute, they must either substitute a different player or call a time-out.

Playing the Ball

The location of a player is determined by the location of the four wheels of the wheelchair. The location of the ball is determined by the location of the player, if the ball is carried; by the location of the ball itself, if the ball is touching the floor; or by the last position where the ball touched a player or the floor. The side lines, end lines, goal lines, and cones are considered to be out-of-bounds. A referee may be considered in-bounds or out-of-bounds depending on his position on the floor.

Players may play the ball with their arms and hands, or may carry it on their lap or their chair. If the ball is carried on the lap, at least three-quarters of the ball must be visible. To pass the ball, players may throw it, roll it, bat it, or bounce it. Kicking the ball is not permitted.

A player is considered to have control of the ball when he has possession of the ball, when he has a hand firmly on the ball preventing an opponent from moving it, or when he is in the act of bouncing the ball. A team is considered to have control of the ball when one of their players has control of the ball. Once a team has control of the ball, they continue to have control until a player from the other team gains control or until the ball becomes dead.

A held ball exists when players from opposing teams have control of the ball at the same time. This can occur when one player has possession of the ball and another player places a hand firmly on the ball, preventing the first player from moving it. When a held ball occurs, the referee stops the play and awards possession according to the alternating process. The team that has the next alternating possession is given the ball to in-bound.

Violations

Violations are committed by the team that has possession of the ball. When a team commits a violation, they lose possession of the ball. The referee stops the play and gives the ball to the other team to in-bound.

A player who has possession of the ball is not permitted to touch the floor with any part of his body, or with any part of his wheelchair except the four wheels and the anti-tip device. Any other contact with the floor will result in a Physical Advantage violation.

A player who has possession of the ball must dribble or pass the ball at least once every ten seconds. Failure to dribble or pass the ball will result in a Ten Seconds – No Dribble violation.

A player whose team has control of the ball cannot remain in the opposing team's key area for more than ten seconds. Staying in the key for longer will result in a Ten Seconds in the Key violation.

A team which takes control of the ball in their back court area has twelve seconds to advance the ball into their front court. If the ball does not enter the front court within twelve seconds, a twelve Second violation will occur.

A team which has control of the ball in their front court area is not permitted to return the ball to their back court. If the team causes the ball to re-enter the back court, a Back Court violation will occur. This violation is only called if a player from the team is the first to touch the ball after it has reentered the back court; if the opposing team touches the ball first, play will continue.

The ball must remain in-bounds at all times. If a player causes the ball to go out of bounds, an Out of Bounds violation occurs. Following an out of bounds violation, the ball is given to the team that did not cause the ball to go out of bounds. A player who has possession of the ball who leaves the court without scoring a goal has committed an out of bounds violation.

A team in possession of the ball has forty seconds to score a goal. Failure to score a goal in forty seconds results in a forty second violation. A team in possession of the ball that calls a player time-out with less than fifteen seconds on the forty second clock will have fifteen seconds put on the forty seconds clock when play recommences.

Fouls

Fouls may be committed by either team. There are four types of fouls: common fouls, technical fouls, flagrant fouls, and disqualifying fouls.

Common fouls occur when a player violates the rules during a genuine attempt to play the game. The sanction for a common foul is a loss of possession, if the foul is committed by a player on the offensive team, or a one-minute penalty, if the foul is committed by a player on the defensive team. A player who is serving a one-minute penalty for a common foul is released from the penalty box after one minute of time has elapsed on the game clock, or if the opposing team scores a goal.

If a defensive foul is committed when the offensive team is in an imminent scoring position, the referee may award a penalty goal in lieu of a one-minute penalty. A player serving a penalty is not released if a penalty goal is awarded.

A Charging foul occurs when one player strikes another player with excessive speed or force, risking injury to the player.

A Contact Before the Whistle foul occurs if one player makes deliberate or advantageous contact with another player while the ball is dead. Each team will receive one contact warning in each half before this foul is called.

An Out-and-In foul occurs when a player who has possession of the ball leaves the court on the goal line and then returns to the court without scoring a goal. This usually occurs when a player gets one wheel over the goal line and then returns to the court.

A Four in the Key foul occurs when the defending team has four of their players in their own key area. The foul is charged to the last defending player who entered the key.

A Holding foul occurs when a player grasps or holds the body or wheelchair of another player with a hand or any other part of the body, or leans on another player, preventing that player from moving freely.

A Leaving the Court foul occurs when a player who does not have possession of the ball exits the court anywhere, except on the goal lines, to gain an advantage. A player who does not have possession of the ball may leave the court as a result of contact or to avoid a dangerous situation; however, when he returns to the court he must not have gained any positional advantage.

Leaving the court also occurs when a player who does not have possession of the ball exits the court on his goal line while the opposing team has possession of the ball, or on the opposing team's goal line when his team has possession of the ball.

A Pushing foul occurs when a player who has made legal contact with an opposing player applies a continuous force to his wheels to push the other player from a legal position into an illegal position, or

when a player uses his hands to physically push an opponent or an opponent's wheelchair. Pushing also occurs when a player uses such a push to assist his team-mate in defending or scoring a goal.

An Illegal Use of Hands foul occurs when a player using his arms or hands to contest for possession of the ball strikes any part of another player.

A Spinning foul occurs when a player strikes another player's wheelchair anywhere behind the axle of the rear wheel, causing the wheelchair to rotate horizontally or vertically so that the player's safety is at risk.

A player who is in-bounding the ball must be given one metre of clear space from the side line or end line to allow him to re-enter the court. A One Metre foul occurs when a player from either team enters this one metre area before the in-bounding player has released the ball.

Technical fouls occur when a player or coach acts in a disrespectful or unsportsmanlike fashion, or violates the rules governing the administration of the game. There are a variety of situations that may lead to a technical foul. Common reasons for technical fouls include:

- Using disrespectful or abusive language to officials, spectators, or other players
- Delaying the game, for example by preventing the ball from being promptly put into play
- Preventing an in-bounding player from returning onto the court after a throw-in.
- Not proceeding directly to the penalty box when directed by the referee
- Playing with an illegal chair
- Using an unjustifiable excuse to obtain a stoppage in play, for example by a trivial request for an equipment check
- Playing with more than the maximum classification point value of players

The sanction for a technical foul committed by a player is a one-minute penalty. The sanction for a technical foul committed by a team's bench personnel is a one-minute penalty, to be served by a player selected by the team's coach.

A Flagrant Foul occurs when a player commits a common foul with reckless disregard for safety. An example is committing a spinning foul against the ball carrier at the goal line, when there is no realistic possibility of making safe or legal contact. The sanction for a flagrant foul is a common foul plus two technical fouls, to be served consecutively. A penalty goal may be awarded in place of the common foul, but the offending player must still serve the two penalties for the technical foul.

A Disqualifying Foul is any foul that is blatantly unsportsmanlike or dangerous. Examples include fighting, striking or attempting to strike a fallen player, or continuous abusive and offensive language. A player who commits a disqualifying foul is immediately ejected from the game and must leave the playing area. A player who commits their second flagrant foul during a game will also be disqualified from any further participation in the game. The player's coach must designate a substitute to serve a one-minute penalty for the disqualified player. This penalty is served for a full minute; the player is not released if the opposing team scores.