



USA TEAM HANDBALL

Competition Rule Book



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Preliminary information

Mission

The Mission of the USA Team Handball (USATH) will be to develop, promote, educate and grow the sport of Team Handball at all levels in the United States and to enable United States athletes to achieve sustained competitive excellence by winning medals in international and Olympic competition.

Foreword

The USA Team Handball (USATH) Rule Book regulates all team handball structures, organizations and activities in the USA. The amendments made to this Rule Book are aimed at facilitating sanctioning and promoting competition, in order to help boost the development of team handball at a National level.

Abbreviations

- **TD** - Technical Director
- **CEO** – Chief Executive Officer
- **LOC** - Local Organizing Committee
- **EM**- Event Manager (representing sponsoring team or club or LOC)
- **EDC** - Event Disciplinary Committee
- **CC** – Competition Committee

Definitions

- **Event Manager (EM)**
LOC representative who has the ultimate decision-making authority for specific sanctioned event and is responsible for compliance with USATH rules and regulations.
- **Local Organizing Committee (LOC)**
An organization of individuals (teams, clubs, community-based entities) that work together to host, promote and/or stage USATH sanctioned events.
- **Competition Committee (CC)**
The appointed group of representatives that oversees the sanctioning, exemptions and qualification requirements for USATH sanctioned events.
- **Maximum Roster Size**
The highest number of players that a team can bring to and use in USATH sanctioned championships event.
- **Minimum Roster Size**
The lowest number of players that a team can enter USATH sanctioned championship event without losing its Performance Bond.



- **Club Roster**

The list of players who actively participate in club practices or games.

- **Season**

The USA Team Handball Indoor Season begins on the Tuesday after Labor Day and ends on Labor Day of the following year.

- **“In writing”**

A letter mailed or electronically transmitted (email); however, the sender must confirm any email that has been received by intended recipient.

- **Qualifying Match**

Any match, sanctioned by USATH as a single contest or part of the larger tournament or league competition, played in accordance with all IHF rules except:

- Participating teams cannot be part of the same club, unless roster integrity is established at the beginning of the season and maintained throughout the season for the purpose of entering two separate teams from one club for sanctioned local events, regional qualifiers and/or meeting the minimum games standard for USATH Open Club Championships.
- Halves may be as short as 25min without additional approval. In the event that scheduling requires the organizer to schedule games with 20min halves, approval can be given by a representative of the CC, provided the crossover and final games are regulation length.
- Court may be as short as 35 meters and as narrow as 19m.
- Each match has to be officiated by at least one (1) USATH certified referee.
- Match has to be played within season’s time-table/deadlines.
- Interior dimensions of a goal must meet IHF standards, but construction and exterior may differ.
- Other exceptions must be requested and approved from the TD or CEO in writing
- Official match report must be filled-in by a table referee, signed by both coaches, at least 1 USATH-registered official, and forwarded to CC and TD or CEO as a hard copy or email attachment no later than 10 business days after the game was played.



Article I. Participant Registration and Eligibility

Section 1.01 Player Eligibility

Pursuant to the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act, USATH will provide an equal opportunity to amateur athletes, coaches, trainers, managers, administrators, and officials to participate in amateur athletic competition, without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual preference or orientation, gender identity, age, or national origin.

Section 1.02 Participant Registration

All active members of a USATH-recognized Club, including colleges and schools, coaches, athletes and officials are required to register online on the official USATH website: <http://usateamhandball.usetopscore.com>.

The dues structure, levels, and deadlines to pay are set annually by the USATH Board of Directors and posted on USATH website.

Only USATH registered teams, clubs, LOCs will be eligible to sanction their tournaments.

Section 1.03 Club/Team Regulations and Standards

To be recognized by the USATH, an existing club/team must fulfill the following annual requirements:

- A. Maintain an up-to-date profile with the TD or CEO, including contact information for Club and Club's designated official as liaison with USATH.
- B. Keep up with Club/Team annual fees per schedule, per Section 1.02.

All new clubs must register and comply with all required paperwork and fees at least thirty (30) days before participating in any USATH sanctioned event.

Furthermore, clubs are encouraged to:

- A. Be incorporated in their state of operation (not-for-profit 501(c)(3) status is recommended).
- B. Have at least one USATH certified pair of referees (non-players are recommended as officials).



Article II. Code of Conduct

Section 2.01 Application

All participants (including players, coaches, referees, event organizers and volunteers) in USATH sanctioned events are considered ambassadors of the game and, as such, must adhere to these rules.

All participants, as part of their individual online registration, must sign the Participant Code of Conduct, available on TOPSCORE, before they may take part in a USATH sanctioned event.

Section 2.02 Authority to Implement the Rules and Code at Events

- A. During any match occurring in a USATH sanctioned event, the referees are the ultimate disciplinary authority. Their authority extends to warm-ups, actual game play, time-outs and halftime.
- B. Prior to the first game of any sanctioned event, the LOC will form an Event Disciplinary Committee (EDC) comprised of, at a minimum:
 - a. Event Manager (EM),
 - b. Head Referee,
 - c. At least one (1) Athlete Representative. Every effort will be made to have a male and female athlete representative.
- C. The EDC will meet in the following situations:
 - a. The use, by the game officials, of the blue card.
 - b. An immediate disqualification from a game issued by referees for any player and/or team official related to either unsportsmanlike conduct and/or dangerous play.
 - c. Any and all actions by any individual prior to, or after a game, that are deemed detrimental to the tournament organizer and/or to the USATH including, but not limited to unsportsmanlike conduct towards other participants (verbal and/or physical), referees, tournament staff and volunteers, facility employees, and/or spectators, as well as destruction of property.
 - d. Any situation not described above requiring the intervention of a disciplinary authority. This authority extends over all event venues, participants, and spectators.

Section 2.03 Unacceptable Behavior during USATH Sanctioned Event

This Rule Book defines as unacceptable behavior:

- A. The use of offensive language - generally as a disparaging remark to an opposing player or toward a referee, or even as an expression of frustration or self-admonishment. This includes any act that is reasonably likely to threaten, disparage, vilify, offend, insult, humiliate or intimidate another person or group based on race, gender, religion, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation or gender identification.
- B. Questioning and/or disputing of the referee's decision.
- C. Failure to obey referee instructions and/or to leave the court promptly upon being penalized by a referee.
- D. Abuse of equipment (e.g. kicking/spiking the ball, removing his / her shirt, etc...)
- E. Improper conduct and/or failure to exit the competition hall without delay after a player has been disqualified.



Section 2.04 Referees' Obligations in Event of Direct Disqualification

- A. An incident resulting in disqualification of any player and/or team official during a game, except for 3rd 2-minute suspension, will be described in writing by the respective referees on the back side of the match report upon conclusion of that match indicating any additional disciplinary actions needed.
- B. When required, the EDC will meet, review, and render its decision as soon as possible, and no later than the involved person's next match. Only members of the EDC are allowed to participate in this process. However, the EDC, at its sole discretion, may confer with other individuals related to the subject matter under review. Notice of actions, if any, will be delivered verbally to the player(s) and/or team official(s) immediately after the meeting to be followed by a written report for the record. If that person is not available, notice will be delivered as soon as possible. There are no appeals of actions taken by the local EDC.
- C. In the case where a direct disqualification is issued during the last game of an event, the EDC will note as such on the match report and USATH Disqualification Report. Upon receiving the Disqualification Report, the TD or CEO will review the case and render any additional sanctions. All involved parties will be notified of any additional sanctions via email within 15 business days.

Section 2.05 Minimum Recommended Penalties for Violations

The following guidelines/recommendations are established to help standardize additional punishments that may be issued during USATH sanctioned events. The EDC should adhere to the recommended penalties but are not bound them.

- A. The following are recommended punishments for in-game violations:

Violation	Occurrence	Minimum Penalty	Maximum Penalty
Rough/dangerous play	1 st red card	No additional punishment required	N/A
	2 nd red card	1 game suspension	Rest of the tournament
Unsportsmanlike conduct	1 st red card	1 game suspension	3 game suspension
	2 nd red card	2 game suspension	Rest of the tournament
Red card for verbal abuse or physical assault that is personal in nature¹		Automatic disqualification from the tournament	Review by USATH Disciplinary Committee, subject to due process

- B. If disciplinary measures, regardless of source, result in a player's suspension for 1 or more matches during the season, such suspensions must be served during next USATH sanctioned match. If by the end of the season, not all suspensions have been served; those will roll over into the next season.

¹ Remarks regarding age, gender, ethnicity, religion, character, physical appearance, competency level or sexual orientation.



Section 2.06 Recommended Actions for Inappropriate Out-of Game Conduct

There are no specific guidelines for out-of-game violations. The respective EDC will have wide latitude in issuing punishments. However, the EDC should review existing guidelines for in-game violations, especially related to unsportsmanlike behavior, as use as a guideline when making its decisions.

Section 2.07 Safe Sport Commitment

USATH totally embraces the principles and guidelines that serve to protect our membership and we work closely in collaboration with the U.S. Center for SafeSport and the U.S. Olympic Committee toward that end.

Beginning in October of 2018, ALL coaches, team managers, team leaders, medical trainers or any other team official that expects to be seated on a team bench in any of our sanctioned events, to include the annual College National Championships and the annual Club Open Championships, will be mandated to show proof of having passed the free on-line SafeSport educational tutorial. The SafeSport Certificate that is issued for this course is valid for two years and must be current for the specific event where participation is being sought. This also extends to all referees assigned to the event by the National Referee Committee Chair. All the above referenced individuals will also be expected to show proof of having passed a Background Check that is valid for two years and must be current at the time of the specific event in which participation is being sought.

In addition, ALL registered clubs must designate a SafeSport Champion for their respective club and they too are expected to have passed the SafeSport educational tutorial and having passed a Background Check every two years and to be familiar with the SafeSport resolution and policy in effect for USATH.

Until such time that Club SafeSport Champions can register within our on-line platform as to their designation for their respective club, SafeSport Champions must register with Chris Morgan, USATH's Membership Director. Chris will maintain a club SafeSport Champions list that he will produce for all applicable events that will be monitored.

For sanctioned events, compliance with these mandates will be the responsibility of the named person in charge for each respective event, this is typically the responsible person named on the sanction request form and/or the Certificate of Insurance form. For the College Nationals and Open Club Championships, compliance enforcement will fall upon the respective Competition Director.

The USATH Director of SafeSport Education / Certification is Jan O'SHEA. Access to the SafeSport on-line tutorial can be found through the following link:

<https://safesport.org/authentication/register?token=fbfa9bd1-7c7f-4cde-8686f477c1c493ebc2>.

Choose USA Team Handball and enter the following access code: **VH58-JRRJ-BPLL-ZA75**.

Dave GASCON serves as the USATH Director of Background Checks and our designated service provider is NCSI. You may apply for a background clearance as follows:

Go to www.ncsisafe.com, click on "START YOUR BACKGROUND SCREENING NOW".

STEP 1: Enter Self-Registration Number: **40393054**

STEP 2: Enter your information as requested

STEP 3: Provide Legal Authorization and Certification



It is important when entering your name, that you use your full legal name as written on your current ID (state driver's license, passport or state ID with name and DOB). Please also verify that your social security number was typed correctly. Using nicknames or failing to type a correct social security number may delay or invalidate your background check.

Once you have submitted your information you will receive a confirmation page with a 16-digit Applicant ID Number. The background check generally takes 10 business days to complete and you may check your status on our website under the "CHECK YOUR BACKGROUND SCREENING STATUS" link at www.ncsisafe.com.

If there are any questions on what is presented above you can direct them to Michael D. CAVANAUGH at mdc@usateamhandball.org, or to Jan O'SHEA at janoshea@aol.com, or to Dave GASCON at ChiefDave84@aol.com – we stand ready to respond quickly and directly!



Article III. Rules of the Game

Section 3.01 Application of the Rules

The USATH, as member of the International Handball Federation (IHF), will apply all handball rules specified in the IHF Rules of the Game (valid at that time) in all USATH events.

Section 3.02 Exemption Procedure

The LOC must request any deviation from the IHF rules in writing, no later than 30 days prior to the event start date.

The USATH CC will review the request and respond, no later than 10 days prior to the event start date.

Section 3.03 Copies of the Rules

The IHF Rules of the Game and USATH Rule Book can be found at www.usateamhandball.org.

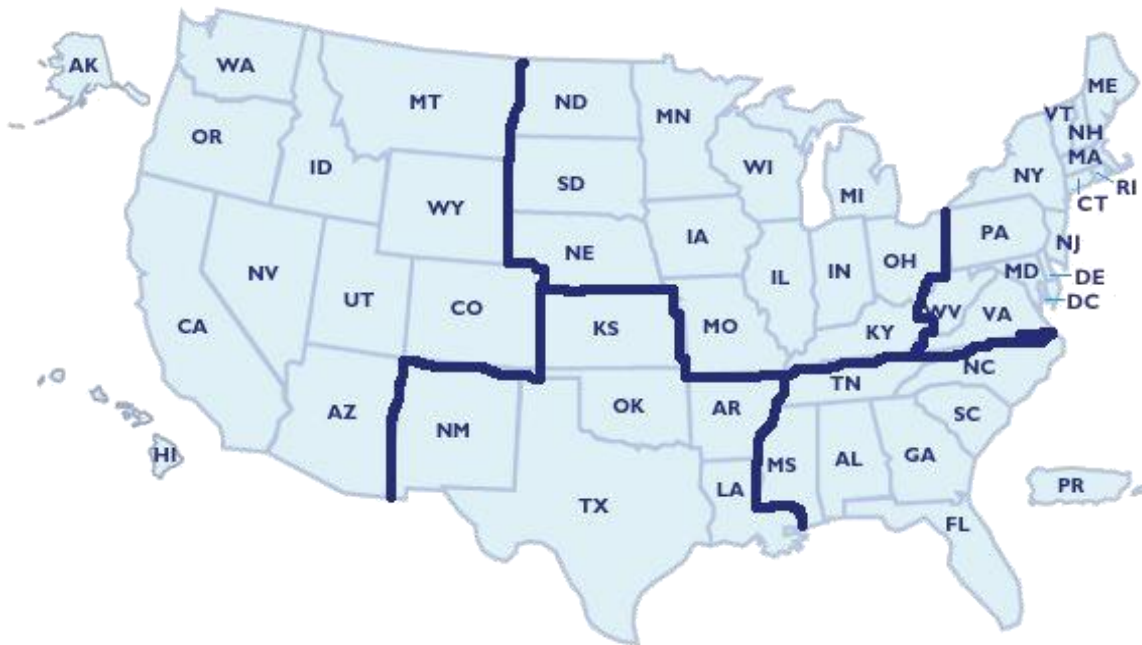


Article IV. USATH Regional Structure, Qualifiers, and Leagues

Section 4.01 Regions

There are five (5) regions for USATH Handball competition and classification purposes. Regions and their respective regional representatives, comprising of the USATH CC, are solely and independently responsible, within the parameters set forth in this Rule Book, for working out a system of regional competitions, including local games, regional tournaments and regional leagues.

Requests to qualify for Open Club Championships from outside of a home region will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The regions are outlined below:



WEST	MIDWEST	SOUTHWEST	NORTHEAST	SOUTHEAST
Alaska	Illinois	Arkansas	Connecticut	Alabama
Arizona	Indiana	Kansas	Delaware	Florida
California	Iowa	Louisiana	Maine	Georgia
Colorado	Kentucky	New Mexico	Maryland	Mississippi
Hawaii	Michigan	Oklahoma	Massachusetts	North Carolina
Idaho	Minnesota	Texas	New Hampshire	South Carolina
Montana	Missouri		New Jersey	Tennessee
Nevada	Nebraska		New York	
Oregon	North Dakota		Pennsylvania	
Utah	Ohio		Rhode Island	
Washington	South Dakota		Vermont	
Wyoming	Wisconsin		Virginia	
			West Virginia	
			Washington, D.C.	



Section 4.02 USATH Regional Qualification Process

Each region will strive to have a Regional Qualification Process, to determine its entrants into the USATH Open Club ELITE Championships. Only USATH sanctioned single contests, multi-game tournaments, and regional leagues are recognized as “qualifying” towards USATH Club, College, and High School National Championships. The USATH CC is ultimately responsible for the determination of the qualification format, which is described in Article VI.

The number of available seeds for each region will be determined based on the number of active teams in the region. A team shall be considered active if it participates in at least 50% of the region’s sanctioned events.

In case the winner of a sanctioned Regional League or Regional Qualification Tournament is also the reigning Club Champion, an additional bid shall be awarded to the next highest ranked team from that region. In the event that the qualified teams decline the bid, their spots shall be granted to the highest-ranking regional finishers interested in accepting it. If none of the remaining eligible teams accept the bid, such bid should be turned-over and become a Wild Card bid.

The CC will strive to announce the assigned regional bids early in the season. With that in mind, regional committees are required to commit the number of active teams no later than October 31st of any given year. Following that commitment, the CC will announce the format and for the USATH Open Club Championships no later than November 15th of any given year.

Results are expected to be communicated to the CC on a regular basis if not made available online, and final standings are due by March 31st of any given year, in order to facilitate the draw of the Open Club divisions.

If a regional committee does not meet its committed schedule, the CC reserves the right to reassign the ELITE bids that had been assigned to the region.

Section 4.03 Regional Leagues and Local Competitions

Each region will strive to have a sanctioned regional league(s) with a designated Commissioner and own website or maintain a dedicated page on USATH website about playing schedule, participating teams, league news and results.

Regional leagues will abide by the regulations set forth by the USATH CC, and comply with the USATH Rule book.



Article V. USATH Sanctioned Events Involving Domestic Teams

This article is the reference to be followed by any LOC hosting a domestic tournament. It replaces the USATH Tournament Sanctioning Guide.

Section 5.01 Authority

Per USOC charter as the National Governing Body for Team Handball and subsequent authority and duties, including granting sanctions for amateur athletic competition under paragraph 220525 of the Ted Stevens Act, USA Team Handball sanctions events involving domestic teams and clubs (Article II) and international club and National Teams competitions (Article III) to ensure:

- A. an equal opportunity for all hosts (teams, clubs, LOCs) to hold tournaments without unreasonably competing for the same teams to participate in these tournaments and,
- B. all players to participate in these events under the best possible playing, officiating, safety, and social conditions.

Section 5.02 Eligibility and Exemptions

Only USATH registered and recognized teams/clubs and LOC may apply to and have an event sanctioned. All events, including single matches and multiple match tournaments, ought to be sanctioned by the USATH TD, CEO or designee.

Note: Only USATH sanctioned single contests, multi-game tournaments, and regional leagues are recognized as “qualifying” towards USATH Open Club, College, and High School National Championships.

Section 5.03 Rights and Responsibilities of the Host Organization

In applying for sanction the host (team/club and/or LOC) agrees to conduct the tournament in accordance with the USATH Rules of the Game (as defined in Article I), and to abide by the USATH Sanctioning Process (as defined in Section 5.04). In return, the host obtains the right to:

- A. USATH General Liability and Secondary Accidental insurance coverage for the competition venue owners, host team/clubs players, visiting participants, spectators, and guests.
- B. Conduct the tournament on the dates at the location specified.
- C. Have the single contest and/or tournament and all games played recognized as “qualifying” for USATH Open Club Championship events.
- D. Have the tournament listed on the USATH web page (Events).
- E. Receive necessary forms for the conduct of the tournament.
- F. Receive support from the USATH membership committee to check participants’ membership status.
- G. Use the designation of USATH sanctioned event to leverage media attention, larger attendance, sponsorships and revenue opportunities, including use of the USATH logo and access to the USATH sponsors network.
- H. Have the results published on the USATH web page provided the information is submitted in a timely manner and subject to standard editorial policies.



Section 5.04 Sanctioning Process

The entire sanctioning process, including approval process is currently being established on the USATH online platform: <http://usateamhandball.usetopscore.com> Please contact the CC chair, TD or CEO for more information.

Note: for all league tournaments, the league commissioner shall be responsible for managing the sanctioning process for each event and reporting the league's results to the CC.

Section 5.05 Participation in Sanctioned Events

(a) Membership requirements

- A. All players and coaches in a sanctioned tournament must be USATH members. Memberships are valid for one season and have to be renewed annually to maintain participation eligibility. All USATH memberships are to be purchased through the dedicated platform.
- B. USATH will provide sponsoring club an access to listing of current members to the EM prior to the start of the sanctioned event. However, the LOC is fully responsible for checking players' eligibility to compete.

(b) Officiating requirements

- A. Each qualified match has to be officiated by at least one (1) USATH certified official. Officials certified by the IHF or EHF can be used in place of USATH certified officials.
- B. The sponsoring LOC is responsible for all arrangements and costs related to referee needs. Please consult the National Referee Committee (NRC) for the currently enforceable referee court fees to be paid. Upon request, USATH and the NRC may assist the LOC in identifying available certified officials.

(c) Players

- A. A player may sign up at any time during the playing season; however, they will not be cleared to play at sanctioned events until their registration has been certified by the USATH.
- B. Once a player has taken part in a sanctioned event with a team, they may not participate in sanctioned events with other teams, except in the following situations:
 - a. One-time waiver (up to two per team, per tournament) to help a team meet minimum roster requirements. This only applies to teams that have fewer than ten (10) players on their roster. In that case, the sanctioned event will not be counted towards that player's eligibility for participation in the ELITE division. Note that one-time waivers **must be announced in writing** at the time that the roster is submitted for review by the CC. The CC will be responsible for maintaining a record of all those waivers, should the TD or CEO need to review them prior to the Open Club Championships. Players may not play for more than two (2) teams over the course of a season.
 - b. Permanent transfer, submitted in writing to the CC Chairperson and approved by the club of origin. This process, including approval from the TD or CEO, must be completed **prior** to playing any sanctioned game with a new team. The CC will be responsible for maintaining a record of all permanent transfers, should the TD or CEO need to review them



prior to the Open Club Championships. Note that any sanctioned games played with a former team will not count towards eligibility with a new team. All permanent transfers must fall within one of the following categories:

- i. Off-season transfers – players may transfer without justification during the off-season period, from June 1st to August 31st of every year. Those transfers must still meet the rules listed previously but do not require justification.
- ii. In-season transfers – players may transfer one-time during the season, provided they present justification with their request. Acceptable forms of justification include – but are not limited to – relocation or strategic change on the player’s current team. The CC will review the request and make a recommendation to the TD or CEO, who will have the ultimate decision on whether or not to allow the transfer.

Section 5.06 Violation(s)

Any and all violations of Article IV shall be recorded by the TD or CEO and are subject to disciplinary sanctions by USATH. Pending disciplinary sanctions shall be communicated in writing, via emails, to the respective parties as soon as recognized but no later than within 60 days after the event.

Should an individual or club/team/LOC wish to appeal those sanctions, they will have 10 business days to do so to the CEO. The CEO will review the case and either support, alter, or overrule the sanction rendered, in consultation with the CC, within 15 business days. The CEO’s decision is final and cases that are denied for appeal cannot be reopened.

Section 5.07 Minimum Venue Requirements

The following are minimum venue standards that the LOC is expected to meet. However, the LOC can use the Sanctioning Application to request an exception be made. The USATH’s TD or designee shall respond **within 10 days** with an approval or a denial.

(a) Court

Only a regulation Team Handball court measuring 20 m x 40 m (or approximately 65’7” x 131’2”) should be used for all sanctioned events. Each court should have at least a 2m, with 3m preferred perimeter “safety zone” surrounding it.

Each venue shall have at least one Stadium Court that meets basic Court requirements and provides seating for at least 100 spectators via bleachers and/or seating bowl.

Note: Courts need not necessarily be adjacent and/or under one roof, but should be within easy walking distance (less than a ½ mile).

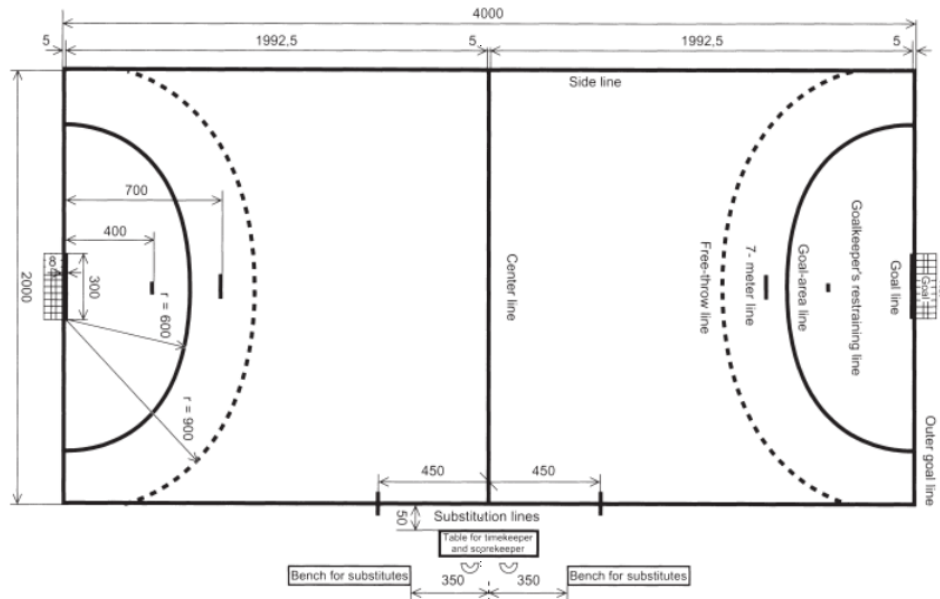


Figure 1 - Court layout

(b) Court Lines

Each court must be visibly marked with 2-inch wide lines according to the IHF rules.

(c) Goals

Each court must have 2 regulation goals with nets. Both goals must be securely attached to the floor with anchors and/or weights and/or sand bags.

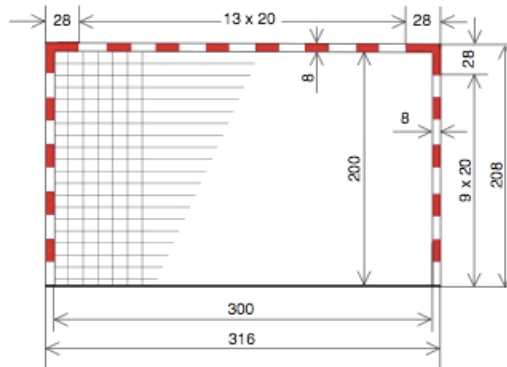


Figure 2 - Regulation Goal

(d) USATH Table

If so stipulated by USATH, the main gymnasium shall have one dedicated USATH membership/merchandise table placed near the entrance. The LOC will not be required to manage that table.



(e) Team Bench

Each court shall have sufficient bench seating for 16 athletes for each team and up to four (4) team officials (2 coaches, 1 athletic trainer, and 1 manager/statistician). The team bench must be placed in accordance with Figure 1.

(f) Officials' Table

Each court shall have one (1) official's table (capacity: 3 people) equipped with scoreboards (manual or mechanical) that are visible to the spectators facing the scoring tables.

Each scoring table must have the equipment listed below:

- A. One (1) stop watch
- B. Two (2) regulation size balls
- C. Pre Printed Match Reports plus 10 blanks
- D. Two (2) Red Sharpies
- E. Four (4) black pens
- F. Cards
 - a. One (1) yellow
 - b. One (1) red
 - c. One (1) blue
- G. Two minute penalty sheets – print 10 per game
- H. Two (2) Penalty sheet stands
- I. One (1) Whistle
- J. Three (3) large green laminated and numbered time out cards
- K. One (1) air pump with extra inflator needles
- L. Five (5) blank injury reports
- M. Sandbags or weights to hold down goals
- N. One (1) pair of scissors and string for goal repair
- O. Form and display for tracking injury player stoppage – 2 possessions.

(g) Locker Rooms

Each venue shall provide separate men's and women's changing rooms (capacity: 20 players each). It is not required that each court have its own locker room. Shower facilities are preferred, but not required. If lockers are not available, this must be communicated to teams prior to the tournament.

(h) Venue Hours

Depending on the number of teams that are entered, competition shall begin as early as 8 a.m. on Friday morning or as applicable and conclude no later than 5 p.m. on Sunday afternoon.

(i) USATH Handball Operations Center

Venue shall have, if so stipulated by USATH, one room (500 sq. feet) dedicated to USA Team Handball for its operations and storage.



(j) Hospitality Area

At least one room and/or tented area shall be designated, if so stipulated by USATH, for USA Team Handball and/or LOC hospitality.

(k) Warm-up Area(s)

Clearly designated and ample in size area for teams' general warm-up routines should be identified prior to the competition and communicated to teams' reps during the Technical Meeting.

Section 5.08 Minimum Game Scheduling Requirements

(a) Match Intervals

Regardless of the event's competition format, the games must be planned in such a way to allow each team to have the following minimum time intervals between each match:

- 90 minutes between 2 x 30 minutes games
- 80 minutes between 2 x 25 minutes games
- 70 minutes between 2 x 20 minutes games

(b) Length of the Half-Time

The length of half time is to be respectively:

- 10 minutes for 2 x 30 minutes games
- 7 minutes for 2 x 25 minutes games
- 5 minutes for 2 x 20 minutes games

(c) Warm-up times

Minimum warm-up time on court before first match of the day and/or daily session of the competition should be at least 30 minutes. Minimum warm-up time on court for all other matches should be at least 10 minutes.

(d) Maximum number of matches per event

The maximum number of matches for an event must be defined according to the requirements listed previously.

Section 5.09 Minimum Athletic Trainer/Medical Care

It is required that at least one (1) licensed medical provider (ATC, MD, EMT, or DO) be present in the competition area **at all times during competition** provided the play areas are within one hundred (100) feet of each other.

If play areas are located on separate floors, then one (1) licensed medical provider is required on each floor.

It is also required that a first aid kit and supply of ice be readily available for emergency first response treatment. All medical personnel and event staff should be easily recognizable.



The LOC is required to have an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) on site at all times. The location of the AED must be identified to all staff and Athletic Trainer at the Technical Meeting.

It is required that an EM have a published emergency contact list, emergency action plan and an emergency transportation plan available on hand at the venue.

The EM is responsible for introducing the Trainer and clearly stating where the trainer station will be located. For identification, an 8.5x11 sign should be posted above the Trainer Station.

Section 5.10 Minimum Uniforms Standards

In a continuing effort to upgrade our local and national sanctioned competitions, all teams are mandated to follow IHF rules regarding uniforms.

<http://www.ihf.info/TechnicalCorner/Referees/RulesandExpertsCorner/RulesoftheGame/tabid/1285/Default.aspx>

For USATH Open Club Championships, any and all violations of uniforms standards are subject to additional Performance Bond regulations and penalties.

Section 5.11 Local Promotion / PR and Media Plan

USATH's role is to build national teams and do so by promoting the sport of team handball in the United States. The LOC is required to ensure that each sanctioned tournament is reasonably well advertised to the public.

Section 5.12 Hospitality and Communication

The following is required from the LOC:

(a) Signage

Proper signage directing guests to the gymnasiums must be in place at all times

(b) Schedules

At least one (1) large printed schedule (24" x 24" minimum) must be posted at main doorways. The Schedule poster board should include the USATH logo and the words "This event is officially sanctioned by USA Team Handball".

(c) Communications Board

One large poster board must be present for any announcements (e.g. lunch location, tournament social event, special appearance, etc...)

(d) Courtesy

We encourage the LOC to inform players to act as good hosts. Everyone is encouraged to invite and educate new spectators about the sport.



Article VI. USATH Open Championships

Section 6.01 Open Club ELITE divisions

(a) Format

Provided there are enough interested and qualified teams, an ELITE division may be held for both MEN's and WOMEN's teams. The TD or CEO will announce, **no later than March 31st** of the on-going season, whether or not ELITE divisions will be held.

The ELITE divisions will be limited to eight (8) teams until such a time as the number of ELITE-worthy teams exceeds that capacity. The CC reserves the right to adjust the format of play. The CC will preside over the draw of all teams into their respective pools of play.

(b) Minimum eligibility requirements

(i) Teams

- A. All teams wishing to participate in ELITE divisions must meet the following minimum participation standard:
 - a. Women: three (3) qualifying matches, including regional qualification tournaments.
 - b. Men: five (5) qualifying matches, including regional qualification tournaments.

Regional League Commissioners will be asked to provide participation information for all teams affiliated with their respective league.
- B. If a club wishes to enter two or more teams into the regional competition, it can do so under following conditions:
 - a. The club must declare its intentions in writing and provide a separate roster of at least 10 registered players for each team.
 - b. Each entered team must meet the minimum participation standard to be eligible for ELITE divisions.
 - c. If more than one team from the same club enters a qualification tournament, players may only play for one team during the course of that tournament.
 - d. If more than one team qualifies for the ELITE division, those teams may not swap players used during qualification. However, teams may add eligible players who have not played in the qualifier.
 - e. If only one team qualifies for the ELITE division, that team may call up any player from its club that:
 - i. complies with the player minimum participation rule for the qualified team
 - ii. has not qualified for the ELITE division with another team.

(ii) Players

- A. To be eligible for participation in the ELITE division, each player must meet the following requirements:
 - a. Female players: Prior to the start of Open Club Championships, and complying with all other parts of this rulebook, must be listed as a player, and therefore physically present, at two (2) qualifying games for the respective team qualified for the ELITE division.



- b. **Male players:** Prior to the start of Open Club Championships, and complying with all other parts of this rulebook, must be listed as a player, and therefore physically present, at three (3) qualifying games for the respective team qualified for the ELITE division.
 - c. Qualifying games include all games played in Regional Qualification Tournaments and/or Sanctioned Regional Leagues, as well as any games at a sanctioned invitational tournament.
- B. Each team will be allowed one (1) automatic exception from the player minimum participation rule.

(c) Qualification

ELITE divisions may feature from six (6) to eight (8) teams, selected as follows.

(i) Defending champion

An automatic bid will be awarded to reigning ELITE Open Club Champions, under condition that they still meet the team eligibility requirements.

(ii) Regional league seeding

- A. Only regions with an official qualifying process are eligible to receive bids for ELITE divisions. The qualification process must be presented by the league commissioner and approved by the CC **by October 31st** of the on-going season.
- B. Based on the number of recognized regional leagues/qualifiers, the CC will announce the number of bids awarded to each region **by November 15th** of the on-going season, based on the following guidelines:
 - a. One (1) bid for regions with five (5) or fewer active teams.
 - b. Two (2) bids for regions with six (6) or more active teams.
- C. If a team has already been awarded an automatic bid, the regional bid passes to the next highest rank team in the region.
- D. If the total number of regional bids exceeds the number of available entries into the ELITE division, the CC reserves the right to reduce the number of bids for a given region and will provide an explanation to the concerned region's commissioner.

(iii) Wild Card bid(s)

If any bids remain, they will be assigned to the highest ranking teams. Points are earned by participating in USATH Sanctioned Events that have been approved to award points (regional qualifiers excluded) based on the following table.

So as to be able to announce the schedule of qualifying events early in the season, clubs and LOCs that intend on hosting such an event must submit a request to the CC **no later than October 31st** of the on-going season. Each registered club may organize one, and only one Wild Card qualifying tournament per season. In the event that a club plans on hosting more than one event, they must notify the CC of which event will be counted as their Wild Card qualifier when submitting their intent to host. The schedule will be announced to all teams **by November 15th**.



Table 1 - Wild Card Points System

RANK	NUMBER OF TEAMS IN TOURNAMENT						
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+
1	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	1	1	2	3	4	5	6
5		1	1	2	3	4	5
6			1	1	2	3	4
7				1	1	2	3
8					1	1	2
9						1	1
10+							1

A three (3) point bonus will be awarded to the defending OPEN division champions, in recognition of a successful season.

If two or more teams end up with the same number of points, ties will be broken using the following rules:

1. Head-to-head results during Wild Card qualifiers.
2. The best record (Win – Draw – Loss) against other teams that have qualified for the ELITE division. Records will be assessed using a points system (Win = 2 points – Draw = 1 point – Loss = 0 points).
3. A playoff game to be played on the first day of the Open Club Championships.

Additionally, Wild Card qualifying events must follow these rules:

- Given that the ELITE division is intended to determine the best US-based team, qualifying events should be comprised of at least two-thirds (2/3) US-based teams. If a Wild Card qualifier does not meet that rule, no Wild Card points will be attributed.
- Wild Card qualifiers may include up to two (2) teams from the same club. If a tournament includes more than two teams from the same club, Wild Card points will be allocated on a smaller sized tournament.
- All Wild Card qualifiers must be registered and hosted through the USATH online platform – TOPSCORE. This includes roster management, to allow for review by the CC and the USATH Membership Director no later than 14 days prior to the start of the event. The host will be responsible for ensuring that all registered teams and athletes meet the eligibility requirements, but they must receive a sign-off, in writing, from the CC and the USATH Membership Director prior to the start of the event in order to receive points for the event.
- All guidelines and necessary documents can be found in the Event Sanctioning Guide.

Section 6.02 Open Club OPEN divisions

(a) Format

The CC will determine the format of play based on the number of teams and preside over the draw of all teams into their respective pools of play.

**(b) Minimum eligibility requirements**

Teams and players are required to comply with the requirements set forth in Section 5.05.

Section 6.03 Open College Championships**(a) Format**

The CC will determine the format of play based on the number of teams and preside over the draw of all teams into their respective pools of play.

(b) Minimum eligibility requirements

Teams and players are required to comply with the requirements set forth in Section 5.05. Players comprising properly registered college teams must be enrolled in an academic degree or certificate program. Faculty, staff or graduate students are not permitted to play but may serve as a coach or as a team official.

(c) Eligible players

All students currently enrolled in Undergraduate coursework at a university is eligible to play for that university's team. Additional players may be added to a team's roster to meet in order to meet minimum roster requirements if the request is made, in writing, to the CC Chairperson no later than 30 days prior to the Open College Championships and if one of the following situations applies to them. The CC will review the request and make a recommendation to the TD or CEO, who will have the ultimate decision on whether or not to allow the player to participate.

- Enrolled in Graduate coursework at the university in question.
- Enrolled in coursework at another university within the same state if that university does not have a team participating in the Open College Championships.

Section 6.04 Open High School Championships**(a) Format**

The CC will determine the format of play based on the number of teams and preside over the draw of all teams into their respective pools of play.

(b) Minimum eligibility requirements

Teams and players are required to comply with the requirements set forth in Section 5.05.

Section 6.05 Roster size requirements**(a) Minimum roster size**

All teams participating in the ELITE division must present a roster with a minimum of 12 players and one (1) team official.

All teams participating in any other Open Club Championship division must present a roster with a minimum of 10 players and one (1) team official.



(b) Maximum roster size

The maximum roster size for any USATH Open Club Championship is set at 16 players.

(c) Reserve players

- A. In order to encourage the development of the sport, teams will be allowed to bring up to two (2) additional players to USATH Open Club Championships.
- B. In the event a team elects to use its reserve players, a minimum number of 12 players for the ELITE division and 10 players for all other divisions must be clearly identified as “permanent players” and cannot be removed from the roster.
- C. In the event a “permanent player” is injured during the course of a championship and is ruled out for the remainder of the event, he may be replaced by a reserve player.
- D. The responsible team official (identified as official A) must ensure, prior to every game, that the all active players are listed on the match report. Inactive players may not sit on the bench.

Section 6.06 Table Area, Table Officials and USATH Delegates

The table area is reserved for the score-keeper, time-keeper, and USATH Delegate or Designee, only. No other individuals can be sitting, standing, or walking-through that area while a game is under way. It is the responsibility of both team officials to ensure that this rule is followed.

The only exception may be an additional seat for an announcer if no other logistical solution is possible.

Section 6.07 Sportsmanship and Performance Bonds

Each team competing in a USATH Open Club Championship (Club, College, or High School) is required to submit two (2) separate and refundable bonds (check made payable to USA Team Handball):

- A. A \$300 Sportsmanship Bond. The bond will be returned to the team **within 30 days** of the conclusion of the Open Club Championship if no team member or team official is disqualified for unsportsmanlike conduct and/or verbal/physical assault.
- B. A \$300 Performance Bond. The bond will be returned to the team **within 30 days** of the conclusion of the Open Club Championship if the team does not commit any violation related to minimum competition standards established by USATH for the respective Championship.

Section 6.08 Rules for Foreign Teams Interested in Competing in the USATH Nationals

Any foreign club team, and not an All-Star team, is welcome and encouraged to participate in the USATH Open Club Championships under following guidelines:

- A. The ELITE divisions (Men and Women’s) are reserved for US teams only, as they are meant to reflect the highest standard of handball in the United States. In the interest of growing the sport in North America, Pan-American teams² can be approved to participate in ELITE divisions, provided they follow the same rules as all US teams.

² Pending further information on the **potential** Pan-American split, USATH reserves the right to amend this segment of the rule book during the course of the 2018-2019 season.



- B. Each team must verify its local roster by sending appropriate documentation proving local residence.
- C. Each team must pay standard participation fees set by the USATH and post required bonds
- D. Each team must bring, at its own expense (travel and hotel accommodations), at least one (1) certified referee to work during the event. The USATH National Referee Committee reserves the right to accept/reject traveling guest referee(s) based on review of their refereeing certification credentials. If accepted to officiate during Nationals, the USATH will pay such referees for their court duties and per diem according to the established domestic scale.
- E. Each team must accept all medical, health and accident responsibility as well as satisfying their own visa requirements.
- F. Each team interested in College Nationals must proof its players' eligibility per USATH College Eligibility Criteria.

Section 6.09 Seeding

Note that this section is applicable across all USATH Open Championships

(a) National ranking

In order to seed teams for the Open Championships, we will use a National Ranking system, based on the results of the previous Open Championships, at the start of every season.

- Each team will score points based on their **overall** placement in the Open Championships, in 2-point increments, with the highest number of points being allocated to the ELITE National Champion.
- All teams that did not participate in the Open Championships start the season with 0 points.
- Throughout the season, the National Ranking will be updated based on points that teams secure through sanctioned events, using Table 1. Note that all **sanctioned** events are counted in this case, not only the Wild Card qualifiers.
- Teams that participate in Regional leagues will score points from that league worth double those listed in Table 1 (e.g. the winner of a 4-team league will score 8 points).

The final season ranking will be announced no later than 30 days prior to the Open Championships and used as the basis for seeding teams. Any ties will be broken by:

1. Head-to-head results in sanctioned events.
2. A random draw.

(b) Seeding an even number of teams

In the event that a division has an even number of teams, those teams will be split into as many pots as there will be groups in the group stage of the championship, in order of strength. For example, if the 8 top-ranked teams have qualified for the same division, the buckets would be:

1. Team #1 and Team #2
2. Team #3 and Team #4
3. Team #5 and Team #6
4. Team #7 and Team #8



One team from each pot shall then be drawn at random into each group.

(c) Seeding an odd number of teams

In the event that a division has an odd number of teams, one team shall be given the choice of which group to play in. That team will be:

1. The defending champion in that division.
2. The highest ranked team on the National Ranking.

All other teams will be split and drawn in the same manner as for an even number of teams.



Article VII. Complaint(s)

Section 7.01 Complaint Procedure for in-game offenses

If an individual wishes to file a complaint regarding the actions of any member (coach, player, referee, team official, etc...) during a USATH sanctioned game, such a complaint must be filed **within one (1) hour** of the conclusion of the game to the EDC. There is a refundable \$50 filing fee required, that is returned if the complaint is found to be valid/true.

The EDC will follow the process described in Article II to make any decision.

Section 7.02 Complaint Procedure for out-of-game offenses

If an individual wishes to file a complaint regarding the actions of any member (coach, player, referee, team official, etc...) outside of a game, such a complaint must be filed in writing with the TD or CEO **within 7 days** of said action.

As soon as the formal complaint is received, the person or club will receive notice of a pending disciplinary action.

- A. The USATH TD or designee will review the complaint and make a recommendation of action to the USATH CEO **within 15 business days**.
- B. The USATH CEO will review the TD's findings and support, alter or overrule the recommendation **within 7 business days**. Notices of the decision will be delivered to all parties involved and go into effect immediately.
- C. The individual or club will have **7 business days** to appeal the decision to the CEO, who will send the appeal to the USATH Judiciary Committee. The Judiciary Committee will review the case and either support, alter or overrule the recommendation and deliver its decision to the CEO **within 15 business days**.
- D. All USATH Judiciary Committee decisions are final, and cases that are denied for appeal cannot be reopened.
- E. USATH Bylaws contains further complaint/grievance processes that can be ultimately referred to the American Arbitration Association (AAA) but it is recommended to try and exhaust means internally to reach a remedy/resolution before elevating the matter to AAA.



Article VIII. Violations, Strikes and Sanctions

Section 8.01 Strikes

All violations of this Rule Book could result in the assignment of a “strike” to the participant and/or the club involved. Violations that cannot be attributed directly to any person but to a club will result in the assignment of a strike to said club.

Section 8.02 Forfeit of the Game

All scheduled games must be played. Forfeiting a game in a USATH sanctioned event is considered a serious violation. For every match forfeited, the team/club will be assessed a strike.

Section 8.03 Disciplinary Sanction(s)

The USATH TD or CEO will keep track of all violations occurred and strikes/sanctions issued. Once a person or a club has accumulated three strikes, or has committed a violation that requires immediate disciplinary action, said person or club is subject to disciplinary sanctions by USATH.

Section 8.04 Actions that Warrant Immediate Sanctions

Egregious single actions by individuals or clubs may warrant immediate sanctions, even if that person or club has not acquired three strikes.

Section 8.05 Additional Sanctions

For any violation of this Rule Book, the person or club involved is subject to disciplinary sanctions by USATH that include but are not limited to, fines, suspensions, revocation of USATH Membership and lifetime bans from USATH sanctioned events.

Section 8.06 Appeals

Should an individual or club desire to appeal any additional sanctions given:

- A. The individual or club will have **7 business days** to appeal to the CEO who will send the appeal to the USATH Judiciary Committee. The committee will review the case and either support, alter or overrule the recommendation. The USATH Judiciary Committee will deliver its decision to the CEO **within 15 business days**.
- B. All USATH Judiciary Committee decisions are final.
- C. Disputes can be elevated to the complaint/grievance process found in the USATH Bylaws and could lead to the dispute being adjudicated by the American Arbitration Association (AAA). Every attempt should be made to resolve the matter internally before taking a complaint/grievance to the AAA.



Article IX. Amendments, Conflicts and Interpretations

Section 9.01 Amendments

Changes to this Rule Book may only be made by the USATH TD or CEO in consultation with the CC, with the approval of the USATH President.

Any Changes or Addendums will be published in a timely manner at www.usateamhandball.org. All registered clubs will be notified of such changes via email.

Section 9.02 Conflicts or Interpretation Issues

Any conflicts or interpretation issues resulting from this Rule Book will be resolved and published by the USATH TD or CEO. If needed, the TD or CEO will publish such interpretations as addendums to this Rule Book.

Section 9.03 Effective Date and Transition, Proposed Rule Changes

This revision of the Rule Book is scheduled to go into effect on September 1st, 2018 and will be published at www.usateamhandball.org.

The USATH TD or CEO will submit a timetable for gradual and full compliance by all persons and groups involved with USA Team Handball, if required.

Proposed changes to this Rule Book should be submitted to the TD, CEO, or any member of the USATH CC for review.