

NORTHERN NSW DODGEBALL LEAGUE RULE BOOK

Part 1 INTRODUCTION

1 This Publication

(1) This publication contains the rules of dodgeball administered and controlled by Northern NSW Dodgeball (NNSWDL).

2 Application

(1) These rules apply to operations affiliated with NNSWDL. Operation management teams may make appropriate modifications consistent with the spirit of these rules for specialised and underaged competitions.

3 Nature and Object of Dodgeball

(1) Dodgeball is a game played between 2 teams competing in accordance with these rules. The object of each team is to win the match by winning more sets than the opposing team. The winner of the match is the team that has scored, in accordance with these rules, the greater number of sets after the match. A match is drawn when both teams have the same number of points after the match.

4 Purpose of the Rule Book

(1) These rules explain how a match of dodgeball is played and seek to attain the following objectives:

- (a) To ensure that the game of dodgeball is played in a fair manner and spirit of true sportsmanship, and
- (b) To prevent injuries to players participating in a match so far as this objective can be reasonably achieved in circumstances where dodgeball is a physically demanding sport.

Part 2 DEFINITIONS

(1) Unless the context requires otherwise, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

ADC

Abbreviation for Australian Dodgeball Championship, national level competition.

ADF

Abbreviation for Australian Dodgeball Federation, the current controlling body for dodgeball in Australia.

Advantage

The team with the advantage is required to throw next in the instance that neither team appears set to throw.

ARC

Abbreviation for Australian Representative Cap, the number of allowed Australian Representatives to be registered as a player to any 1 team or used as a substitution to any 1 team.

Australian Representative

A player who has represented the Australian National Team in the WDBF Championships in the last 2 years.

Ball

A ball or dodgeball is a foam ball with rubberised skin, used to throw and eliminate opposition players.

Dead Ball

A ball that is no longer a live ball and therefore cannot cause elimination or be caught.

Inactive Ball

A ball that has not passed behind an activation line since the beginning of the current set.

Live Ball

A ball that has been validly thrown which can cause elimination or be caught.

Ball Retriever

A person assigned to collect balls that have left the court for their designated team.

Blocking

The action of using the ball in one's hand to deflect an incoming live ball.

Catch

Controlling a live ball that is thrown by the opposition to eliminate the throwing player.

Club

An entity fielding a team in a dodgeball competition conducted by the controlling body.

Court

The playing surface is used to conduct a match. Dead Objects, Surfaces or Players

Anything that is not an active part of the match with which contact by a ball will render it a dead ball immediately.

Disarmed

A disarm occurs when an opposing live ball impacts a ball held by an active player, resulting in the ball that was struck being dislodged uncontrollably from the player's possession (at the referee's discretion).

Division

Can either be referred to as:

Gender Division

A match with mixed, men-only or women-only players.

Tier Division

A competitive standard, with division 1 being the highest division.

Dodgeball

A game played between two teams in accordance with these rules.

Elimination

An active player may be eliminated and as such will no longer participate in the active set unless revived.

Extra Time

Time outside the regular time used to complete sudden death or tie breaker sets. False Start
Stepping forward off the baseline prior to the starting signal when commencing play in a set.

Game

A match played during a round in the NNSWDL season.

Match

A contest between 2 teams to accumulate the greatest number of sets/points within the specified time and any additional time as prescribed in match provisions. Match Official
Any person appointed to assist in conducting a match, including but not limited to, a referee, lines person or person performing any duties (paid or unpaid) for or on behalf of the controlling body or NNSWDL.

MVP

Abbreviation for most valuable player, the player or players who have been considered the most beneficial to the match.

NNSWDL

Abbreviation for Northern NSW Dodgeball League.

Ordinary Time

The timed period begins from the start of the first half period, until the specified time limit for the match has elapsed.

Player

A person who plays or is selected to play with a team or a person who otherwise trains with a team or who is within the purview of these rules.

Active Player

A player who is participating in the current set and has not been eliminated.

Eliminated Player

A player who is participating in the current set who has become eliminated as per these rules.

Inactive Player

A player who is participating in the current match but not participating in the current set.

Non-Active Player

A player who is present but not participating in any game throughout that round. This may be due to injury or another reasonable excuse. Non-active players are marked as present for attendance records.

Revival

Enabling an eliminated player from the team to return to active play by completing a catch.

Round

An NNSWDL day with matches played across all divisions.

Set

The duration it takes to eliminate all 6 active players of the opposing team.

State Player

Someone who is actively registered in the New South Wales Dodgeball League.

Sudden Death

An extra period with modified rules of game play to expedite completion of a set.

Team

The group of players competing against another group of players in a match of dodgeball. **Team Official**

The person appointed to assist the players of the team during a match, including but not limited to, an officer, coach, assistant coach, trainer, runner, employee, or any person performing any duties (paid or unpaid) on behalf of a club or team.

Throw

Launching a ball with the intent of eliminating opposing players.

WDBF

Abbreviation for World Dodgeball Federation, the current controlling body for dodgeball worldwide.

Part 3 ADMINISTRATION

Division 1 Controlling Body**5 Definition**

(1) A controlling body includes:

- (a) Northern NSW Dodgeball and its officers,
- (b) Any league, association, or body responsible for the organisation and conduct of matches of dodgeball, who has determined to play such matches in accordance with these rules,
- (c) Any league, association, or body responsible for the organisation and conduct of matches of dodgeball and which is affiliated with Northern NSW Dodgeball.

6 Application of these Rules

(1) Unless section 7(1) applies, these rules shall apply to all matches of dodgeball organised and conducted by a controlling body.

7 Variations and Exemptions

(1) To provide consistency and a clear pathway toward the peak of the sport, these rules will be applied as written:

- (a) A controlling body may apply to NNSWDL to vary the application of these rules or permit exemptions applicable to participants who are enrolled in the ADF National Program and/or selected as an Australian Representative to ensure athletes can fulfil their roles without hindrance to their NNSWDL competition,
- (b) Unless specifically allowed under these rules or a variation allowed by NNSWDL under subsection (1)(a), a controlling body should not prescribe any rules in addition to or conflict with or affect the full operation with these rules.

Division 2 The Court**8 General**

(1) The dimensions and standard marking of the court are contained in this section and illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Court Dimensions

9 Court Surface

(1) The preferred surface for a match of dodgeball is a timber hardcourt. A controlling body may choose to conduct competitions on surfaces they deem suitable.

10 Court Dimensions

(1) The court shall be:

- (a) A rectangle,
- (b) 18 metres long,
- (c) 9 metres wide, and
- (d) Divided into two equal half sections by a centre line.

(2) For a women's only competition employing WDBF style play, the court shall be:

- (a) A rectangle,
- (b) 16 metres long,
- (c) 9 metres wide, and
- (d) Divided into two equal half sections by a centre line.

(3) Sufficient area adjacent the court should be available for eliminated, inactive players to remove themselves from the court.

11 Areas of Play and Line Markings

(1) The court boundaries should be marked by lines that are clearly distinguishable from the main surface. Line markings should be 35 to 50 millimetres thick and will include:

- (a) Base lines marking the full width at each end of the court,
- (b) Side lines marking the full length along each side of the court,
- (c) A centre line marking the full width of the Court 9 metres from each base line, 7.5 metres for a WDBF women's court,
- (d) Activation lines marking the full width of the court, 3 metres from the centre line in each half section, and
- (e) Optionally, a mark designating the middle of the centre line, can be useful.

(2) A team's playable area shall be bounded by the baseline, side lines and centre line in their allocated half section.

12 Non-Play Areas

(1) A designated location should be identified at the side of the court for eliminated players to gather a safe distance from play. This is also known as an 'Out Box'.

(2) The centre line, whether marked or not, shall continue beyond the sidelines separating each half section's non-play area.

(3) To promote safety, the controlling body may designate an area immediately adjacent to the court for the purpose of restricting non-active participants from that area.

13 Modified Courts

(1) A controlling body may approve altered dimensions for the court and areas identified in this section for a modified competition or for standard competition where a complying venue is not readily available.

Division 3 The Team

14 Number of Players

(1) **Social League:** A team must consist of a maximum of 8 players and a minimum of 6 players. No gender requirement, however, players 15-17 years of age must have written parental consent.

(2) **State League:** A team may consist of a maximum of 8 players and a minimum of 6 players. For the Mixed State League, a maximum of 6 active players, evenly split into 3 male players and 3 female players.

(3) An Australian Representative Cap (ARC) will be implemented when deemed necessary to further the growth of the sport. The ARC will be limited to 3 Australian Representatives per team.

(4) A team is required to have a minimum of 4 registered players to be deemed not a forfeit. If the team for any reason does not have the minimum required players, a forfeit will occur with the team not maintaining the minimum required players to lose the match 0 sets to 10 sets.

(5) Substitutions are only allowed for teams that have less than 6 registered players but more than 3 registered players in their team, excluding non-active players, for the round.

Substitutions for the mixed division should fill to a maximum of 3 active players of each gender and have no inactive players. The gender maximum of 3 players must be maintained, i.e., having 4 players of the same gender and 2 players of the opposite gender on court is not allowed because the maximum number of 3 players is not maintained.

(6) Examples:

(a) If the mixed team has 3 registered players of the same gender and 1 registered player of the opposite gender, that team is allowed to have 2 substitution players of the opposite gender only,

(b) If the mixed team has 4 registered players of the same gender and 2 registered players of the opposite gender, that team is not allowed to have any substitution players as there are 6 registered players. The team can therefore only field 5 players on court at any time abiding with the gender maximum,

(c) If the mixed team has 5 registered players of the same gender and 0 registered players of the opposite gender, that team is only allowed 1 substitution player of the opposite gender only. The team can therefore only field 4 players on court abiding with the gender maximum,

(d) If the mixed team has 6 registered players of the same gender and 0 registered players of the opposite gender, that team is not allowed any substitution players,

(e) If the team in a gender division has less than 6 registered players but more than 3 registered players, that team is allowed to fill to a maximum of 6 active players with no inactive players.

(7) The substituting players must not be registered to another team in the league. Substitutions must be declared by captains to the controlling body prior to the beginning of the match. Invalid substitutions may be considered misconduct as per section 55.

(8) Player substitutions will only be allowed in between sets or during timeouts as per section 29(3). A catch may only revive an eliminated player in that set.

(9) When an Australian Representative is used in a team as a substitution, that player can only replace another Australian Representative in that team.

(10) During finals matches, no substitutions will be allowed for any team for any reason. Teams with less than 4 registered players will be given the option to either: (a) Play with the number of players they have, or (b) Forfeit the finals match.

15 Team Sheets

(1) Unless otherwise determined by a controlling body, a team sheet shall include:

- (a) The names and numbers of the players in the team,
- (b) The captain, and
- (c) Any team officials.

(2) Unless otherwise determined by a controlling body, a team official of each team shall complete and lodge its team sheet, supplied by the controlling body, with a match official, board member or person appointed by the controlling body no later than 10 minutes before the scheduled commencement of a match.

16 Score Sheet

(1) Unless otherwise determined by a controlling body, a team score sheet shall include:

- (a) Date and time,
- (b) Court number,
- (c) Home/away team,
- (d) Main/second/line referees,
- (e) MVP vote,
- (f) Player first/last name and number,
- (g) Sportsmanship rating,
- (h) Score/final score, and
- (i) Comments/penalties.

(2) Unless otherwise determined by a controlling body, a match official shall complete and lodge the score sheet, supplied by the controlling body, with a board member or person appointed by the controlling body no later than 5 minutes after the conclusion of a match.

17 Uniform (*State League ONLY*)

(1) It is mandatory for all players on a team to dress alike. The controlling body may specify additional uniform requirements suitable for competitions conducted by the controlling body.

(2) Dodgeball jerseys may take any format suitable for vigorous sporting activity and should include the following elements:

- (a) Team colours,
- (b) Team logo,
- (c) Player last name – located on back,
- (d) Player number – located as a minimum on back, (e) NNSWDL logo, and
- (f) May also include:
 - (i) Sponsorship logo,
 - (ii) ADC logo, or (iii) ADF logo.

(3) Shorts are best suited to the vigour of dodgeball. Shorts should match jerseys in colour and design, these should include the following elements:

- (a) Team colours,
- (b) Team logo,
- (c) Player number,
- (d) NNSWDL logo, and (e) May also include:
- (i) Sponsorship logo,
- (ii) ADC logo, or (iii) ADF logo.

(4) Other bottoms such as tights and skins may be worn underneath the shorts as part of the uniform, but not in replacement or substitution of.

(5) Player numbers are required to identify and track a player's activity in the match.

Numbers should not be duplicated, including the use of zero-padding, e.g., '7' and '07' on the same Team is not acceptable. The number '0' is acceptable, although the number '00' is not acceptable. Player numbers are limited to double digits.

(6) Players should wear suitable sporting shoes that provide adequate support to avoid injury. For competitions played on the preferred hard-court surfaces, players should wear non-marking shoes. Players must adhere to venue rules regarding footwear and other items. Players without appropriate footwear will be refused entry to the court and subsequently will not be allowed to participate in the match as a player.

(7) Accessories designed to prevent injury are permitted to be worn by players. Accessories should not significantly detract from or alter the appearance of the player's uniform. Permitted accessories may include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Knee pads,
- (b) Compression sleeves, (c) Joint and limb support, and (d) Sweat bands.

(8) Accessories such as hats and gloves are not to be worn on court during game play. Jewellery such as rings, bracelets and necklaces are advised not to be worn, however, may be worn at a player's own risk. Match officials can ask a player to remove any accessory they deem unfit for game play.

(9) All uniform items must be worn and are not to be removed during game play.

Alterations in any way, shape, or form from their original will not be accepted on court.

(10) All Teams are to have their respective uniforms ordered and worn by the first round of the competition, or in such time as advised by the controlling body. A penalty system will be in place for teams that fail to wear their uniforms by the appointed round. The penalties include, but are not limited to:

- (a) 1 set point loss per item of uniform per person not worn, enforced at the start of the match, and
- (b) In such a case that a team has no uniform, a monetary fine of \$100 per round per team will be enforced until proof of purchase can be shown to a board member or person appointed by the controlling body no less than 5 minutes before the team's first match.

(11) If teams do not have their uniform by the specified round but have proof of purchase shown to a board member or person appointed by the controlling body no less than 5 minutes before their first match, there will be no penalty.

(12) A controlling body may determine a varied penalty to uniforms as they see fit.

Division 4 Team Official Participation

18 Team Official Areas

(1) Team Officials including coaching and support staff should not enter the courts during active play. The controlling body may specify the maximum number of team officials permitted to be within the court adjacent area. Recommended maximums are:

(a) 2 coaching staff restricted to a single side of the court, and (b) 3 ball retrievers.

Division 5 Equipment

19 Balls

(1) The official ball of NNSWDL, used in tournament and league play, is a 7-inch (178 millimetre) diameter, rubber-coated, foam dodgeball between 120-160 grams in weight. Any ball over 170 grams in weight is inappropriate for play, as it might inflict bodily harm to the participants of the sport.

(2) Balls shall be considered suitable for use where they:

(a) Meet the above specifications,

(b) Retain a reasonable level of their original firmness, and

(c) Are free from other deformations, including, but not limited to, skin tears.

(3) Players should be aware that balls may acquire general wear and tear and therefore may require general playing adjustment by the players.

(4) Unless the controlling body decides on an alternative procedure, the following procedure shall apply to the supply and selection of balls for a match:

(a) 6 balls per court shall be supplied by the controlling body to the match officials,

(b) A suitable stock of interchangeable balls shall be made available,

(c) Match officials shall inspect and ensure all balls are suitable for use during the scheduled matches, and

(d) Team captains will have the right to request exchange of any ball that they deem unsuitable for play, but the final decision will be made by the match officials.

20 Netting System

(1) There is no official netting system used by NNSWDL, as use varies from venue to venue. The netting used shall be incorporated or separate to the venue. Should courts be near one another, the netting system used shall separate the courts to prevent balls from another match disrupting game play to the best of its ability.

Division 6 Scoring

(1) Match officials will be responsible for keeping the match score, which will determine the outcome.

21 Score Values

(1) Teams will be awarded 1 point for each set they win as outlined within match provisions.

Division 7 Match Officials

22 Main Referee

(1) The main referee is the person in charge of conducting the match, making sure the match runs accordingly and that all players, team officials and supporters act according to these

rules. They are appointed by the controlling body, or volunteers (paid or unpaid) to assist in conducting the match. The main referee may be accompanied by a second referee as per section 23, and line referees as per section 24.

(2) The main referees' role includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) Keeping the official match time,
- (b) Keeping the official match score,
- (c) Starting, stopping, and otherwise controlling the movement of game play,
- (d) Monitoring player eliminations, either by strike, catch or out of bounds,
- (e) Disciplining players, team officials and supporters accordingly, and
- (f) Keeping a safe and fair environment for players, team officials and supporters.

23 Second Referee

(1) The second referee is an added referee to a match. A second referee can be appointed by either the main referee, controlling body or volunteer (paid or unpaid) to assist in the conducting of matches.

(2) The second referee's role is to share the load of the main referee's role. They may assist with any of the main referee's roles as per section 22(2) and act as a confirmation to events in the match.

24 Line Referee

(1) A line referee is a person who assists in the conducting of a match who may be appointed by the controlling body or volunteer (paid or unpaid).

(2) The line referee's role includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) Monitoring false starts as per section 31(19)-(21), and (b) Main referee roles as per section 22(2)(d)-(f).

25 Conduct of Match Officials

(1) Match officials should act in a fair and unbiased manner towards the match. Should a player, team official or supporter feel that the match officials are not conducting the match in a fair and unbiased manner, they may bring the issue up with a board member or person appointed by the controlling body.

(2) Depending on the nature of the issue, actions taken can include:

- (a) A verbal warning issued to the match official,
- (b) Disciplinary action, such as removal from the match, or (c) In serious cases, a monetary fine.

26 Referee Penalties

(1) Subject to variation as per subsection (5), referee penalties will be used to:

- (a) Discourage unfair and biased mannerisms, (b) Discourage lack of interest to the match, and
- (c) Encourage participation.

(2) If a match official is found to be acting in bad faith to the match, there will be a monetary fine of \$50 to the team the match official is registered in.

(3) If the match official is not registered as part of a team, the monetary fine will be \$20 to the match official.

(4) Payment is to be made no later than 1 week after that round.

(5) A controlling body may determine a varied referee penalty as required.

27 Referee Payment

(1) Referee payment is subject to change without notice or reason. A controlling body may determine a varied referee payment as required.

Part 4 MATCH PROVISIONS

Division 1 The Match

28 Objective

(1) The objective of a match is for teams to win the greatest number of sets within the allotted time.

(2) The team with the greatest number of set wins at the end of the match will be awarded a win.

(3) Determined by the controlling body conducting the match, if the final set of the match extends beyond the expiration of time, such that it enters sudden death, and the outcome of that set ties the score, then the match may:

- (a) Result in a tie/draw, or
- (b) Require a tiebreaker set, as described in section 41, to be played to determine a winner.

29 Duration and Timing

(1) Subject to subsection (10), a match shall consist of 40 minutes of gameplay, divided into 2 half periods of 20 minutes duration. The 20-minute duration of each half period will run continuously from commencement of play to completion of time, with no time stoppages between sets. Match officials shall keep the official match time. This time is considered ordinary time.

(2) Match officials have the discretion to stop time in the event of major disruption to gameplay.

(3) Each team will be allowed 1 timeout per match, in total. Unless varied under subsection (10), match officials will pause match timing for 30 seconds when a timeout is called. A timeout may only be called by a team captain or team official.

(4) A timeout may be used:

- (a) To discuss a ruling confusion, or
- (b) If a player on the court is injured, or
- (c) For another reason, the team captain finds suitable, at the discretion of the match official.

(5) Play will cease immediately upon a signal from the match official that a timeout is in effect. Any live ball thrown before the signal shall remain live and may still eliminate players or be caught with the normal consequences until it becomes dead.

(6) Teams may substitute an injured active player with:

- (a) An inactive player, or
- (b) The next revivable eliminated player where no inactive player is available.

(7) A player substituted due to injury cannot return to the match for the rest of the half period. In the event the injury substitution happens in the second half period, the injured player cannot return for the rest of the match.

(8) Match officials will have discretion to shorten or refuse a timeout where it is deemed unnecessary to meet reasonable requirements of resolving matters, as per subsection (4).

(9) At the end of the first half period, the second half period shall be promptly started with teams either starting:

(a) A sudden death set, or (b) The second half period.

(10) A controlling body may vary:

(a) The duration of a match,

(b) The duration of break intervals,

(c) The number of timeouts,

(d) The duration of play stoppage, and (e) The duration of match timing stoppage.

30 Set Timing

(1) There is no prescribed limit for the length of a set. A set will continue until all active players from 1 team have been eliminated.

(2) A set is to be started if the time remaining on the match clock is more than or equal to 30 seconds.

(3) Any set still in progress when time expires for:

(a) The first half period will continue into the second half period, and

(b) The second half period or tiebreaker set will proceed to sudden death as per section 40.

(4) Any balls thrown before the signal for the expiration of time in either half period or tie-breaker set shall remain live and may still eliminate players or be caught with the normal consequences until it becomes dead.

(5) Time will continue at the end of each set. Match officials will allow 30 seconds from the end of a set for teams to take their starting positions, at which time the new set will be started. Teams will be given a warning before the start of the set.

(6) To allow teams to take their starting positions, teams should be given as a minimum:

(a) A 30 second warning for the start of the first set in a half period, and

(b) A 30-second warning for the start of every other set.

(7) Should match officials determine that both teams are ready sooner, a set may be started by signalling as described in section 31(7-9).

(8) Should the remaining match time be less than that specified in subsection (2), then the match official will advise teams that:

(a) In the case of the first half period, teams will prepare for the second half period, or

(b) In the case of the second half period, the match will be ended.

31 Commencing Play

(1) Match officials should meet with team captains at the beginning of each match to:

(a) Confirm teams are ready to compete,

(b) Specify which team will begin with the advantage, and

(c) Confirm the end of the court at which each team will start the first half period.

(2) The home team will start with an advantage, and the away team will select the side they wish to start the first half period.

(3) The method for determining opening advantage and starting ends will be instituted by the controlling body.

(4) Active players must take correct starting positions for the start of each set. A player is in the correct starting position when they:

- (a) Are inside the court, and
- (b) Have at least 1 foot touching the baseline.

(5) Any active player not inside the court for the commencement of the set as signalled by the match officials will be eliminated.

(6) Any active player who steps forward off the baseline after the match officials have indicated for teams to be ready but before the starting signal is given will be deemed to have false started as per section 31(19-21).

(7) Following any required warnings as per section 30(6), match officials will determine that both teams are ready to begin or that regulation time between sets has elapsed and invite teams to prepare for the commencement of the set with an announcement. The announcement will affirm that both teams are ready.

(8) After a short pause that should be no longer than 3 seconds, match officials will blow a whistle in conjunction with a downward hand movement to initiate the set, see Figure 2. E.g., "Both teams ready", followed by whistle/downward hand motion.

(9) Players should move from their starting position into the court immediately upon the whistle. Should players have their foot on the baseline for a prolonged period, upon match officials' discretion, that player may be eliminated, as touching any boundary line while in game play results in elimination.

Figure 2: Starting Signal

(10) Upon the starting signal, active players may retrieve balls from the centre line to begin play. See Figure 3: Opening Rush.

(11) Players may cross the centre line when retrieving balls during the opening rush, this is the only time this is allowed. There are no requirements to retain contact within the teams' half of the court.

(12) Upon retrieval of the balls, players are expected to immediately retreat to their own court half, delay may be cause for elimination at the match officials' discretion.

(13) Balls must be activated prior to throwing by having them pass behind the activation line, defined in section 11(1). Only the ball will need to pass behind. Until such time as the ball passes the activation line it remains inactive. If an inactive ball is thrown, it immediately becomes a dead ball.

(14) Teams may initially only retrieve the 3 balls on the right of the middle of the centre line from their starting end.

(15) Balls placed for the opposition to retrieve may be retrieved after all 3 of the team's own balls have been activated, as per subsection (13). After that, the team may retrieve the opposition balls, which will require the same activation.

Figure 3: Opening Rush

- (16) A set will begin with 6 balls placed on the centre line, with 3 balls on either side of the middle of the centre line. Balls will be placed on the centre line no further than 3m from the right side boundary line for retrieval on the opening rush.
- (17) Each team is responsible for placement of 3 balls which they will be allowed to retrieve during the opening rush as per subsection (10).
- (18) A controlling body may specify the exact location for placement of balls for the purposes of a competition conducted by that controlling body.
- (19) Once match officials have indicated for teams to ready themselves for commencement of the set, active players must remain in the correct starting position until the whistle has been blown to initiate the set. Any player who moves forward from their starting position into the court prior to the whistle is deemed to have false started. A false start will stop play and the set will be restarted.
- (20) Each team may be issued 1 warning for a false start per half period. Subsequently, any player who false starts within the half period may be eliminated and the team will restart the set with 1 less player.
- (21) Repeated false starts may be considered misconduct under section 55.

32 Stopping Play

- (1) Match officials should make all efforts to ensure players are aware of a stoppage of play immediately by blowing the whistle and stepping partially into court.
- (2) Play should stop immediately:
 - (a) Upon expiration of ordinary time as indicated by match officials, with live balls subject to section 30(4), and
 - (b) Upon expiration of time allowed for a tie breaker set.
- (3) Play should stop upon completion of a set. A set is complete upon the instant of elimination of the final active player of a team as indicated by the match officials.
- (4) Players should make all efforts to avoid throwing any balls after the set has ended. Should a player deliberately throw a ball after the set has ended, it may be considered misconduct under section 55.
- (5) Teams may collect balls and set them up for the next set when applicable.

Division 2 Gameplay

33 Objective

- (1) The objective of game play in a match is to eliminate all opposing active players to win the set.
- (2) The first team to validly eliminate all active players from the opposing team will win the set and score 1 point as per section 21.

34 Throwing

- (1) A ball must be thrown by an active player to become live. To be deemed to have been thrown, the ball must:

- (a) Initially be controlled in the players hand, (b) Leave the player's hand via a launching action, and (c) Become airborne.
- (2) A ball that is not thrown in a valid manner will immediately become a dead ball. Invalid throws may constitute player misconduct as per subsection (6) if deemed by match officials to be against the spirit of the game.
- (3) Actions that will not constitute a valid throw include, but are not limited to:
 - (a) Rolling,
 - (b) Kicking,
 - (c) Slapping, or
 - (d) Scooping the ball.
- (4) As the objective of throwing is to strike an opponent, a ball that has been thrown and subsequently contacts a player from the throwers team prior to crossing the centre line is deemed a dead ball.
- (5) Deliberate deformation of the ball prior to throwing that lasts for a significant portion of the flight will be deemed an invalid throw and will constitute misconduct under section 55.
- (6) Balls deemed by match officials to have been deliberately thrown:
 - (a) Away from opposing players and ball retrievers, (b) Off court, or
 - (c) In any other way to waste time, will be considered invalid throws and will constitute misconduct under section 55.
- (7) As soon as the validly thrown ball leaves the players hand, it becomes live and can cause elimination of opposing players or be caught.
- (8) A live ball remains live until it becomes dead when it:
 - (a) Contacts a dead object, surface, or player,
 - (b) Is caught, or
 - (c) Is deemed invalidly thrown as per subsection (3).
- (9) Dead objects, surfaces and players are those items that cause the end to a live ball's travel, including, but not limited to:
 - (a) Non-active person:
 - (i) Eliminated, inactive and non-active players, and
 - (ii) Team officials, ball retrievers and supporters,
 - (b) The court surface, including line markings,
 - (c) Any surface or structure outside of the court, and
 - (d) Any ball not in an active player's physical possession, including those in flight.
- (10) A ball that strikes an opposing active player continues to be live until it becomes dead as per subsection (9).

35 Catching

- (1) Catching a live ball validly thrown by an opposing player before it becomes dead will: (a) Eliminate the thrower, and
- (b) Revive 1 eliminated players from the catcher's team as per section 38.
- (2) A catch is completed at the instant the catching player:
 - (a) Is deemed to have maintained control of the ball, which can be described as holding the ball with any part of the catcher's body, and (b) Contacts the floor within the court boundaries.

(3) Catching a live ball thrown by a teammate will not constitute a catch, due to the instant the ball contacts a teammate it becomes dead.

36 Blocking

(1) Players may use the balls to block an incoming live ball. To successfully block, the player must:

- (a) Retain control over the ball that is used to block the incoming live ball,
- (b) Retain control over any other ball the player may be holding at the time of impact of the live ball, regardless of whether it contacts the incoming live ball, and
- (c) Avoid any contact by the live ball with their person or clothing.

(2) A blocked or deflected ball remains a live ball until it becomes dead as per section 34(9) and can cause elimination or be caught.

(3) Blocking is not available in sudden death as per section 40(4).

(4) If the impact of the incoming live ball causes a blocking ball to become dislodged, the blocking player is deemed to be disarmed if the player or a teammate is not able to recover the dislodged ball before it contacts: (a) A dead object, surface, or player, or (b) A live ball in flight after dislodgement.

(5) A disarmed player is eliminated.

(6) A blocking ball that has become dislodged by a live ball is neither a live ball nor a dead ball. The player which has lost control over the blocked ball must regain control before the ball becomes dead as per section 34(9) to avoid being deemed disarmed.

(7) If the player or teammate does regain control over the dislodged ball, that player remains an active player in the match. Catching a dislodged ball does not constitute a catch towards the team, and thus does not revive an eliminated player.

(8) Should a teammate fail to regain control over the dislodged ball, the player that was in control of the ball is eliminated by disarm and the teammate is not eliminated.

37 Elimination

(1) Active players who are eliminated must immediately leave the court and take a position in the designated area for their team's eliminated players being sure to retain the order in which they were eliminated. players are eliminated by the following:

(a) Being struck on any part of their person or clothing with a live ball, validly thrown by an opposing active player, at the instant it becomes dead as per section 34(8) without being caught,

(b) Validly throwing a ball which is then caught by an opposing player before it becomes dead as per subsection (3),

(c) Being out of bounds as per subsection (4), subject to the opening rush exemption under section 31(11), or

(d) When directed by match officials due to a penalty for misconduct under section 56.

(2) An active player struck on their person or clothing by a live ball, validly thrown by an opposing player will be eliminated the instant the ball becomes dead. A completed catch does not constitute a strike.

- (3) An active player who validly throws a ball which is subsequently caught by an opposing player will be eliminated the instant the catch is completed.
- (4) Active players must remain within their team's playable area as per section 11(2). An active player will be eliminated the instant they:
 - (a) Step, fall or otherwise touch with any part of their body or clothing, or (b) Support themselves on or beyond the court boundary for their area (bridging).
- (5) Any action undertaken in game play prior to the instant of elimination remains valid.
- (6) An eliminated player must leave the court in a timely manner from the nearest point of exit. If the player is still holding any balls, they may pass those balls to active players. Any balls not in their possession which are moved by an eliminated player should be given to the opposition.

38 Revival

- (1) When a catch is taken, an eliminated player from the catching team is revived and may return to active play. If no player is currently eliminated at the time of the catch, then no revival will occur.
- (2) Before a revived player can re-enter the court, they must touch the out box with part of their person, then re-enter the court by stepping over the baseline and into the court boundaries. Entry from any other area or contacting the base line will cause immediate elimination.
- (3) Revived players must re-enter the court in a timely manner, however, they are not required to do so into immediate threat, such as into the path of a live ball in flight; this does not include the threat of a throw. Delaying return unnecessarily may constitute player misconduct under section 55.
- (4) Revived players must not retrieve, or be handed by ball retrievers, any balls prior to entering the court.

39 Fair Pace

- (1) To maintain a fair pace, match officials will prompt a team to throw when neither team appears to be preparing to throw. Match officials will determine which team has the advantage to throw as per subsection (2).
- (2) Match officials will determine which team has the advantage by the following:
 - (a) The team with the most balls will have the advantage, or
 - (b) If both teams have 3 balls, the team with the most active players will have the advantage, or
 - (c) If both teams have 3 balls and the same number of active players, then the following will determine which has the advantage:
 - (i) At the start of the match, the home team or team listed first on the fixture will have the advantage,
 - (ii) At the start of a set during the match, the team that won the preceding set will have the advantage, or
 - (iii) During the set, the team that received the last valid throw (did not throw last) will have the advantage.
- (3) Teams are in possession of balls when they are on their side of the centre line, even when they are off court.

- (4) Match officials will announce the team that has the advantage and indicate by holding out an arm in the direction of the team's half.
- (5) Once match officials have indicated which team has the advantage, the team will be given 10 seconds to make at least 1 valid throw. Match officials will count the final 5 seconds aloud.
- (6) A controlling body may determine the length of inactivity which will initiate match officials to allocate the advantage. However, at higher levels of competition, match officials should endeavour to allocate the advantage as quickly as possible to maintain the pace of the match.
- (7) Any valid throw or disposal of a ball by either the team with advantage or the opposing team must cross the centre line to release the advantage. The advantage will be established again according to subsection (2), except in cases specified in subsection (8) and considering section 34(6) regarding deliberate invalid throws.
- (8) Players may not purposely place or cause the placement of a ball in the opposing teams half with such proximity to the centre line to cause the advantage to shift and force opposing players to approach the centre line to retrieve the balls. Balls that, in the natural course of game play, settle in such a location are accepted.

- (9) If a valid throw is not made or release from the advantage is not achieved as per subsection (7) prior to the end of the advantage period, the team with the advantage will be required to immediately hand over all balls to the opposition. Until the balls are handed over, no elimination can occur. Repeated failure may be considered misconduct under section 55.

40 Sudden Death

- (1) Sudden death is a game play mode that is devised to hasten the completion of a set if time has expired or is about to as per section 30(8).
- (2) Upon expiration of time, match officials should signal alerting teams. Any live ball thrown prior to expiration remains alive until it becomes dead and can continue to cause elimination or be caught as per section 30(4). Play then ceases and active players will be instructed to return to their baseline in preparation for sudden death.
- (3) Regardless of the location of balls at the expiration of time, 3 balls will be distributed to each team to commence sudden death. Players may hold the balls in their hands for the commencement of sudden death.
- (4) During sudden death, any ball in a player's possession will be deemed as part of their person. Any ball blocked will be deemed to have contacted the player and will cause strike elimination if not caught prior to becoming dead.
- (5) During sudden death, catching will cause the opposing player that threw the ball to be eliminated as per section 37(3).

41 Tie Breaker Set

- (1) When determined by the controlling body, a tie breaker set will be played in the instance that the final set of a match results in a tied score and where a winner must be determined.
- (2) A tie breaker set will be played for 4 minutes under normal playing conditions in accordance with these rules.
- (3) A controlling body may determine a varied duration for a tie breaker set as required.
- (4) If the tie breaker set is not completed with the elimination of 1 entire team by the expiry of the set duration, sudden death will be entered as per section 40.

Division 3 Ball Retrieval

(1) Teams may employ non-active persons as ball retrievers, whose role is to retrieve balls that have left the court, to return them to active players. Eliminated players are not permitted to retrieve balls for their team.

42 Number of Ball Retrievers

- (1) Teams may have a maximum of 3 ball retrievers active.
- (2) A controlling body may vary the number of ball retrievers allowed per team in a match conducted by that controlling body.

43 Ball Retriever Uniform

(1) To limit distraction to opposition players, ball retrievers are required to wear clothing that clearly distinguishes them from the active players in their team, e.g., bibs.

44 Areas of Ball Retrieval

- (1) Balls may be retrieved by ball retrievers once they are wholly and completely beyond the line of marked boundaries. Ball retrievers may not enter the court by contact with the court surface or boundaries to retrieve or return a ball, doing so may constitute misconduct under section 57.
- (2) Balls may be retrieved by ball retrievers once they are on or over the centre line including its continuation under section 12(2) on the side of the ball retriever's team. If a ball comes to rest on the centre line, it may be retrieved by either team in accordance with section 45.
- (3) Ball retrievers may access all areas adjacent to the court as is reasonably necessary but may only retrieve balls as per subsections (1) and (2).

45 Ball Retrieval Right of Way

- (1) Ball retrievers shall have reasonable right of way from other non-active persons in performance of their duties, however, ball retrievers:
 - (a) Must not impede match officials in their duty,
 - (b) Must not impede any active player when retrieving a ball,
 - (c) Must not impede any ball retriever from an opposing team who has a reasonable chance of retrieving a ball as it approaches the centre line, and
 - (d) Must take all reasonable precautions to move safely around the court.

46 Retaining Possession

(1) Ball retrievers may retain possession of balls until a suitable opportunity to return the ball to an active player arises, so long as no unreasonable delay to the match occurs, which may constitute misconduct under section 57.

47 Other Non-Active Persons

(1) Other non-active persons including support personnel or spectators may, where reasonable, assist in the retrieval of balls nearby to themselves to avoid either delay of the Match or

proximity related hazards for Ball Retrievers. Persons not designated as ball retrievers must not be moving around the court with the purposes of ball retrieval. Unreasonable participation in ball retrieval by non-designated persons may constitute misconduct under section 57.

48 Incorrect Retrieval

(1) If a retrieval does not meet the requirements as per part 4, division 3, then the team responsible will forfeit the ball and be required to pass the ball as a dead ball to the opposing team. Repeated incorrect retrievals may constitute misconduct under section 57.

49 Returning Balls

(1) Ball retrievers may return balls to active players by any reasonable method so long as the action does not:

- (a) Impede active game play in any way,
- (b) Affect the path of travel of any ball inside the court,
- (c) Create an advantage by moving a dead ball to benefit any player on court, and (d) Cause unreasonable delay to the match.

(2) All of which may constitute misconduct under section 57.

Part 5 CONDUCT PROVISIONS

Division 1 Respect for These Rules

(1) Respect for the rules is key to promoting a healthy sport and sporting community.

50 Match Officials Decisions

(1) Match officials are charged with interpreting these rules and ensuring the match runs accordingly. During game play, a match official's decision is final. Disputing a call may be considered misconduct under section 55.

(2) Where practical, players or teams may seek further explanation or review of a ruling during a set break or timeout, subject to timing restrictions, or after a match. A controlling body may implement a process for ruling reviews where the outcome of the match may be affected.

51 Honest Conduct

(1) While match officials are in place, the fast-paced and multi-faceted nature of dodgeball will often present difficulty for match officials in deliberating on every event during game play.

(2) While it is the role of match officials to deliberate, using these rules, on the events occurring during game play, in accordance with part 5, division 1 and the Code of Conduct contained within the Member Protection Policy, players and teams participating in dodgeball conducted under these rules are expected to act honestly and in cases where match officials have not yet ruled, to the best of their ability:

- (a) Rule themselves or teammates eliminated when struck,
- (b) Confirm a non-catch when a ball has not carried the full distance,
- (c) Rule themselves or teammates eliminated when having travelled out of bounds, and
- (d) Otherwise uphold these rules.

(3) Match officials will rule on any occurrence where there is dispute over an outcome.

52 Dishonesty

(1) Repeated reports of dishonesty by a player or team will be monitored. Any player or team found to be acting dishonestly will be considered misconduct under section 55 and be subject to appropriate penalties as determined by match officials or the controlling body conducting the match.

Division 2 Conduct During Matches

53 NNSWDL Policy

(1) The conditions of the NNSWDL policy should be applied to all persons to whom these rules apply unless a controlling body has adopted its own relevant policy in place.

54 Maintaining the integrity and spirit of the sport.

(1) The sport of dodgeball is fast paced and competitive, however, players and teams participating are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that upholds the integrity of the sport and fosters the spirit of the sporting community.

55 Misconduct

(1) Misconduct detracts from the spirit of the sport and will not be tolerated. Any action that brings the game in disrepute may be considered misconduct.

(2) In conjunction with the applicable Member Protection Policy, misconduct will include, but not be limited to:

(a) Poor sportsmanship, such as:

(i) Disrespectful actions or aspersions towards players, official or supporters, or

(ii) Refusal to follow protocol, or

(iii) Self-reffing or calling opponents out.

(b) Fighting, assault or unnecessary roughness such as:

(i) Intentional hard striking at close range, or

(ii) Intentional striking after elimination, or

(iii) Impeding an opposition player's space near or beyond the centre line.

(c) Vilification of any kind,

(d) Generally offensive behaviour such as excessive use of foul language, (e) Mistreatment of equipment, such as:

(i) Kicking or spiking balls, or

(ii) Squeezing or squashing balls.

(f) Dishonesty in the case of elimination not identified by match officials, and (g) Interference in game play proceedings by any non-active person.

(3) Instances of misconduct will result in penalties to be prescribed by match officials. These may include, but are not limited to:

(a) Verbal warnings,

(b) Elimination,

(c) Penalty cards,

(d) Individual or team disqualification from a match or matches,

- (e) Individual or team disqualification from a competition or tournament, (f) Ejection from the venue,
- (g) Playing bans, and
- (h) In extreme cases, legal prosecution.

56 Penalties

- (1) When appropriate, players should be given the opportunity to reconsider any part of the action that tends towards misconduct. Verbal warnings will be given by match officials when a single instance of an infraction does not seem to warrant a penalty. Repeated behaviour following a verbal warning will incur further penalties such as elimination or penalty cards. Match officials will determine the appropriate follow-up penalty.
- (2) Players may be eliminated by match officials when misconduct unfairly influences gameplay outcomes. This penalty should be used in low-level competition only with a preference for the use of penalty cards at higher-level competitions.
- (3) Yellow cards may be issued by match officials to:
 - (a) Active players – when on-court misconduct occurs. Yellow cards issued to individual Players will be recorded against that player's team, and
 - (b) Teams – when off-court misconduct by any person connected with that team occurs.
- (4) A yellow card is the next disciplinary level after a verbal warning to penalties for players and teams. A single yellow card infraction will have the following consequences:
 - (a) An individual player that receives a yellow card is immediately disqualified from participating in the remainder of that set, with their team being required to complete the set with only 5 active players, and
 - (b) A team that receives a yellow card immediately forfeits that set, with the point being awarded to the opposing team.
- (5) A second yellow card infraction to either a player or team will have the same consequences as a red card.
- (6) Red cards may be issued by match officials to a player or team:
 - (a) As a second offence to a yellow card infraction, or (b) In a case of serious misconduct without warning.
- (7) A red card is the disciplinary level after yellow cards to penalties for players and teams. A single red card infraction will have the following consequences:
 - (a) An individual player that receives a red card is immediately disqualified from participating in the remainder of that match, with their team being required to complete the match with only 5 active players, as well as being disqualified from participating in their next match, with their team being able to play with 6 active players, and
 - (b) A team that receives a red card immediately forfeits that match, with the win being awarded to the opposing team.
- (8) A record of penalty cards issued should be kept by match officials and reported to the controlling body conducting the competition at the end of the match. This record should be made available for players and teams.
- (9) Cards issued by match officials during a match will stand until the completion of that match. Teams and players may request a review from the controlling body conducting the

competition following completion of the match. Any review will not affect the recorded outcome of a match and can only alter the record of penalty cards issued.

57 Conduct of Team Personnel and Supporters

(1) Teams are accountable for the actions of team officials, support staff, other non-active participants and to a reasonable degree, spectators supporting the team. Poor conduct from these groups may constitute misconduct under section 55 and result in the issuing of a penalty under section 55(3) to either the related team or the perpetrating individual.

(2) The following are examples of off-court misconduct which include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Causing unreasonable delay to the match by any action,
- (b) Any action aimed at distracting players or officials, such as loud or abrupt noises,
- (c) Offensive comments or gestures,
- (d) Unnecessary physical contact with players, officials, or supporters,
- (e) Inactive or non-active players, team officials or supporters entering the court, and
- (f) Providing unfair or undue assistance to active players, such as supporting a player's balance or providing leverage during the opening rush.

(3) A lead team official or team captain may approach match officials during a set break to request they monitor the off-court conduct of opposing team officials, support staff, other non-active participants, and spectators. Match officials may issue warnings or penalties at their discretion.

(4) Teams for whom support personnel or spectators are in breach of conduct requirements as per section 57 may be subject to any penalty under section 55(3) at the discretion of match officials.

Part 6 APPENDICES

58 Example Interpretations

Blocking Example 1

(1) Player A is holding 3 balls, one in each hand and a third trapped between the other 2. Player A attempts to block an incoming live ball with the ball in their right hand, but in doing so drops the third ball that was trapped. Even though the third Ball was not apparently hit by the live ball, the ball was dropped concurrently with and due to the impact of the live ball and player A is eliminated.

Blocking Example 2

(2) Player A is holding 3 balls when opposing player B throws a live ball. Player A clearly drops 1 ball before using the remaining 2 to block player B's live ball. Since player A did not drop the ball due to the impact of the live ball, player A is not eliminated.

Blocking Example 3

(3) Player A is holding 2 balls and uses 1 ball to block an incoming live ball. The ball used to block the live ball was held out in front of player A's face while player A dropped the ball they were holding at their side at the time of impact. Since the dropped ball was not clearly a result of the impact of the live ball, which was blocked, player A is not eliminated.

Complex Example 1

(4) 2 live balls are thrown at player A. The first ball strikes and bounces in the air while the second ball is caught before the first ball hits the ground. The catch is deemed valid; however, player A is still eliminated the instant the first ball becomes dead.

Complex Example 2

(5) Player A throws a ball at player B, but right before the ball hits player B, they throw a ball at player A. Both balls thrown are live balls and both players are eliminated if player A got hit by player B's ball. This is often called a 'Double Elimination'.

Complex Example 3

(6) If player A and B are the last players remaining (i.e., there is a one-on-one) and there is a 'Double Elimination', the set shall be awarded to the team whose last player was eliminated second, keeping in mind that a player is not eliminated until the ball that struck them becomes dead. If player A's ball hits player B before player B's ball hits player A, but player B's ball hits the ground before player A's ball, player A is eliminated first, and player B's team is awarded the set.

Complex Example 4

(7) Player A is hit by a live ball which bounces high into the air. Player A throws a ball at player B while the ball that hit player A is still in the air (i.e., before becoming dead). The ball thrown by player A is still a live ball capable of eliminating player B or being caught.

Ricochet Example 1

(8) If player A throws a live ball which strikes opposing player B and ricochets to also strike opposing player C before becoming dead, then both opposing players B and C are eliminated.

Ricochet Example 2

(9) If player A throws a live ball which is blocked by opposing player B and then strikes opposing player C before becoming dead, then player C will be eliminated.

Ricochet Example 3

(10) If a live ball ricochets off a dead player exiting the court and hits another player, the ball is deemed a dead ball and the hit does not cause another elimination.

Complex Ricochet Example

(11) If player A throws a live ball which is blocked by opposing player B and then hits player C on the throwing team (player A's team), while still a live ball, player C is not eliminated, but the ball is still a live ball which may yet be caught by the opposing team until it becomes dead.

Dead Ball Example

(12) Player A is struck by live ball 1. Player A throws live ball 2 which strikes player B on the opposing team prior to live ball 1 becoming dead, making the throw valid. Live ball 2 then also becomes dead. Player A and player B are eliminated.

Out of Bounds Example 1

(13) Player A releases live ball 1 in a valid throw before stepping on or beyond one of the boundary lines. Live ball 1 strikes opposing player B and becomes dead. Player A is eliminated the instant they make contact out of bounds, but the throw released prior is valid. Player B is eliminated.

Out of Bounds Example 2

(14) Player A releases live ball 1 in a valid throw immediately after stepping on or beyond one of the boundary lines. Live ball 1 strikes opposing player B and becomes dead. Player A is eliminated the instant they make contact out of bounds, so the throw released after is invalid. Player B is not eliminated.

Catching Example 1

(15) If player A attempts to catch a live ball and loses balance and falls/lands out of bounds before player A has complete control of the ball, such as still juggling the ball, then it is not deemed a catch and player A is eliminated.

Catching Example 2

(16) If player A attempts to catch a live ball and is hit by a live ball thrown by opposing player B which becomes dead before player A has complete control of the ball, such as still juggling the ball, then it is not deemed a catch and player A is eliminated.

Catching Example 3

(17) Player A throws a ball which strikes opposing player B and then ricochets and is caught by another opposing player C before becoming dead. The catch is valid. Player A is eliminated as their throw was caught. Player B is not eliminated. This is often known as a 'Team Catch'.

Catching Example 4

(18) Player A throws a ball which is blocked by opposing player B and then ricochets and is caught by another opposing player C before becoming dead. The catch is valid. Player A is eliminated as their throw was caught.

Catching Example 5

(19) Player A throws live ball 1. Opposing player B then throws live ball 2 which strikes player A and becomes dead. After live ball 2 becomes dead, opposing player C (player B's team) catches live ball 1. As live ball 1 was live, the catch is valid despite player A being eliminated before the catch was completed.

Catching Example 6

(20) If player A throws a ball at opposing player B which is blocked or ricochets and is caught by player A's team while it is still a live ball, this does not constitute a catch.

Revival Example

(21) Player A is revived and returns via the sideline rather than the baseline. Opposing player B throws a ball which strikes player A and becomes dead. Regardless of the decision on the incorrect re-entry, player A is eliminated.

Elimination Example

(22) If player A is struck and leaves the court while the striking ball is still alive, player A is eliminated for being out of bounds. If the striking ball is caught before it becomes dead, player A remains eliminated but is eligible for revival subject to the order of elimination, i.e., if player A is the only eliminated player, they are revived by the catch.