



# Benchball (Indoor Soccer) Rules

**UPDATED January 7, 2025**

## **1. Pre-Game – Spirit Points, Equipment, Game Time, Defaults, Fields**

Play that is competitive, overly aggressive, rough and/or unsportsmanlike such as pushing, shoving, elbowing, shouldering, tripping, hacking, slashing, sliding, tackling, ball blasting, chirping, name calling, threats and intimidation, is prohibited and will not be tolerated by FCSSC. FCSSC IS FIRST-AND-FOREMOST-FOR-FUN. ANY ROUGH OR PHYSICAL PLAY WILL RESULT IN IMMEDIATE EXPULSION FROM THE GAME, THE LEAGUE, THE CLUB AND/OR ALL OF THE ABOVE. All players should go out of their way to avoid contact with other players and/or eliminate actions or behaviours that could jeopardize player safety. If accidental contact occurs it is expected that players will apologize for that contact, ensure everyone is alright and stop the game to seek appropriate help as required. **This rule supersedes all others!**

**Spirit of the League:** The primary focus of the FCSSC is sportsmanship and to have FUN...NOT on competitive and aggressive sport.

**Equipment/Set-Up:** FCSSC Game Hosts will provide soccer balls and goals for each game. Teams are welcome to bring their own balls for warm-up and practice. In addition, FCSSC's Game Host will keep score when possible (ie. Only one game at a time). If the FCSSC Game Host is unable to keep score, we ask that each team select a player to assist in keeping score. Each team should bring both light and dark coloured shirts to each and every game.

**Mixed Gender Requirements:** FCSSC is committed to providing inclusive access to for-fun sport for players of all gender identities.

In this co-ed league, teams on the court are comprised of five (5) players with a minimum of 2 players of the non-majority gender (for example, a team with a majority of male players must have at least 2 players of another gender on the court).

### **Game Time/Defaults:**

- Please arrive 15 minutes early so that you can start your games on time.
- Games are 55 minutes in length, with a 2-minute break at halftime.
- Teams may call a one (1) minute timeout per half if needed, except in the final 10 minutes of play
- Depending on gym size, 4v4 (including goalie) can also be played with a minimum of 3 players (including at least 1 player of the non-majority gender)
- A default will occur if any team cannot field a squad by 10-minute after the official start time. A team can play with a minimum of 3 people, as long as gender requirements are still met. Captains may agree to waive rules regarding gender minimums, but this should be decided before the game starts. IF IT IS AGREED THAT THE GAME COUNTS, IT COUNTS!

## **2. In Game – General Rules, Fouls, Slide Tackling, Scoring & Goalies**

### **How is it different from FCSSC soccer?**

- 'Goals' are benches turned on their side. To score, the ball must hit the front of the bench. (Hockey nets can be used face-down in lieu of benches, however NO goalie is permitted in this case)
- Balls can be played off both back and side walls.
- Goalies (if permitted) CANNOT use their hands to block a shot.

## General Rules:

1. The game begins with one team initiating play by making a pass from the centre of the court.
2. Player substitutions can be made at any time (i.e. changing on the fly is allowed).
3. A handball infraction occurs when the ball hits a player's arm from the ELBOW down (as opposed to the shoulder). In addition, players may use their arms to block the ball from hitting their groin area, and women can also use their arms to block the ball from hitting their chest. This rule will reduce the number of stoppages in play. Please don't abuse this rule.
4. Balls cannot be kicked above shoulder height. This will result in an indirect kick for the non-offending team from the point where the ball was kicked/where the infraction occurred. This rule is in place to prevent ball blasting and head injuries.
5. Whether intentional or unintentional, elbowing, pushing, tripping, or otherwise making physical contact with another player during a game is prohibited. A change of ball possession occurs at the location of the incident and the fouled player must be given a minimum of 2 paces space to move the ball. Shots on goal must be indirect.
  - It is recognized that incidental contact between players can happen – it is expected that all players will go out of their way to avoid an unsafe and/or unsportsmanlike play. Because *player safety, sportsmanship and fun are FCSSC's priority*, anytime physical contact has occurred players are expected to apologize and ensure that the other involved in the incident is not hurt and capable of resuming play. Should competitive tension result from an incident of physical contact both players involved in the incident MUST sub-off until tensions have dissipated. Team Captains are expected to help enforce this rule.
6. Should the ball be "trapped" in the corner for more than 2 seconds, the team who kicked the ball into the corner must give a player from the opposing team space (a minimum of 2 paces) to move the ball out. The ball must be kicked out (not thrown). This rule is in place to prevent pushing/elbowing or other contact between players in the corners.
7. Slide tackling is not allowed under any circumstances, even if contact is made with the ball first. Players must stay on their feet at all times. No players can slide to block a shot or pass at any time. Please see the Goalie Rules section for sliding rules specific to goalies.
8. All free kicks are indirect. To score off an indirect kick, the ball must be touched by another player (offense or defense, but not the goalie)
9. Teams may call a one (1) minute time-out if needed, except in the final 10 minutes of play.
10. Balls can be played off both back and side walls.

## Goalie Rules:

1. Goalies CANNOT use their hands to block a shot. If a ball deflects off the goalie's hands and goes in, it is a goal. If a ball deflects off the goalies' hands and does not go in, an indirect kick is awarded to the offensive team from where the ball was kicked. If a goalie purposely uses their hands to block a shot that would have otherwise gone in, it is a goal.
2. Goalies must stay behind their "crease line" (In most gyms, this is a line approximately 1 metre in front of the bench) - they can touch a ball that is on the other side of the line, as long as one foot remains behind the line and they do not touch the floor on the other side of the line.
3. Goalies ARE permitted to slide or spread out along the floor, provided that it is a reaction to the play AND that goalies are behind the "crease line". Goalies cannot slide outside of the crease (as is the rule for all other players). If goalies slide inside the crease they cannot stay in this position - they must return to their feet asap. For safety reasons, goalies are not allowed to dive.
4. When a goalie has control of the ball in front of the bench, it is good sportsmanship to allow the goalie to clear the ball without impeding them.

## Scoring:

1. To score a goal, the ball must hit the front of the bench (benches turned on their side will be used as goals. Face-down hockey nets can be used if no benches are available, but NO goalies are permitted in this case).
2. If the ball hits the top of the bench and then deflects off the back wall, it is NOT A GOAL.
3. A ball that hits the top of the bench and then bounces back into play without hitting the back wall (or hits the ground before hitting the back wall) is a FAIR GOAL.
4. A ball that deflects off the corner of the bench, regardless of whether it hits the back wall or not, is NOT A GOAL.
5. **You cannot score by shooting the ball from your own side of half** – the ball must first be touched by an offensive player in the attacking half, or deflect off a defender in the attacking zone. A shot from your own side of half that deflects off only the goalie and goes in is not a goal. This will help to reduce the amount of "ball blasting".
6. If a discrepancy arises as to whether the ball hit the front of the bench or the corner, an indirect kick is awarded to the offensive team from where the original shot was taken. Please remember that you are playing in a self-officiated, co-ed, social league, so any arguments or disputes should be kept to a minimum.

### **3. Post-Game – Score Reporting & Departure**

**Score Reporting:** FCSSC Game Hosts will report the scores for each game. Please be sure to inform your game host of the game's score before leaving the facility. Scores and standings can be viewed at [www.forestcityssc.ca](http://www.forestcityssc.ca)

**Departure:** Each week after your game, it is important to leave the gym in a timely manner. Teams could be playing after you and will need to get their game started on time. It is also possible that the facility could be closing upon the completion of your game and all staff and members will need to depart the building at that time.

### **3. Playoff Games**

**No Ringers:** To play on playoff nights players must have played a minimum of 2 regular season games for that team.

**Substitutes:** A player is only allowed to play for one team in each playoff round. Players cannot sub in for another team during the same round, most particularly in a championship game. Exception: a player may sub for another team in the same league during the same play-off round IF the game is not a championship game (ie, title on the line) and the team needing a sub would default the game without the substitute player (resulting in both teams being unable to play).

**Tiebreaker:** During playoffs, games are 50 minutes in length to allow extra time in case of a tie. A game that is tied at the end of regulation time is decided by a three-minute sudden death overtime period. If still tied, a shoot-out will commence; each of the five players on the floor (including the goalie) takes on shot each at a distance of eight paces. Only the players on the court at the end of the game can participate and the goalie that finished the game remains the goalie for the shoot-out. After five shots, if still tied, teams continue taking single shots until one team has scored (and the other team does not). The order of shooters must be maintained.