

# **CORNHOLE CANADA OFFICIAL RULEBOOK**

*As adopted in Toronto on September 5, 2020 and updated on May 7, 2023*



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# PLAYING RULES

This edition is prepared for easy and convenient reference only. Should errors occur, the contents of this book will be interpreted by the President according to the official minutes of Cornhole Canada Meetings.

The Regulations and the Articles & Bylaws of Cornhole Canada are published in a separate booklet and can be obtained from the Secretary or office of Cornhole Canada.

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## MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The rules which are contained in this book, are the only rules which are to be used while playing Cornhole under the jurisdiction of Cornhole Canada. Member leagues choosing to play outside these rules will be subjected to discipline and will at a minimum, forfeit the right to Cornhole Canada's insurance program and events. However, during internal competition, leagues may make variations to Cornhole Canada's official rules, providing these variations are more restrictive than the rules as written.

Rules are approved by Cornhole Canada's membership and are to be changed only through the democratic process at given periods of time.

It is understandable that in a Country of the geographic expanse of Canada, a uniform interpretation of the rules may prove somewhat difficult. That, however, is the goal which is to be aimed at, and if the rules are strictly adhered to in all parts of Canada, it should not be hard to come near achieving that goal.

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# SECTION 1 - THE COURT

## 1.1 Layout

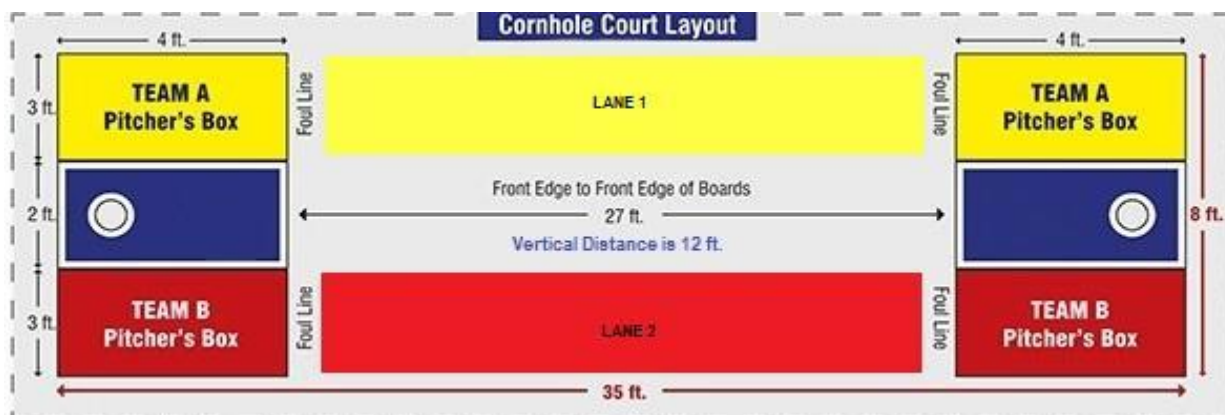
A regulation size court shall be a level rectangle area eight (8) feet wide and thirty-five (35) feet long with a vertical clearance of twelve (12) feet.

The court shall consist of two (2) cornhole boards, designated pitcher's boxes and foul lines.

For children ages 13 to 17 and adults, boards are positioned twenty-seven (27) feet from the front of each board. For children ages 8 to 12, boards shall be twenty-one (21) feet apart. And children 7 years old and younger, boards shall be fifteen (15) feet apart. The front edges of the two (2) boards must face each other.

The pitcher's box is rectangular and is four (4) feet long by three (3) feet wide at each end of the court, parallel with, and on both sides of the boards. Each player must remain in the pitcher's box while pitching a bag.

A lane is defined as two (2) pitcher's boxes directly across from one another on two (2) different boards on one court.



In doubles and team play, players on the same team will line up directly across from each other in the same lane, not diagonally from each other in opposite lanes.

The foul line is designated as the front end of the board, which is also marked by the front edge of a player's pitcher's box.

One scoreboard per court shall be used and shall be placed a minimum of one (1) foot behind either of the boards, outside of the field of play. Scoreboards are not mandatory.

## **1.2 Preparation & Maintenance**

Every effort shall be made to keep the playing surface in perfect playing condition. Players are responsible for making sure the court is in good playing condition prior to starting the match.

No foreign substance (such as cleaning products, talc powder, baby powder, silicone sprays) may be applied to the playing surface or bags by an individual player before or during play.

A dry clean cloth may be used to wipe down the boards prior to the start of the game.

## SECTION 2 - SCORING

### 2.1 Length of Games

The game shall be played to the predetermined number of twenty-one (21) points. The first player/team to reach (or exceed) that amount at the conclusion of a frame is the winner.

### 2.2 Scoring Points & Bag Terms

Woody: Refers to any bag that has been pitched and remains on the board at the conclusion of the frame. Each woody is worth one (1) point.

Cornhole: Refers to any bag that has been pitched or knocked through the board hole at any time within the frame. Each cornhole is worth three (3) points.

Foul Bags: Refers to any cornhole bag(s) that has not been determined as a “woody” or “cornhole”, or was designated a foul bag as the result of a rules violation.

Scoring is always completed at the end of a frame, not during. Bags “hanging” on the hole are valued at one (1) point.

If a bag is pinned by another bag and is hanging off the side of the board touching either the ground, board support brace, or board legs, the pinned bag is immediately deemed dead. An official must be called to remove the pinned bag. If the other bag remains on the board after the official has removed the pinned bag, the bag will count as one (1) point. If the other bag also falls off the board when the pinned bag is removed by the official, the bag counts as zero (0) points.

### 2.3 Designated Foul Bags

The following are rule violations that must be spotted and called by a player or official. The penalty is to declare the bag foul, which requires the bags to be removed from the court prior to resuming play.

Any bag pitched without one (1) foot or appendage completely inside the pitcher’s box at the time of release.

When pitching a bag, a player's foot or appendage crosses the foul line at any time even after the bag has been released.

Any bag not pitched within the twenty (20) second time limit.

A bag pitched from a different pitcher's box than their designated pitcher's box.

Any bag that contacted the court or the ground before coming to rest on the board.

Any bag that comes to rest touching the ground and the board.

Any bag which struck a previously defined object such as a tree limb, wire, indoor court ceiling, etc.

## **2.4 Cancellation Scoring**

The approved method of scoring for the sport of Cornhole is "cancellation" scoring. In cancellation scoring, the points of one player cancel out the points of their opponent. Using this method, only one player/team can score in each frame.

*Example:*

- *Team A achieves one (1) woody and two (2) cornholes during the frame (7 points)*
- *Team B achieves two (2) woodys and zero (0) cornholes during the frame (2 points)*
- *Total: 7 points for Team A minus 2 points for Team B*
- *Team A scores 5 points for that frame*

## **2.5 Recording the Score**

No bags shall be moved before the scoring is determined. If this decision is in doubt, an official shall be called to determine the scoring for the frame in question.

If all bags are believed to have been thrown and both teams/players clear the board of bags and proceed to start the next round only to find that a single bag has not yet been thrown, the round is still over and the points are scored as the round is finished. The single bag leftover is simply forfeited.

Players must pay close attention to the score at all times. Players are required to update their score on the scoreboard at the conclusion of each frame. Players may call upon an official between frames if any discrepancy occurs regarding the correct score.

When a third party is being used to manage the scoreboard, it is the responsibility of the player/team who scores in each frame to call out the score to the scorekeeper. It is the responsibility of the players/teams to ensure the score is represented correctly on the scoreboard at the conclusion of each frame before moving to the next frame.

If a player refuses to finish a game, that player will forfeit the game by a score of 21-0. If one partner of a doubles team cannot finish the match for any reason that game will be forfeited by the team that could not finish by a score of 21-0.

## SECTION 3 - THE GAME

### 3.1 Boards & Bags for Game Play

Boards and bags are supplied by the individual league however, players may use their own bags as long as they are approved. For tournaments, boards are supplied however, players must use their own bags.

### 3.2 Singles, Doubles & Teams Play

Each game begins with a bag spin by the highest ranking team/player.

The Scoreholio app determines lane assignment.

The bag spin winner will pitch first.

The bag spin winner will then choose one of the following:

- Pick their designated pitching box; or
- Choose their opponents.

Once this is decided it cannot be changed.

In the King/Queen Seat scenario, players change lanes but do not switch ends. A bag spin will determine who pitches first.

*Please Note: During tournaments the player/team with the higher seed has their choice of bag color and spins the bag to determine pre-match options.*

Players shall stay in their designated lane for the entire game.

*Please note: Players always pitch next to their opponent.*

Players start the game from their pitching boxes and will alternate pitching bags until each player has pitched all four (4) of their bags.

In doubles and team play, once the first frame is over the other players from both teams will alternate pitching bags from the other end of the lane until each player has pitched all four (4) of their bags.

In singles, players walk to the other end of their lane and begin frame two. Scoring is recorded after each frame.

Unless unanimously decided otherwise by all players on a court, it is customary to complete a practice round before beginning a game.

### 3.3 Teams

Teams shall consist of eight (8) players. Each team is allowed a reserve roster of four (4) players.

Teams must attend with eight (8) players or forfeit games. Should a team play with six (6) or seven (7) players then four (4) games shall be forfeited. Should a team play with four (4) or five (5) players then eight (8) games shall be forfeited. Teams cannot play with three (3) players or less.

Games are played in doubles format and follow doubles game play rules.

Sixteen (16) games shall be played to determine the winner.

All games must be completed regardless if the total score is out of reach for the losing team.

Teams shall set four (4) doubles teams before the competition begins and partners shall not be changed.

Total points scoring is used to determine the winner.

Scoring Example:

- Team A vs. Team B
- Each team has four (4) doubles teams
- For this example Team A is numbered 1, 2, 3 and 4 and Team B is numbered 5, 6, 7 and 8

Round 1		Round 2		Round 3		Round 4	
Teams	Score	Teams	Score	Teams	Score	Teams	Score
1v5	21-10	1v6	21-20	1v7	21-12	1v8	21-6
2v6	21-14	2v5	9-21	2v8	21-18	2v7	18-21
3v7	8-21	3v8	16-21	3v5	6-21	3v6	16-21
4v8	21-6	4v7	21-10	4v6	14-21	4v5	21-8

- Team A total points: 276
- Team B total points: 251
- In this example Team A would win the game

### **3.4 Pitching Bags**

Players alternate pitching bags (one player at a time) until each player has pitched all four (4) of their bags.

A player must pitch all four (4) bags from their designated pitcher's box.

Players must deliver the bag with an under-hand release.

One (1) foot or appendage must be completely within the pitcher's box at the time of releasing the bag.

When pitching a bag, a player's foot or appendage cannot cross the foul line at any time even after the bag has been released.

One (1) foot or appendage can be outside of the left, right or back of the pitcher's box as long as one (1) foot or appendage remains in the box.

### **3.5 Pitching Rotation**

The player/team who scored in the preceding frame shall pitch first in the next frame. If frame ends in a tie, the player/team who pitched first in the preceding frame shall retain first pitch in the next frame.

### **3.6 Accidental Release**

Any bag that leaves a player's hand once the final step (if taken) and final forward swing of the delivery process has started, shall count as a pitched bag.

A bag that is accidentally dropped by a player before the final step (if taken) and final forward swing has started, shall not be considered a foul bag and may be picked up and pitched.

### **3.7 Pitching Out of Turn**

If a player pitches out of turn at any time during a frame, their pitch will be considered a Foul Bag and will be swept from the playing surface. Then, to reestablish the correct sequence of pitching, the opposing player will pitch two (2) consecutive bags.

If the out-of-turn bag affects any bags in play, their opponent has the option of returning all cornhole bags to their original position on the playing surface or leaving all bags as they are.

If the error is not discovered until after two (2) bags have been pitched, the frame shall continue and be scored accordingly.

If no agreement can be reached an official shall be called. The official shall either determine the scoring or void the inning and order it to be re-pitched.

### **3.8 Touching the Bags Illegally**

If any bags in scoring positions are touched by a player, intentionally or unintentionally, before all bags during the frame are pitched, the frame is over.

The offending team (team who touches the bags) forfeits all remaining bags and tallies the score for the bags they have already thrown during the frame. The non-offending team tallies twelve (12) points as if they had thrown four (4) cornholes during the frame.

*Example:*

- *Team A throws 3 bags equaling 5 points to this point in frame*
- *Team B throws 3 bags equaling 8 points to this point in frame*
- *Team B accidentally reaches down and grabs the bags. The frame is now considered over*
- *Team B's remaining bag is declared dead and their previous points are tallied*
- *As per rules Team A tallies 12 points for the frame*
- *Team A records 12 points. Team B records 8 points*
- *Team A scores 4 points for that frame*

### **3.9 Time Limits for Pitching**

A player must pitch each bag within twenty (20) seconds of their opponent's bag coming to rest.

A player has one (1) minute to start the new frame from when the last bag from the previous frame comes to rest.

In singles play, once the final bag comes to a rest, each player has one (1) minute to walk to the other end, pick up their bags, and ready themselves to pitch.

Failure to pitch a bag in time results in loss of bag.

*\*Please Note: Exceptions may be made by an official considering physical disabilities or difficulties for a player.*

### **Time Limits for Scoring**

The frame will be scored five (5) seconds after the last bag is pitched, comes to rest, and all bags on the playing surface have stopped moving.

Any bag that moves in position after five (5) seconds will be scored based on its previous position.

If timing cannot be agreed on, the official will score or negate the frame.

### **3.10 Moving Boards & Bags**

A player can only straighten the boards in between frames and with the approval of their opponent. An official may be called to determine replacement if a discrepancy is in question.

The penalty for adjusting boards during an opponent's throw is the forfeiting of the next bag.

### **3.11 Crossing the Foul Line**

A player may only cross the foul line and approach the opposite board during a frame under three (3) circumstances:

1. A timeout has been called
2. To rake bags piled inside the board hole
3. To sweep bags that are considered foul bags from the playing surface

### **3.12 Timeouts**

Each player or team is allowed two (2) one minute time outs per game.

A player may only call a timeout when it is their turn to pitch.

Players may walk to the other boards to examine bag position during the time out.

Players may not touch the bags or boards during a timeout.

*Please Note: Time outs may be granted in the case of a broken bag, equipment malfunctions and/or other circumstances at the discretion of the official. A player/team will not be charged for a time out.*

### **3.13 Raking Bags**

If bags become piled inside the board hole and interfere or obstruct the playing area a player may request to “rake” the bags that have fallen inside the hole. To request a rake, the player must audibly ask.

In singles both players must walk to the other board and rake the bags from under the board. One player will rake while the other watches.

An official may be called to rake the bags if a discrepancy is in question.

A timeout will not be charged for "raking".

*Please note: During raking, all efforts should be made to leave bags on the playing surface undisrupted, in their natural state, and to leave bags that may hang on the rim of the hole from falling inside the hole unnaturally. If a bag is resting on a piled bag and unavoidably falls into the hole as a result of raking, then it shall be counted as a “cornhole.”*

### **3.14 Sweeping Bags**

If a foul bag lands on the playing surface or comes to rest touching the ground and the board, it must be removed immediately.

If a player pitches a foul bag which affects any bags in play, their opponent has the option of returning all bags to their original positions on the playing surface or leaving all bags as they are.

## SECTION 4 - EQUIPMENT

### 4.1 Approved Equipment

Equipment must comply with the specifications below for all league and tournament play.

#### **Boards:**

- Hardwood plywood (birch or oak) measuring forty-eight (48) by twenty-four (24) inches with three quarter (3/4) inch tolerance.
- Boards must have a minimum top layer thickness of half (1/2) inch with cross-section backing or three-quarter (3/4) inches with or without cross-section support.
- Each board in a set should weigh no less than fifteen (15) lbs.
- Each hole is six (6) inch in diameter, centered nine (9) inches from the top of the board and centered from each side edge.
- The front edge of the board should be raised three (3) to four (4) inches from the ground.
- The top of the board should rest twelve (12) inches above the ground.
- The playing surface should be finished and sanded to a very smooth texture. There should be little to no blemishes in the wood surface that may disrupt or distort play.
- The playing surface can be painted with a high gloss latex paint or varnish. The surface should allow bags to slide when thrown but not be to slippery that the bags slide back down the platform.

#### **Bags:**

- Each bag measures six (6) square inches and weighs 15.5 to 16.25 ounces.
- Bags must have a thickness no less than 1.125 inches and no greater than 1.5 inches.
- Bags may not be filled with any material other than plastic resin.
- The bags should be made from a durable fabric like canvas, twill, or synthetic suede.

### 4.2 Bag Rules

After purchase from the manufacturer, bags may not be altered in any way. Alterations include but are not limited to repair, stitching, removing resin,

adding resin, ironing and any other manipulation that results in a bag becoming different from the original state of purchase.

Players may wash bags using fabric softener and/or detergent and use in a dryer.

Players may label their bags with initials or a name with a permanent marker. The label should not exceed five (5) by five (5) inches.

Bags with holes where plastic resin can leak will not be allowed.

Bags must feature a logo or stamp from the manufacturer.

Faded logos will not be accepted. Players may not have their bags re-stamped.

Players may dry bags but no foreign substances can be applied to the outside of a bag including water.

If a player is found to be intentionally applying any substance, the official reserves the right to either:

1. Force the player to switch bags during the game
2. Forfeit the player for that game

All bags in a set of four (4) must have the same design and color for each corresponding side of the bags.

A player may not switch bags during a game unless a bag is unintentionally damaged and leaking. They may also be changed if they have been unintentionally altered such that it affects the play of the game differently.

In the event of a damaged bag, all four (4) bags in that set must be removed at the end of the round.

Bags can be changed after a game is concluded.

### **4.3 Bag Challenging**

If a player/team believes that the opposing player/team is using a set of

bags that does not abide by the bag policy, they may challenge the bags before the beginning of the game only.

To complete a challenge, an official will complete a bag inspection. If the set of bags are approved, the game will begin. If the set of bags are not approved, that player/team is given a warning and the bags cannot be used for that game.

If a player/team already with a warning during a season has the same set of bags challenged or has a different set of bags challenged that are also disallowed, that player/team forfeits all remaining matches and is given a one (1) month suspension from Cornhole Canada.

If a player/team who has already served their one (1) month ban is found to be playing with bags that do not meet the bag requirements again, they will be suspended for one (1) calendar year from Cornhole Canada.

Bags that are not challenged prior to a game are deemed acceptable for use during that game. However, should an official notice illegal bags, they may at any time revoke the bags.

## SECTION 5 - PLAYER CONDUCT

### 5.1 On the Court

A player/team while in competition, shall make no disturbing noises or movements that would distract the opponent or players on any of the surrounding courts. Other inappropriate behavior would include profanity, abusive language, obscene gestures, flipping bags, etc.

### 5.2 Penalties

A player may call on an official to enforce a rule at any time. If the official deems action to be required:

- The first offense shall call for a warning.
- A second offense shall call for a loss of four (4) points
- A third offense shall call for forfeiture of the game being played

### 5.3 Sportsmanship

Any player who indulges in heckling or unfair rooting, uses profanity or abusive language, makes obscene gestures or exhibits any other form of unsportsmanlike conduct toward other players, officials, or spectators shall be subject to expulsion from the league/tournament.

*Please Note: It is legal for a teammate or spectator to provide advice on bag position and/or next pitch recommendation.*