

## **1. Mission Statement**

Rollerchairball is first and foremost a Gentlemen's Sport. All questions about play-legality, athletic conduct and league matters must be first subject to the mission statement. Gentlemanly codes of ethics must be first and foremost in the minds of players, officials, and governing appointees. Rules and league actions shall be driven with the well-being of players and teams in mind.

## **2. Ruling Texts**

The Official Rollerchairball Rulebook is the only governing text that shall be used in outlining official league policies, game rules, and league procedures.

## **3. The Governing Board**

The most supreme governing post of the league is the Founding Fathers (Mike Barone, Eddie Cotter, Brandon Lock, Brandon Scherer, & Andrew Snow). These are permanent positions held for life.

The Founding Fathers (also known as Founding Fathers plus Mike) have absolute authority in all areas of the league provided a majority (3/5) vote is achieved. Any decisions that have potential of affecting future rulings or structure of the league must be presented to the Founding Fathers for a ruling.

With the Founding Fathers scattered in different parts of the country, a Board of Directors has been created to oversee all league matters, including rules and development. Currently this Board consists of three founding fathers – Michael Barone, Brandon Lock, and Brandon Scherer – as well as Kyle Stout and Andrew Wood. All changes to the rulebook and all league development questions are subject to the Board of Directors.

## **4. Description of the Game**

Rollerchairball is a game in which two teams, each consisting of two players on the field at a time, roll, throw, and carry a ball for touchdowns valuing 2.5 points a piece.

Playing surfaces must be hard. The dimensions of the non-end-zone court must be forty (40) feet long by twenty (20) feet wide. These dimensions can be altered slightly if an arena cannot adhere exactly to these dimensions.

The players use chairs to maneuver themselves on the playing surface, at no time leaving their seated position. There are three downs per possession to achieve a touchdown.

The game is a race to 30 points; the first team to achieve 30 points wins. Halftime comes when the first team reaches 15 points.

The entire surface is in play at all times, and throws are considered live regardless of direction or completion.

The ball can be thrown out of bounds or out of the back of the end-zones. In that case, the next play shall be spotted from where the last person who had possession rested as the ball went out. If a ball live on the ground ends up out of bounds when possession is in doubt, the team previously on offense regains possession of the ball at the spot it was knocked out of bounds.

Players are downed by simultaneous two-hand tap on the back section of a player's chair. A player is also out of bounds if two wheels go out of bounds in a four-wheeled chair; one wheel out is considered inbounds still. Likewise, a player is out of bounds if three wheels go out of bounds in a five-wheeled chair; two wheels out is considered inbounds. The ball is considered out-of-bounds only if it is entirely out of bounds, partially on the line is still live.

The ball is not snapped, but rather starts in the hands of an offensive player. Since the play is not marked by the snapping of a ball, movement by both sides before the snap is acceptable. "Hike" or "Go" are the only two words used to trigger the play to begin. Players may be off the line of scrimmage and players with the ball may be in a shotgun formation while holding the ball. If on the line of scrimmage, opposing teams must allow a one (1) foot neutral zone, representing the ball placement line. The referee shall mark the line of scrimmage by simply extending his/her arm in front of his/her body until the ball is snapped. The referee should also let the players know if they are in the neutral zone.

The game is a loose variation of football, but has influences from hockey, basketball, polo, and several other sports.

## **5. League Approved Equipment**

When possible, chairs in use must be identical. Approved chairs must include a full-sized back and sound wheels.

All players must wear an approved helmet and closed-toe shoes. No sandals or any other soft/open-toed footwear is permitted. Elbow pads and knee pads are not strictly required, but strongly encouraged.

## **6. Scoring**

**Touchdown** – The most common method of scoring, a touchdown is worth two point five (2.5) points each. A touchdown is defined as a player in possession of the ball with two (2) or more wheels across the goal line if chairs have four (4) wheels or three (3) or more wheels if chairs have five (5) wheels.

**Safety** – When a player is downed in his/her own end-zone while in possession of the ball the play results in a safety. Kickoffs must be returned, and there is no option of “taking a knee.” However, on a turnover, the player downed while in possession of the ball is awarded a ‘touchback’ and the ball is moved out four (4) feet from the goal line to start the series. If the defender, recovering a turnover, is not downed in the end zone, the referee can call a ‘touchback’ if the player makes no attempt to advance the play. Leaving the end-zone, then returning to it, results in a safety as well. 11 points are awarded to the opposing team.

**Half-Safety** – If a player is in his/her own end zone and throws the ball out of the end zone and the ball goes out of bounds, they are assessed a half-safety. Since an out-of-bounds ball would be spotted from the place of the throw for the next down, a player in the end zone would be considered ‘down’ in the end zone. A half-safety results even if a player on the opposing team deflects the ball out of bounds. This call results in 5.5 points for the opposing team.

**Out-Of-Bounds Kickoff** – Any team throwing the ball out of bounds three (3) times on one kickoff forfeits the game by awarding the opposing team ninety (90) points. Any ‘on-side’ kick that does not travel two-thirds (as indicated on the playing surface) of the field is considered one out-of-bounds throw. Out-of-bounds throws do not carry over onto the next kickoff.

## **7. Referees**

Typically two (2) referees work the game. One is responsible for holding the spot of the ball by standing on the sideline without moving throughout the play. The other is free to flow and must keep track of the down count. One official watches the quarterback and the correlating defender; the other is vigilant to the receivers. These rules are fluid, as officiating must cover all aspects of the playing field, as well as the fact that often plays break down into situations that do not fit neatly into the preceding scenarios.

Referees must be sanctioned by the Rollerchairball Governing Board, having attended and passed the League’s official Referee Training Program.

A third member of the officiating crew is in charge of the official scorecard of the match. This member needs not be sanctioned by the League as an official.

## **8. Penalties, In-Game Aspects, and Terms**

**Penalty box** – On certain calls, players may be removed for one play and placed in a zone outside the playing surface, awarding a ‘power play’ to the other team.

**Cheeking** – All players must remain in their chairs at all times. Any player rising or falling out of their chair is assessed a cheeking call. Cheekings are recorded in the official scorecard. When a player earns a third cheeking, the call results in the player being placed into the penalty box and the opposing team awarded a power play, as well as the ball via kickoff for one (1) play. After being placed in the penalty box, every other cheeking call results in a power play.

**Intentional Leaving of the Chair** – At the judgment of the officials, a player that intentionally leaves his/her seat to disrupt a play can be assessed a trip to the penalty box regardless of previous offences. This call results in a power play for the other team, as if the player had received his third cheeking call. Once released from the box, all subsequent cheeking calls result in a power play.

**Important Note on Cheeking:** A team cannot benefit if its player leaves a chair. If a team benefits on an offensive play, the play is nullified and the down replayed from the previous spot. If a defending team commits the infraction, the play is essentially free for the offense. If the offense gains yardage or scores, the play stands. After the play, the offense has the choice of replaying the down. This fact means that if a defending team cheeks before a potential switch in possession, the switch in position in effect never occurs. The penalty is assessed after the play, meaning the guilty player, may still participate in the play and even down the player with the ball. If a team earns a switch in possession and then commits a cheeking offense, they still gain possession; the ball is placed down at the spot of the cheeking (if the cheeking occurs in the end zone, the play results in a touchback.). See Change of Possession below.

**Technical Fouls** – Technical Fouls will be called on offenses that go against the gentlemanly aspects of the game, but do not warrant removal from the game. Examples can be kicking horses, swearing, excess force, blowing or spitting in another player's face. Calls are at the discretion of the referee; players can receive warnings before they receive a foul call. Technical Fouls carry a 2.5 point penalty to the guilty team. Further, two (2) Technical Fouls in one game will result in a power play for the opposing team. Each Technical Foul past the second results in another power play.

**Holding** – No player may grasp another player, their equipment, or their chair or impede the movement of a player. Any closed hand on any portion of a player or a chair is an automatic holding call, whether from in front or behind. Pulling on a chair with an open hand is ruled the same as a hold. Open hands, used to push a chair, are legal. Intentional touching of a player, and not a chair, is grounds for a holding call. Holding calls penalize the guilty team half the distance to the goal from the spot of the foul. The down is also replayed, no matter which side commits the infraction. If it is a flagrant holding call, the referee may award a power play to the opposing team.

**Ramming** – If a player uncontrollably or excessively runs directly into other players at high speeds, judged to be a dangerous maneuver by officials, this call may be assessed. It is punishable by one (1) Technical Foul or even an ejection from the game. This call can also be issued as a warning. Officials are allowed to set their own standards of contact and conduct.

**Times-Out and Excessive Stalling** – Each team is allowed three (3) times out per game. These must be called by the team and acknowledged by the official. These huddles can last no longer than fifteen (15) seconds. The penalty for excessive wasting of time is a ‘half distance to goal’ ruling and is ordered via the discretion of the referees.

**Jump Ball** – If two players have equal possession of a ball for more than a count of three (3) seconds, the referee shall blow the play dead. There is no penalty assessed. The ball is awarded back to the offense and is spotted at its location at the time of the whistle and the down is considered over. If it is third down, the ball then shall be turned over to the opposing team. If an offensive player can cross over the goal line during an equal possession situation, it shall be considered a touchdown. Likewise, if a defender can pull or force an offensive player into his/her own end zone during the three second period, and the jump ball is called, it shall be a safety. Referees’ second counts can vary and all plays are up to the referee’s judgment.

**Intentional Overthrow** – Considering every ball is considered live if it remains in play, it was necessary to create a rule that states, at the judgment of the referees, no ball can be intentionally overthrown in order to gain an advantage. These calls should rarely be used, but are meant to prevent one player from simply chucking the ball to a location, knowing his/her teammate will be the first to get to it. Throwing or sliding the ball to a location more than roughly five (5) yards ahead of a teammate may warrant this call, resulting in the play being called dead, the ball spotted at the location of the throw, and a loss of down. It is important to note that if a team throws the ball down the court with the intention of giving the other team possession of the ball, the play does not result in an Intentional Overthrow call; this action is considered a punt.

**Simultaneous 3<sup>rd</sup> Cheekings** – As is the rule, a third cheeking (and any subsequent) results in a power play for the opposing team. If two players on opposing teams receive a cheeking call that would result in a power play on the same play from scrimmage a jump ball will be held at mid-court. The remaining two players will start on their defensive end lines and an official will drop the ball in the center of the court. Both players will then have equal shot at recovering the ball, which is live as soon as it hits the floor. Once the jump ball play is completed, the other two players may return to the court. The jump ball sequence does not count as a down; if the recovering team does

not score on the sequence and is downed, they retain the ball at that spot and it is first down.

If two players on the same team receive a third cheeking call on the same play, the opposing team receives two power plays.

**Neutral Zone Infractions** – On a court played with 1-foot tiles, such as those in school cafeterias, the neutral zone will consist of an entire tile-length. When the referee gives the players the line, he or she marks the neutral-zone tile with his or her foot, then alerts players if they are in the neutral zone. The referee then gives the “play at will” call, at which point a play can begin. After “play at will” is given, the referee cannot alert players to neutral zone infractions again. If a play is begun with a defensive player in the neutral zone, the offensive team receives a “free” play; the offensive team can progress the play to its conclusion, at which point they can decide to take the play’s result or to replay the entire down. If an offensive player is in the neutral zone when a play is begun, the referee must immediately signal the play dead. The offensive team loses the down at the same spot. If an offensive team is offside on third down, the result is a turnover on downs.

In arenas where neutral zones cannot be clearly marked, the official’s foot serves as the line of scrimmage indicator. Both teams must leave one (1) foot of space between the line of scrimmage and their feet and chairs.

**Simultaneous Penalties**- Not infrequently players on opposing teams will each record a penalty during one play from scrimmage. In almost all instances, the penalties offset and the down is replayed. For instance, if both teams are whistled for holding, the penalties offset and the down is played over. The same is true for a holding on one team and a cheeking on the other. However, even though a cheeking play might be offset by a holding call, the cheeking infraction still counts toward a player’s cheeking total; a down might be replayed, but the cheeking is still marked. This rule allows for the rare instance where the down is not replayed (i.e. a player records a third cheeking call, or fourth, etc). Multiple penalties to one team (one holding, one cheeking for example) and only one penalty on the other team still offset, no matter how large the difference in penalty infractions. Again, cheekings are still recorded, no matter how many or on whom.

**Kickoff Irregularities/Touchbacks on the Kickoff** – On kickoffs, players have two wheels over the end line (see wheeling the line below) no matter how many wheels chairs in use have. If on a kickoff the ball hits a player’s chair or body and passes out of bounds or through the back of the end zone, the result is a touchback.

**Change of Possession** – If a team gains possession of the ball from the offensive team during a play, they are then considered the offensive team. This ruling is especially important in references to downs. If a team intercepts a pass or picks up a fumble, they become of the offensive team and when they

are downed, the next play is first down for that team. Each change in possession results in a new slate of downs, regardless of what down the preceding play was. For instance, if it is third down and the defense takes possession of the ball, but then gives back possession to the original offensive team, that original offensive team gains a completely new set of downs. No matter where the ball is placed at the end of the play, if change of possession occurs, the down will be first.

**Wheel the Line!** – This phrase may or will be shouted by the officials or players before a kickoff situation. The term denotes a required action in which all players must have exactly two (2) wheels on the non-end-zone side of the end-zone line before being considered ‘set’ for the kickoff (no matter how many wheels are on the chairs). The play is blown dead if one player is not set or encroaches offside during a kickoff. The players may not move their wheels from the ‘set’ position until the ball has been released on the kickoff throw. There is no penalty for being offside in such a situation and a simple redo of the down is warranted.

**Snap** – The command which must signify the play underway. “Hike” or “Go” are the only two acceptable start commands. The command may not be given until the official has given the “play at will” signal.

**Live Ball** – Any ball, after the snap, that remains in-bounds and in a non-dangerous position is considered in play and free.

**Coin Toss** – All games begin with a coin toss by a referee. A coin must have identifiably two sides which shall be called “heads” or “tails.” The referee may decide which team shall call the coin toss, or it may be left up to the teams to decide. The call must be made while the coin is in the air. The referee should also review the flip procedure, i.e., if he/she will simply catch the coin, catch it and flip it on back of the hand, or let it hit the ground. The team that wins the toss may choose either to kickoff or receive first, or which end zone they would like to defend. They cannot defer to the second half. The losing side chooses either to kickoff, receive, or choose side depending on what option is left. Sides and kickoffs shall flip at halftime.

**Half Time**- Since the game is not timed, the point at which either team reaches or exceeds for the first time one half (½) of the points needed to win the game becomes halftime. Traditionally this is 15 points for a league sanctioned game or 10 for an exhibition game, yet the league is free to set different point goals depending on the situation. At halftime the teams switch sides. Halftime can last no longer than ten (10) minutes and is called over by the judgment of the referees.