

# THE ABRIDGED RULES OF KORFBALL

## *Summary of the official Rules of Korfball as approved by the International Korfball Federation*

### Definition and introduction

Korfball is a sport played by hand within a rectangular field of play whereby a team of four female players and four male players tries to shoot a ball into a korf.(basket). The sport's main characteristics encompass all-round skills, cooperative play, controlled physical contact and gender equality.

Whenever the word "he" is used it should be understood that this could be "she".

## Section 1: Field and Equipment

### 1.1 Playing area

The "playing area" shall be deemed to be the field of play together with its border area and the benches.

#### a field

The dimensions of the field are 40 x 20 m indoors (with a minimum free height of 7 m) and 60 x 30 m (maximum) outdoors, divided into two equal zones. The ratio of length to width is 2:1.

#### b border area

An area 1 m wide and kept clear of obstacles should surround the field.

#### c bench

Two benches shall be placed near one of the sidelines (preferably 2 m from the field of play), one on each side of the middle line, separated from each other by at least two metres.

### 1.2 Marking

The field of play is marked out by clearly visible lines, which should be 3.0 – 5.0 cm wide. The line separating the two zones is marked in the same way. Tapes may be used outdoors provided they are fixed flat to the ground.

The penalty spots must be marked in front of the posts, as seen from the centre of the field, with the edge of the spot furthest from the post at a distance of 2.50 m from the post.

### 1.3 Posts

Posts with an external diameter of 4.5 – 8.0 cm are fixed perpendicularly in or on the ground in both zones at a point situated midway between the two sidelines and one-sixth of the length of the field of play from the end line.

### 1.4 Korfs

A cylindrical bottomless korf is fitted to each post. The korf must face towards the centre and all of its top edge must be 3.50 m above the ground. They are 23.5 – 25.0 cm high and have an inner diameter on the upper side of 39.0 – 41.0 cm. The rim (top edge) of the korf has a width of 2.0 – 3.0 cm. The korfs are made of cane or approved synthetic material. They must be similar and must be in a single colour that contrasts sufficiently from the background.

Korfs are attached to the posts in such a way that movement is not permitted and the post must not protrude above the top of the korf. If metal supports are used underneath then they may only cover one quarter of the circumference nearest to the post. Metal strips against the outside may only cover one third of the circumference.

### 1.5 Ball

Korfball is played with a round number 5 ball of a type that has been approved by the IKF. The ball shall be two-coloured (preferably white/black). Its circumference should be 68.0 – 70.5 cm and the weight of the ball must be in the range 445 g to 475 g inclusive. The ball must be inflated to the prescribed pressure indicated on it so that when it is dropped onto the playing surface from a height of about 1.80 m, measured from the bottom of the ball, it should rebound to a height, measured to the top of the ball, of between 1.10 m and 1.30 m.

### 1.6 Equipment of players and officials

The players of each side must be dressed in a uniform sports outfit that is sufficiently different from that of the other side. The referee and his assistant must wear outfits that are sufficiently different from the competing teams. No one is allowed to wear any object that could cause an injury during the game.

## Section 2: Persons

### 2.1 Players

#### a number and position

Each team consists of four male and four female players, of whom two male and two female players are placed in each zone.

#### b line up and incomplete teams

When one or both teams are incomplete, the game can only start or be continued if a line-up is possible which ensures that no zone has less than three players from each side and that in no zone one female and two male players are opposed by one male and two female players. Unless circumstances change that require a change in line up for the game to continue (due to players leaving the game and substitutes being unavailable) then the same line up is maintained throughout the match.

### **c substitution of players**

Up to four players of a team can be substituted. If the maximum permitted number of substitutions has already been made, then a player who has been sent off, or injured players who can no longer take part in the match, may still be replaced with the permission of the referee. Players may not return to the match once substituted. Players who are sent off may be replaced by a substitute to maintain a complete team.

## **2.2 Captain, coach, substitutes and other persons attached to the team**

### **a Captain**

One player of each team is captain. He wears a clearly visible band on the upper part of his left arm. He represents the team and is responsible for the proper conduct of his players. In the absence of a coach he also fulfils the task of the coach.

### **b Coach**

When a coach is present he makes himself known to the referee before the match. He shall remain seated on the bench but may leave the bench for short periods to talk to his team from outside the field in a manner that will not disturb others. During a break in play, he may request substitutions or apply for a time out.

### **c Substitutes and other persons**

The substitutes and all other persons allowed to sit on the bench are considered members of the team. They must all remain seated on the bench during the match.

## **2.3 Referee**

The referee controls the game. His task is:

- a** to decide the suitability of the hall, field of play, material (and weather when played outdoors).
- b** to enforce the rules.
- c** to use the official signals to clarify his decision
- d** to take action when one side obtains an unfair advantage from circumstances outside the game
- e** to indicate the starting, stopping and re-starting of the game and a time out by means of blowing a whistle.
- f** to take action against misbehaviour by the players, coaches, substitute players and other persons attached to the team
- g** to take action against interference by the public.

Except when the punishment would be to the disadvantage of the non-offending side ("advantage rule"), the referee may choose to punish any infringements of the rules, including when play has stopped. He takes action when one side obtains an unfair advantage from circumstances outside the game. He decides in cases of doubt. He starts or re-starts the game by blowing his whistle as soon as the player taking the throw is ready and all the requirements (§3.9, 3.10 or 3.11) are satisfied. When two infringements take place simultaneously, the referee punishes the more serious infringement.

In cases of misbehaviour the referee can choose to warn the player, coach, substitute or person attached to the team formally, by showing a yellow card, or informally. If a person who has been shown a yellow card misbehaves for a second time then he must be sent off the field and away from the playing area by showing a red card.

Examples of misbehaviour include striking, punching, kicking or intentionally running down an opponent; repeated infringements of the rules, especially after a warning; the deliberate moving of the post during a shot; the utterance of insults, no matter to whom addressed; making remarks against the referee; leaving the field without a good reason and delaying the retaking of positions after a time out. In cases of serious misbehaviour (e.g. violent physical aggression or serious kind of insult either by gesture or verbally) the person is sent off at once by the showing of a red card.

## **2.4. Timekeeper and scorer**

If at all possible a timekeeper and scorer will be appointed.

## **2.5 Assistant Referee**

If at all possible in each match there should be an assistant referee whose duty it is to make sure whether the ball is "out", to draw the attention to any foul made in his vicinity and to undertake other pre-defined duties as notified by the referee. He attracts the referee's attention by means of a flag and during the game should be positioned within the playing area but outside the field of play.

## **Section 3: The game**

### **3.1. Duration and time out**

- a** A match lasts 2 x 30 minutes with a maximum of 10 minutes rest (2 x 35 minutes outdoors).
- b** A time out is a break in the game lasting 60 seconds. Each team may request up to two time outs per match. After the time-out the game is restarted on the spot, and in the manner, that the game would have been restarted if no time-out had occurred.

The referee has the power to extend each half to compensate for delays outside the game or delays caused by infringements of rule § 3.6 g. Time outs and the time used for substitutions are not part of the game's duration.

### **3.2 Goals**

A goal is scored when the ball has, from above, passed completely through the korf in a team's attack zone. (A ball thrown through one's own korf counts as a goal for the opposing team). A goal stands even when the referee has previously blown for an infringement committed by a defender provided the ball has left the hands of the shooting attacker at the moment of the whistling and was outside the reach of the defenders. A goal is disallowed if the referee has previously observed an infringement or unfair advantage by the attacking team, or if the throw was from the defence zone or direct from a free pass or re-start. The

team scoring most goals wins the match.

### **3.3 Line up**

#### **a Choice of line up**

The competition rules shall decide into which korf each team will shoot in the first half. Teams shall arrange their players in the two zones according to the conditions of the competition rules. (In the absence of competition rules, or any indication in such rules, then each team will inform the referee which of their players shall be their first attacking players and a toss shall be made to determine which team shall attack which korf in the first half.)

#### **b Change in line up**

If during the game circumstances alter, owing to the dropping out or sending off of a player, and substitutes are not available the referee can permit a change. He will order a change when it is necessary to comply with the conditions mentioned in §2.1 b or when the number of players with a direct opponent is less than absolutely necessary.

### **3.4 Zone changes and changing of ends**

Each time that two goals have been scored, the roles of the players change. Attackers become defenders and defenders become attackers and this is achieved by the players changing zones. There is no change of roles at half time merely a change of ends.

### **3.5 Throw off**

A throw off is taken by an attacker from a point inside his zone near the centre of the field at the start of the game, the start of the second half and after every goal. In the first case the throw off is taken by the home team, in the second case by the visiting team and in the last case by the team who has just conceded the goal. The same stipulations apply as for a re-start (see §3.9).

### **3.6 Infringements of the rules**

The punishments for infringements of the rules are determined by whether the infringements are made by defenders or are infringements made by attackers. In high level korfball some infringements made by defenders are divided into light infringements (punished by a re-start) and heavy infringements (punished by a free pass from the penalty spot). Where such a distinction is not made then all infringements made by defenders are considered to be heavy and the free pass is taken from where the offence occurred. Some infringements made by a defender may lead to the award of a penalty to the attacking team (see §3.11). Since this abridged version of the rules is not aimed at high level korfball these distinctions between light and heavy are not made in the foregoing rules. For further details please refer to the full version of the rules and their accompanying Guidance Notes.

During the game **it is prohibited:**

#### **a to touch the ball with leg or foot.**

Unless the offence was a deliberate act by a defender and an advantage gained as a result (in which case a free pass is awarded) then all infringements of this rule are punished by a re-start being awarded to the opposing team.

#### **b to hit the ball with the fist**

All hitting with a clenched fist is punishable, even when the ball is actually touched by the wrist or the back of the hand. If the infringement is made by a defender a free pass is awarded; if by an attacker then a re-start is awarded.

#### **c to take hold of, catch or tap the ball when any part of the body other than the feet is touching the ground**

Infringements by both attackers and defenders are punished by the award of a re-start.

#### **d to run with the ball**

A change of position with possession of the ball is only permitted in the following three cases:

1. The player receives the ball whilst standing at rest.  
In this case he may move one leg at will, provided the other one remains in its place. Turning on the latter is permitted.  
*From a stationary position, a player is not allowed to move one foot and subsequently lift the other foot before the ball has left the hands, particularly during a scoring effort. Jumping is permitted provided that the leg that has not moved is used for the takeoff. If after the jump the player comes down with the ball still in his hands and lands in a position away from where he jumped, then this has to be considered as an infringement of the no-running rule.*
2. The player receives the ball whilst running or jumping and comes to a stop before he throws the ball or shoots.  
*The requirement is that, after seizing the ball, he has immediately and fully tried to come to a stop within the least possible distance. After coming to a stop, the same rules apply as mentioned under 1.*
3. The player receives the ball whilst running or jumping and throws the ball or shoots before he has completely come to a stop. In this case the player is not allowed to still be in possession of the ball at the moment that he places a foot on the ground for the third time after receiving the ball.  
*The referee has to pay careful attention to the moment that the moving player receives the ball. When applying this rule the direction in which the player is moving is of no interest.*

Infringements by both attackers and defenders are punished by the award of a re-start.

#### **e solo play**

Solo-play is the deliberate avoidance of cooperation, i.e. a player tries to change his position with the ball in his possession without the help of another player. Solo-play is not punishable when the player does not change his position appreciably or when the avoidance of cooperation was not intentional

Infringements by both attackers and defenders are punished by the award of a re-start.

**f to hand the ball to another player of one's own team**

The ball must move freely through the air or be free on the ground before being received by the second player. Infringements by both attackers and defenders are punished by the award of a re-start.

**g to delay the game**

This includes failing to try to create or take, scoring opportunities; waiting too long before passing the ball; delaying the taking of a free pass by failing to take positions up as per §3.10c; wasting time during substitutions, following a time out or changing zones. Infringements by both attackers and defenders are punished by the award of a re-start.

**h to knock, take or run the ball out of an opponent's hand**

*The criterion is that the opponent must have the ball reasonably under control. This control can exist in holding the ball with one or two hands and also in letting the ball rest on the palms or the fingers.*

Infringements by defenders are punished by the award of a free pass; infringements made by an attacker are punished by means of a re-start.

**i to push, to cling to, or to hold off an opponent**

Every impediment of the free movement of an opponent is forbidden whether this is done deliberately or not. This unlawful hindering of an opponent's free movement has to be punished no matter whether this opponent does or does not possess the ball and even if the ball is in the other zone. This rule does not force a player to give way for another player, i.e. each player allowed to position himself just as he pleases. He will only be punished when he moves so suddenly into the path of a moving opponent that a collision becomes inevitable.

Infringements by defenders are punished by the award of a free pass; infringements made by an attacker are punished by means of a re-start.

**j to hinder an opponent in possession of the ball excessively**

The hindering player is allowed to hinder the throwing of the ball in the desired direction by actions that result in the ball being thrown against his hand or arm. He is allowed to block the ball by bringing his arm in the path of the ball, but he must not hinder his opponent in the free use of his body by blocking the arm instead of the ball or beat the ball or hit the throwing arm, i.e. the hindering arm or hand must not move towards the ball at the instant of contact.

An infringement by an attacker is punished by the award of a re-start; an infringement by a defender is punished by the award of a free pass.

**k to hinder an opponent of the opposite sex in throwing or shooting the ball**

An infringement by an attacker is punished by the award of a re-start; an infringement by a defender is punished by the award of a free pass.

**l to hinder an opponent who is already being hindered by another player**

An infringement by an attacker is punished by the award of a re-start; an infringement by a defender is punished by the award of a free pass.

**m to play outside one's zone**

*A player is outside his zone when he touches a boundary line, the centre line, or the ground outside his zone, or has jumped from a boundary line, the centre line or the ground outside his zone. Playing can consist of touching the ball as well as hindering an opponent.*

Infringements by both attackers and defenders are punished by the award of a re-start.

**n to shoot from a defended position**

The shot must be considered defended when the hindering defender satisfies each of the following four conditions:

- 1 he must be nearer the post than the attacker (except when he and the attacker are near and on opposite sides of the post in which case conditions 2, 3 and 4 alone are sufficient).
- 2 he must be within arm's length of the attacker. (Arm's length means that the defender is close enough to be able to touch the chest of the attacker).
- 3 he must have his face turned towards the attacker.
- 4 he must actually try to block the ball.

Infringements are punished by the award of a re-start.

**o to shoot after cutting past another attacker**

"Cutting" occurs when a defender, who is within arm's length of his attacker, cannot follow his attacker because the attacker runs so close past another attacker that the defender collides with, or is likely to collide with, this attacker and therefore is forced to give up his hindering or defending position and subsequently shoots. Cutting in itself is not an offence, only shooting after cutting. Infringements are punished by the award of a re-start.

**p to score from the defence zone or direct from a free pass**

Infringements are punished by the award of a re-start from under the korf.

**q to shoot when one plays without a personal opponent**

This occurs when the defence zone has only three players against an attack of four players. In that case the coach of the

attacking side must inform the referee, and the other coach, which of his attackers will not shoot. A change of attacker can be made at any time when play has stopped but is only allowed twice between a change of zones. A goal can be made from a penalty by an attacker without a personal opponent. Infringements are punished by the award of a re-start.

**r to influence a shot by moving the post**

The goal counts if the ball goes through the korf after a defender has moved the post. The goal counts even if the referee has already blown for this offence by the defender (see § 3.2). A penalty will be awarded if the movement of the post by a defender might have prevented a goal. The penalty is awarded because a scoring chance was lost.

If an attacker moves the post and the ball goes through the korf then a re-start will be awarded to the defence. If an attacker moves the post and the ball does not go through the korf then the referee will not blow his whistle unless the ball bounces back in a direction favourable to the attack. In this case he will award a re-start to the defence.

The referee will not blow his whistle when the post is moved by a defender and the ball misses the korf by such a margin that moving the post could not have influenced the result of the shot.

**s to take hold of the post when jumping, running or in order to move away quickly**

An infringement by an attacker is punished by the award of a re-start; an infringement by a defender is punished by the award of a free pass.

**t to violate the conditions laid down for a free pass or a penalty**

An infringement by an attacker is punished by the award of a re-start; an infringement by a defender is punished by the award of a free pass or the re-taking of the penalty.

**u to play in a dangerous manner**

*An example of this is for an attacker to force his defender, who is within arm's distance of the attacker, to collide at speed with another attacker.* Infringements by an attacker are punished by the award of a re-start.

**v to violate the conditions laid down for a re-start**

An infringement by an attacker is punished by the award of a new re-start and may be deemed to be misbehaviour. An infringement by a defender is punished by the award of a free pass and may be deemed to be misbehaviour if this is repeated.

### **3.7 Out-ball**

The ball is out as soon as it touches a boundary line of the field of play, the ground, a person or an object outside the field of play. The ball is also out when it touches the ceiling or an object above the field of play.

In the case of an out-ball, a re-start is awarded against the side who touched the ball last.

### **3.8 Referee-throw ("throw-up")**

When two opponents seize the ball simultaneously, the referee will stop play and will throw the ball up. For this purpose he chooses two opponents from the zone concerned, who must be of the same sex and if possible of about the same height. The other players observe a distance of 2.50 m and may only touch the ball after one of the two selected opponents has touched the ball or after the ball has been in contact with the ground.

### **3.9 Re-start**

**a when to award a re-start**

A re-start is awarded to the opposing side after an infringement of the attacking team or a light infringement of the defending team after the referee has indicated that one of the rules in § 3.6 has been violated.

**b place of the re-start**

The re-start is taken from the spot where the infringement was committed. If the infringement was committed against a certain person (§ 3.6 h, i, j, k, l and sometimes m), then the re-start is taken from the spot where this person was standing.

**c how to take a re-start**

At the moment that the player taking the re-start has, or can take, the ball in his hands the referee shall blow his whistle. The player taking the re-start has, from the moment the referee has blown his whistle, four seconds to bring the ball into play. The players of the opposing team may not hinder him. The ball is brought into play when the ball has travelled at least 2.50 m from the place of the re-start (measured along the ground). No player from either team may touch the ball until the ball has travelled 2.50 m from the place of the re-start. If the taker of the re-start has not brought the ball into play within four seconds, then the referee will blow his whistle and award a re-start to the other side. The player taking the re-start is not allowed to score directly from the re-start. He can only score when the ball has been brought into play and has been touched by another player. When the person taking the re-start touches a boundary line, or the playing area on the other side of the boundary line, after the referee has blown his whistle to indicate that the re-start can be taken and before the ball has left his hands, then the referee respectively awards a re-start to the opposing side (see § 3.6m) or an out-ball (see § 3.7).

*A re-start must be retaken if the throw is taken before the referee has blown his whistle for the taking of the throw.*

### **3.10 Free pass**

**a when to award a free pass**

A free pass is awarded to the opposing side after the referee has indicated that one of the rules in §3.6 has been violated by the defending side.

### **b place of the free pass**

The free pass is taken from the spot where the infringement was committed. However, some competition rules (particularly in higher levels of korfball) may state that the free pass is taken from the penalty spot.

### **c how to take a free pass**

At the moment that the player taking the free pass has, or can take, the ball in his hands the referee lifts one of his arms vertically and gives the signal with four fingers on his raised hand that he is going to whistle for the re-starting of play within four seconds. Following the raising of the arm there are two possibilities (see A and B).

- A**
1. All the players are at distance of at least 2.50 m from the spot where the free pass is taken from.
  2. The players of the same team as the taker of the free pass are also at a distance of at least 2.50 m from each other.

As soon as the above situation exists within the four seconds preparation time, the referee shall blow his whistle to re-start play. The player taking the free pass must bring the ball into play within no more than four seconds after the whistle has gone for the commencement of play. If the taker of the free pass has not brought the ball into play within this period, then the referee shall blow his whistle and award a re-start to the defending side.

The players of the defending team must remain meeting condition 1 until the taker of the free pass makes a clearly visible movement of the ball, an arm or a leg.

The players of the same team as the taker of the free pass must remain meeting conditions 1 and 2 until the ball is brought into play.

The ball is brought into play when any one of the following three things occurs:

a player of the defending team touches the ball; a player of the same team as the player taking the free pass touches the ball whilst standing at least 2.50 m from the spot at which the pass has been taken; the ball has travelled at least 2.50 m from the spot where the free pass was taken (measured along the ground).

The player taking the free pass is not allowed to score directly from the free pass. He can only score when the ball has been brought into play and has been touched by another player.

**B** The players do not meet conditions 1 and 2 mentioned above in A within four seconds of the referee raising his arm. In this case the referee will whistle twice quickly in succession, the first time to re-start the game and the second time to stop play, and punish the infringing team. If the infringing team is the attacking team then a re-start is awarded; if the offending team is the defenders then a new free pass is awarded. When the defending team makes this infringement for the second time at the same free pass the referee will give a penalty. If players from both teams are within 2.50 m then the referee will punish the player who is nearest to the spot where the free pass is taken. If the referee considers players from both teams are at the same incorrect distance then the attacking team will be penalised.

## **3.11 Penalty**

### **a when to award a penalty**

A penalty is awarded in the following situations:

**A** Infringements that result in the loss of a free scoring chance of the attacker. In such cases the referee must award a penalty immediately.

**B** Infringements repeatedly made by the defender that prevent the attacker from obtaining scoring chances. In such cases the referee may award a penalty.

### **b place of a penalty**

The penalty must be taken by a player of the attack zone standing immediately behind the penalty spot (see § 1.2).

### **c how to take a penalty**

The person taking the penalty shall stand immediately behind the spot and must not touch the ground between the post and the penalty spot with any part of his body before the ball has left his hands. All other players must observe a distance of 2.50 m (in all directions) from the spot, the post and any point on the imaginary line between the spot and the post until the ball has left the hands of the player taking the penalty. The opposing team, coach and members of that team's bench must refrain from any actions or comments that may disturb the person taking the penalty. If necessary the first, as well as the second, half of the match will be prolonged for the taking of a penalty until it is clear that the ball has, or has not, passed through the korf as a direct result of the penalty.

*The full official rules of the game, as prepared by the Playing Rules Committee and approved by the Council of the International Korfball Federation, have been published in a booklet "The Rules of Korfball". This booklet contains three parts - the Playing Rules; Guidance Notes to the Playing Rules and the Referees Signals. The complete booklet is available for download from [www.ikf.org](http://www.ikf.org). If desired, each of the 3 parts may also be downloaded separately from the same site.*

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