



# **Official Rules of Freestyle Football**

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## Prefix

### **Official Rules of Freestyle Football**

Produced by the World Freestyle Football Association

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This document outlines the core components and official rules of Freestyle Football, directed particularly (but not only) to competitions that are sanctioned by the **World Freestyle Football Association** (from now on, **WFFA**).

These Rules serve as the minimum requirements for any official Freestyle Football Event worldwide, although they may be altered in specific cases to suit the needs of non-official Events if deemed necessary by the corresponding organisers.

As the official world governing body for the sport of Freestyle Football, the WFFA has created the criteria for a globally recognised judging structure and format. This system has been developed with input from freestylers across the globe to ensure accuracy, efficiency and relevance.

New and adapted formats for competitions are welcome at any time; however, any Event produced and managed by the WFFA will adhere to the criteria outlined in this document.



## Terminology

This section is a compilation of definitions of all relevant terms used in the **Rules of Freestyle Football**, with the mission of clarifying their meanings and the responsibilities associated with the roles mentioned in the document.

**Ball (or Football):** The primary piece of equipment used in Freestyle Football, typically a standard-sized football designed for optimal control and performance during tricks, regardless of its brand or specific characteristics, provided it meets the requirements set by the Event organisers or by the WFFA (see section 2.2 for more details).

**Battle:** A competitive format in Freestyle Football where two athletes take turns to perform against the other, with the winner determined based on a series of criteria by a panel of judges. Battles may also involve more than one freestyler per side (e.g. 2x2 or 3x3 matchups).

**Circle:** A competitive format in Freestyle Football involving a group of three or four athletes who take individual turns (usually two or three) to showcase their skills and compete against the other freestylers in said group. The judges then evaluate the athletes within the circle

**Decision:** A determination made by judges, the Event Director, or other officials regarding outcomes or rule interpretations. This includes, but is not limited to, scoring, resolving disputes, or applying sanctions, in alignment with the official Rules and Regulations. Decisions are typically final unless explicitly subject to appeal under defined circumstances.

**Drop:** An error during a trick in which the Ball unintentionally touches the ground.

**Event:** Any organised gathering (known in the scene as Meet) or competition where Freestyle Football is practised, demonstrated, or contested, whether official or unofficial, and regardless of its scale, format, or location.

**Event Director (or Event Organiser):** The individual responsible for overseeing the planning, organisation, and execution of a Freestyle Football Event, ensuring it adheres to established rules and guidelines while managing logistics, staff, and overall Event operations. This person shall act as the sole point of contact (POC) for all official matters with the WFFA. Depending on the size of the Event, this person may also assume the role of Event Manager described below.



**Event Manager:** The individual responsible for executing a Freestyle Football Event according to the indications of the Event Director, ensuring it adheres to established rules and guidelines while managing logistics, staff, and overall Event operations.

**Freestyler (or Athlete):** Any individual, regardless of gender, age, background, nationality or any other characteristic, who practises the sport and art of Freestyle Football either professionally or recreationally.

**Global Judges Manager:** The individual responsible for overseeing the recruitment, training, and management of judges for official Freestyle Football Events, ensuring that they are properly briefed on event-specific criteria and that judging is conducted fairly, consistently, and in accordance with established rules.

**Hand (or Hands):** Any part of the upper extremities of an individual, ranging from below the shoulder to the fingertips - an area that is generally not accepted for performing tricks.

**Judge:** An individual officially designated to evaluate performances in Freestyle Football Events, responsible for assessing participants based on established criteria (see the official Judging Criteria document for more details) and ensuring fair and accurate scoring in alignment with the rules set by the Event organisers or by the WFFA.

**Judges Manager:** At a specific Event, the individual who acts as the primary point of contact for judges before, during, and after the competition.

**Mistake:** An error in the execution of a trick (involving, for instance, a loss of control, unintentional touches, or any kind of deviation from the originally intended trick) that doesn't necessarily end with the freestyler dropping the Ball to the ground.

**Props:** Any accessory (e.g. pieces of clothing or adornments) that the freestyler may intentionally use as part of their performance.

**Shoe:** Any piece of footwear worn by freestylers while performing.

**Stage:** The specific area designated for freestylers to perform during a particular Event. It may vary in size, surface and characteristics from competition to competition, but it will typically be marked or set apart to ensure safety, visibility, and adequate space for executing tricks.

**WFFA (or the Association):** The World Freestyle Football Association, the official global governing body for the sport of Freestyle Football, responsible for setting and



enforcing the rules, organising international Events, and promoting the growth and development of Freestyle Football worldwide.



# 1. Universal Rules of Freestyle Football

## 1.1. Respect

- 1.1.1. The Freestyle Football community welcomes and celebrates people of different backgrounds, cultures, genders, ages, abilities, orientations, and identities. Insulting, harming, disrespecting, threatening, physically attacking or any sort of action that can be deemed offensive towards an individual or the whole community of Freestyle Football is utterly forbidden.
- 1.1.2. Faking an injury or underperforming on purpose in a competition to get an unfair advantage over the opponents (e.g. a more favourable matchup in later rounds) will be considered disrespectful towards the rest of the freestylers.
- 1.1.3. Acts of disrespect may result in sanctions that include potential disqualifications, as detailed in sections 2.5.2 and 2.5.3.

## 1.2. Rulings

- 1.2.1. The judges' decision after a performance in a competition of any kind is final. Appealing shall only be taken into account in case one or more athletes consider that their opponents were not competing with due sportsmanship (e.g. cheating of any sort). Any disputes or complaints should be addressed in a respectful and constructive manner, and reported via email to [judging@thewffa.org](mailto:judging@thewffa.org).
- 1.2.2. Each competition category has its own specific formats and criteria that competitors must follow, including time limits, number of rounds, scoring systems, and more. Athletes are required to familiarise themselves with the rules and regulations of each category before competing.
- 1.2.3. No complaints or appeals about the rules of any specific Event (including its structure, judging system, and any other feature) will be accepted once said Event has started. This kind of appeal must be done before it begins, ideally in the briefing conducted with the corresponding Event Director or earlier.



## **2. Battles & Circles Rules**

### **2.1. General**

- 2.1.1. A Battle determines the winner between two athletes competing head-to-head. A Circle involves multiple athletes (usually three or four) and determines their ranking and scores based on individual performances within the group.
- 2.1.2. Judges will determine the winner of a Battle or the order of a Circle based on the overall performance of the participants according to the official judging criteria.
- 2.1.3. Typically, the athlete with the higher seeding chooses who will go first in each Battle, and the freestyler with the lowest position in the ranking starts in each Circle. However, the Event Director will have the prerogative to decide whether they want to introduce any change to this procedure.
- 2.1.4. All participating athletes will have the same number of rounds as their opponents in each phase of the competition.
- 2.1.5. Each phase (Circles and Battles) typically consists of three rounds, but organisers may reserve the right to adjust this number at the start of each Event. Moreover, the number of rounds may vary within the same competition. Participating athletes will be informed of any changes to the standard format, along with the exact competition structure, before the tournament begins.
- 2.1.6. Participating athletes must not leave the Stage at any point during their Battle or Circle, except when retrieving their Ball after losing control of it. The boundaries of the performance area must be clearly marked and communicated to all athletes before the Event begins.
- 2.1.7. If, during a Circle, an athlete sustains an injury that prevents them from continuing, they will be considered out of the Circle and receive points based only on the rounds completed. To receive a score in a Circle, freestylers must complete at least 50% of the total number of rounds. Judges will score only what they have observed during the athlete's performance. For example, if an athlete completes 2 out of 3 rounds, they can achieve a maximum of approximately 66% of the total possible score.
- 2.1.8. If, during a Battle, an athlete sustains an injury that prevents them from continuing their performance, their opponent will automatically win said Battle.
- 2.1.9. In the case of a doubtful situation where a freestyler shows clear symptoms of injury but wishes to continue, the judges, in consultation with the Event Director, will decide whether the risk should be taken.



- 2.1.10. While one participant is performing, the opponent is prohibited from invading their space or making any movements that could disrupt the execution of tricks. The opponent must keep their Ball close to themselves and must not leave it on the Stage in a manner that could distract or interfere with the performing athlete. Similarly, the performing athlete must not intentionally or systematically invade the space where the opponent is resting. After each round, athletes must leave the centre of the Stage free for their opponent to perform.
- 2.1.11. It is the prerogative of the judges to decide whether an athlete has disturbed the performance of their opponent in an unsportsmanlike manner. In that case, the judges will decide which sanctions, if any, should be applied.
- 2.1.12. The Event Director, in consultation with the judges, has the prerogative to stop a Battle or Circle if external factors require it (e.g., technical issues, safety concerns, environmental hazards, etc.). The judges will then decide whether the Battle or Circle should restart from the last completed round or begin from the beginning.
- 2.1.13. Only the participating athletes and the personnel permitted by the Event Director are allowed on Stage or equivalent competition area during a Battle or Circle. No one else may be on the Stage while the tournament is taking place.
- 2.1.14. Changing equipment (shoes, clothes) is not allowed during an athlete's turn in a Battle or Circle.

## **2.2. Ball**

- 2.2.1. Every athlete is allowed to use their own Ball unless specifically communicated to the athletes before the start of the competition.
- 2.2.2. For official competitions, the default Ball size is 5. Athletes are allowed to use Balls down to size 4.
- 2.2.3. It is not allowed to use any Ball with modifications that alter its original characteristics (e.g. adding rubber bands around it for better grip).
- 2.2.4. During a Battle or Circle, all participating athletes must exclusively use the Ball with which they began said Battle or Circle throughout their entire performance. In the event that the Ball is inadvertently dropped off the Stage, athletes may temporarily use their opponent's Ball until the original one is recovered. The use of alternative Balls, such as those lent by the crowd, is forbidden.

## **2.3. Use of hands**

- 2.3.1. The use of hands to hide or cover a mistake will be considered a drop and will have a negative impact on the marks given by the judges.

2.3.2. If a freestyler intentionally uses their hands while executing a trick (e.g., spinning the Ball on a finger), this action will be regarded solely as a supportive measure rather than an integral part of the trick. Consequently, judges will not factor this use of hands into their evaluation, assigning it neither a positive nor a negative value.

## **2.4. Use of props**

2.4.1. Anything that the athlete wears (e.g. t-shirts, baseball caps, etc.) when entering the Stage may be used as a prop during the performance; however, the use of external props (e.g. bottles, jump ropes, etc.) is not allowed.

2.4.2. If an athlete removes a piece of clothing or an accessory during their performance in a Battle or Circle, they must keep it on their side of the Stage to avoid affecting their opponent's performance.

2.4.3. The use of any sticky substances (e.g. glue, tape, etc.) on either the body of the athletes, their clothing or their football to gain an unfair advantage is not allowed.

## **2.5. Disrespecting opponents**

2.5.1. In accordance with section 1.1, any action that may be deemed as disrespectful towards the opponent, the audience, the staff or the community is forbidden at all times during every phase of all Events.

2.5.2. Both the judges and the Event Director have the prerogative to determine whether a specific action is considered disrespectful and may issue a warning or sanction to the athlete responsible. If the offence is deemed serious enough, the judges, in consultation with the Event Director, may disqualify the athlete from the Event.

2.5.3. In case an offence is considered serious enough by the judges and the Event Director of a specific tournament to justify the exclusion of the offender from said Event, the Sports Committee will be entitled to launch a deeper investigation on the matter and potentially extend the ban from official WFFA Events for the spell of time they deem fit.

## **2.6. Judges and Judging**

2.6.1. All competitions must have an odd number of judges, with a minimum of 3.

2.6.2. Before the tournament begins, the tie vote policy (including the definition of a tie vote and its impact on the overall score) must be established and communicated clearly to the participating athletes. The official judging methods and details are specified in the corresponding Judging Criteria document.

2.6.3. Judging in official competitions must adhere to the latest judging criteria defined by the WFFA.

## 2.7. Protesting

- 2.7.1. Judges' decisions will not be changed under any circumstances, unless there have been technical difficulties that prevented said judges from performing their role accordingly. In such cases, the appealing party must provide sufficient evidence of how the technical issue (e.g. an error in the App or an incorrect result entry by a judge) affected the outcome. This evidence must be submitted in writing to [judging@thewffa.org](mailto:judging@thewffa.org).
- 2.7.2. In the event of an appeal, the Global Judges Manager retains the authority to make the final decision. Once the Global Judges Manager has rendered a decision, it will be final, and no further appeals will be permitted.
- 2.7.3. The WFFA reserves the right to use the outcomes of appeal cases to implement amendments to the Rules in future editions of its official competitions.
- 2.7.4. No amendments to the Rules will ever be applied retroactively.

## 2.8. Timing

- 2.8.1. The Event Director must stipulate the timing protocol for rounds in the competition regulations. Clarification should be provided on whether the timing is flat (e.g., 30 seconds) or initiated from the athletes' first action with the Ball.
- 2.8.2. Athletes are required to adhere to the timing protocol and time limits specified in the competition regulations.
- 2.8.3. If a participating athlete finishes their round before the fixed time limit, their opponent may begin their round immediately, without waiting for the conclusion of the first athlete's time limit.
- 2.8.4. Actions occurring after the specified time limit will not be considered in the evaluation of the performance.