

FALL 2025 SPIKEBALL RULES

(Updated 6/17/2025)

Recent rule changes are italicized and highlighted in gray.

Rule 1: Facility

1. All games will be played at Hubbard Park. Alcohol and tobacco are not permitted at the park.

Rule 2: Player Eligibility

1. All Intramural Sports eligibility rules apply. Please check the [Intramural Sports Rules and Regulations](#) carefully.
2. To check-in, each participant must have a photo available through IMLeagues, or must provide a University of Iowa or government-issued photo ID.

Rule 3: Team Composition

1. Doubles rosters must be finalized before play begins. Teams can have up to three participants on their IMLeagues roster. Once a contest begins, the same two players must play the entirety of the tournament.

Rule 4: Equipment

1. Spikeball sets and spikeballs will be provided by Recreational Services staff. However, upon agreement by both captains, nets and spikeballs provided by participants may be used. If there is not an agreement before the match by both captains, the Recreational Services set will be used.

Rule 5: Ground Rules

1. Matches will be self-officiated. All participants are expected to know the rules.
2. The winning team of a pre-match volley will serve first in the first set and will decide on which side it would like to start. At the conclusion of the first set, the team which did not serve first in set one will serve first in set two and will decide on which side it would like to start.
3. Match format during pool play will be one set.
 - a. The one set shall be played to 15 points with a cap of 20 points. The one set must be won by two points, unless the set reaches its cap (Example: a team could win by the score of 20-19).
4. Match format during bracket play will be best 2-out-of-3.
 - a. The sets shall be played to 15 points with a cap of 20 points. Sets must be won by two points, unless the set reaches its cap.
 - b. Should the match advance to a third set, the teams will have another volley for the choice of team service and initial playing area. If a match enters a third set the teams will trade playing sides after one team scores eight points. The serving will continue by the player who served prior to the change.
5. Scoring: Spikeball is played using rally scoring; points can be won by the serving or receiving team. A team scores a point when:
 - a. The opposing team fails to legally return the ball to the net.
 - b. The opposing team commits a point-loss infraction.
 - c. The opposing team's server has two successive faults.
6. Replay: A point is replayed when:

- a. Teams disagree on the legality of a hit.
 - b. Teams disagree on an infraction.
 - c. There is outside interference (i.e. a player, ball, or other object from outside a match impedes on the game).
 - d. If a point is replayed after a legal serve is hit, the game resumes at the same score, player positions, and serving order. The server will start on their first serve.
 - e. If a point is replayed because the teams cannot agree on the legality of the serve, the game resumes at the same score, player positions, serving order, and fault count.
7. Rally: A rally is a sequence of playing actions between the moment the serve is hit to the moment the ball is out of play.
 - a. If the serving team wins a rally, it scores a point and continues to serve.
 - b. If the receiving team wins a rally, it scores a point and must serve next.
8. The serve: Standing at least six feet from the net, Team One serves by tossing the ball in the air and spiking it down on the net towards Team Two. The Team Two player receiving the serve can stand anywhere on their side of the net. The Team Two player not receiving the serve must be at least six feet away from the net.
 - a. Serves must be below the receiver's raised hand. If the ball can be caught by the receiver, it must be played. If the ball is too high, the receiver must call "let" before their teammate touches the ball. The serving team has one more try to serve. If the serving team cannot hit a legal serve on the second try, it loses the point. If the receiver does not call "let", continue play.
 - b. The ball must come cleanly off the net on a serve. If the ball takes an unpredictable bounce (commonly known as "pocket"), the receiver must call "let" before their teammate touches the ball. The serving team has one more try to give a clean serve. If the serving team cannot hit a legal serve on the second try, it loses the point. If the receiver does not call "let", continue play.
 - i. If during a rally a shot hits a 'pocket', the point shall continue. If there is a disagreement as to whether it was a 'Rimmer' or a 'Pocket', the point shall be replayed.
 - c. After a server wins the point, they change positions with their teammate, so they are directly across from the other member of the receiving team.
 - d. The four players serve in the same sequence throughout the match, changing the server each time a rally is won by the receiving team.
 - e. Serving order: The initial serving team decides which player from their team will start as the server. That player continues to serve until the receiving team wins a point.
 - i. Once the receiving team wins a point, they get the service possession and choose who will start serving for their team. From there on, service alternates between teammates after each change of service possession. This four-person order continues the rest of the game.
 - f. Order in a new set: The process stated above occurs each set, so the serving order does not need to stay the same for multiple games.
 - g. Service faults:
 - i. The ball is struck before traveling four inches away from the point of release from the server's hand.

- h. If the server hits the ball with one foot airborne, that foot must contact the ground at least six feet from the net before further movement.
 - i. The server does not maintain one point of contact with their pivot foot.
 - j. After taking a step, the server does not maintain one point of contact with their non-pivot foot.
 - k. The ball's trajectory changes due to proximity to the rim, without contacting the rim (i.e. pocket).
 - i. Exception: If the ball hits near the server's side of the net, commonly called a near net, it typically bounces low and hard without a change in direction. This is a legal serve.
 - l. The ball's initial contact with the set hits the rim or legs directly.
 - m. The ball lands completely on the netting and subsequently rolls into the rim and up (i.e. roll-up).
 - n. While standing straight up, the ball is higher than the receiver's straight-up extended hand.
 - i. If a serve hits the palm of a straight-up extended hand it is good.
 - ii. If it hits the fingertips of a straight-up extended hand it is too high.
 - o. The ball misses the set entirely.
 - p. The ball lands underneath the set, also known as a Lobster Trap.
 - q. The ball bounces multiple times on the net or bounces on the net then hits the set on the way down.
 - r. After the ball is served, the first contact is by a player on the serving team (i.e. a player hits their partner with the serve).
 - s. The ball is tossed and not hit/contacted. Dropping, catching or swinging at and missing a toss all count as a fault.
9. Game play: In returning the serve, Team Two has up to three hits between the two players before they have to spike it back on the net. It is then Team One's turn to play the ball. This continues as a volley until one team cannot return the ball.
10. Playing the ball: The ball is in play from the moment the server strikes it until one of the following occur:
- a. A serving fault occurs and/or is called by the receiving team or an observer.
 - b. An infraction occurs and/or is called by any team or an observer.
11. Infractions in playing the ball:
- a. Four hits - A team hits the ball more than three times before returning it to the set.
 - b. Non-strike - The ball is carried, caught, or thrown.
 - c. Two-handed hit – A player hits the ball with both hands simultaneously.
 - d. Double-contact - A player hits the ball twice in succession or the ball contacts various parts of his/her body in succession.
12. Simultaneous contacts: If teammates touch the ball simultaneously it is counted as two hits. Either teammate may take the next hit provided they have not already used all three hits.
13. Any player may contact the ball with any body part, above or below the waist.
14. Players are not permitted to scoop, hold, or throw the ball. The ball must not visibly come to rest on the player's hands, fingers, or any other part of the body.

15. Illegal hits on the net: When the ball is returned to the set, the return results in a loss of point for the hitting team if:
 - a. The ball contacts any part of the ground.
 - b. The ball's initial contact with the set hits the rim (i.e. 'rimmer') or legs directly.
 - c. The ball bounces multiple times on the net or bounces on the net then hits the set on the way down.
 - d. The ball has a prolonged roll along the netting.
16. Roll-up: During a rally or serve, a hard-struck shot where the ball lands completely on the netting, and subsequently rolls into the rim and then off the net (i.e. roll-up) is legal.
17. Sides: Each team must start the point on its designated side. However, once the ball is in play, there are no longer 'sides'. Players can run anywhere they want.
18. Hinder: The opposing team must always put forth an honest effort to get out of the way of the hitting team. If someone is in the way unintentionally, it's called a 'hinder' and the point shall be replayed. If the hinder is intentional, the team that hindered shall lose a point.
19. Pocket: If a shot hits the edge of the net at any time (including on a serve), it's called a 'pocket' and play shall continue.
 - a. If there is disagreement as to whether a 'rimmer' or 'pocket' occurred, the point shall be replayed.
20. Change of possession:
 - a. Possession changes once the ball comes off the netting.
 - b. Neither team may contact the ball while it is in contact with the net.
 - c. Other hitting violations (All result in loss of point):
 - i. A defensive player attempts to play the ball out of turn.
 - ii. An offensive player hits a shot off the net which subsequently hits themselves or their teammate.
 - iii. A player is in contact with the ball while the ball is in contact with the net.
 - iv. Contact with the Set - Any contact with the set by a player (rims, legs, or netting) during a rally results in a "Set Contact" infraction for the offending player and is a loss of point for that team.

Rule 6: Game Time and Forfeits

1. Teams will be scheduled a time for their first matches of the tournament. Teams must be present within 10-minutes of the designated time to avoid a forfeit. The tournament will proceed as quickly as possible through the bracket. Teams still competing in the tournament must stay present at the game site to avoid a forfeit.
2. Registered teams that can no longer play and would like to avoid the forfeit fine must notify the Sport Programs Staff by 10:00 a.m. the day of the tournament by completing the Default Form found on the Intramural Sports website.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

If there is inclement weather and Intramural Sports are scheduled, check the [Intramural Sports website](#) for cancellation information. The Sport Programs Staff will also attempt to notify participants scheduled to play that night. You can also sign-up for Intramural Sports notifications through the [Recreational Services app](#).

LIGHTNING POLICY

In the case of lightning within 8 miles of the game site during outdoor sports, play will be suspended. Play may not resume until there have been zero lightning strikes within 8 miles for 30 minutes. Determinations on lightning strikes will be made by Sport Programs Staff on-site using lightning detection software. Lightning detected by the system does not need to be visible to participants or staff.