

How to Play Team Handball

Team handball has been described as a combination of soccer, basketball, and ice hockey. The object is to score by throwing or hitting an inflated ball into a goal. A player can move the ball by dribbling it, as in basketball; by hitting it with any part of the body above the knee; or by throwing it. Only the goalkeeper is allowed to kick the ball. (This, of course, is the reverse of soccer, where all other players have to kick the ball and only the goalkeeper is allowed to handle and throw it.)

It's against the rules to carry the ball for more than three steps or to hold it for more than three seconds.

Shots on goal must be taken from outside the goal circle, an area in which only the goaltender is allowed. Minor violations of the rules allow a team a free throw, which is an unhindered pass to a teammate, usually from a spot near where the foul was committed. Penalty throws at the goal, awarded for more serious infractions, are taken from a mark just outside the goal circle.

The eleven-player game is played outdoors, on a field 90-100 meters (295-360 feet) long and 55-65 meters (180-213 feet) wide, with a goal 2.44 meters (8 feet) high and 7.32 meters (24 feet) wide. The goal circle is an arc 13 meters (43 feet) from the center of the goal.

In the seven-player game, which can take place either indoors or outdoors, the playing area is 38-45 meters (125-148 feet) long and 18-22 meters (59-72 feet) wide. The goal is 2 meters high by 3 meters wide (about 6 feet by 9 feet) and the goal circle has a diameter of 6 meters (about 20 feet).

For men's teams, either 11-player or 7-player, a game is made up of two 30-minute halves. Women and youths play 25-minute halves.

<http://www.hickoksports.com/history/teamhand.shtml>

A standard match duration consists of two periods of 30 minutes each, during which each team may call one time-out. Normal league games are usually allowed to end in a draw, but in knockout tournaments, such as the final stages of the Olympics etc, if a game ends in a tie, two extension periods of 10 minutes are played, and if each of them ends in a tie as well, the tie-break is an individual shootout from the 7-meter line. The game is quite fast and includes much contact as the defenders try to bodily stop the attackers from approaching the goal. Only frontal contact by the defenders is allowed; when a defender stops an attacker with their arms on the side, the play is stopped and restarted from the nine meter line, with the attacking team in possession. If the contact between the players is particularly rough (even if it is indeed frontal), the [referees](#) may award a nine-meter penalty to the attacking team, or a seven-meter penalty. In more extreme cases, they give the defender a [yellow](#) (warning) or a [red card](#) (permanent expulsion). For rough fouls they can also order two-minute expulsions, and the third two-minute punishment for the same player automatically leads to a red card expulsion. Conversely, if the attacker is at fault the possession of the ball can be awarded to the defending team. Players may also cause the possession to be lost if they make more than three steps per one bounce of the ball off the floor. The usual formations of the defense are the so-called 6-0, when all the defense players are within the 6 meter and 9 meter lines; the 5-1, when one of the players cruises outside the 9 meter perimeter, usually targeting the center forwards; and the least common 4-2 when there are two such

defenders. The usual attacking formation includes two wingmen, a center-left and a center-right which usually excel at high jumps and shooting over the defenders, and two centers, one of which tends to intermingle with the defense (somewhat similar to the hole set (anchor) in [water polo](#)), disrupting the defense formation, and the other being the playmaker (similar to basketball).