

International Candlepin Bowling Association

★ Candlepin Rules and Regulations ★

The sport of Candlepins is a bowling game unique to New England and the Canadian Maritime Provinces. First played in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1880, Candlepin Bowling is an exciting, skillful sport, requiring minimal physical strength while demanding great timing, dexterity and patience from each participant. Candlepin bowling is enjoyed by the young and old, the strong and the handicapped, by boys and girls, men and women.

It is indeed a sport for all people. That is what prompted the formation of the International Candlepin Bowling Association. The I.C.B.A. is an umbrella organization that consists of delegates from each State and Provincial Association. Its members see Candlepin Bowling as a part of history and wish to ensure its future.

One of the goals of the I.C.B.A. is to unify the sport so that Candlepin Bowlers will be bowling under the same conditions and rules no matter where they bowl.

Welcome to the sport of Candlepins!

Updated by
The International Candlepin
Bowling Association
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SCORING

- GAME (string):** A game shall consist of ten frames (boxes) in each of which three balls shall be rolled, except when a player scores a strike or spare, called marks.
- STRIKE:** A "strike" occurs when ten pins are downed with the first ball. To score a strike, the bowler receives ten plus the number of pins downed by the next two balls rolled by that bowler.
- SPARE:** A "spare" occurs when ten pins are downed with the first two balls. To score a spare the bowler receives ten plus the number of pins downed by the next ball rolled by that bowler.
- NO MARK:** When three balls are rolled, the bowler receives credit for the total number of pins knocked down in the frame.
- TWO CONSECUTIVE STRIKES:** Scores as follows:
 - Frame in which first strike is made: Score 20 plus the number downed by the first ball rolled in the second following frame.
 - Frame in which second strike is made: Score 10 plus the number downed by the first two balls in the next following frame.
- THREE CONSECUTIVE STRIKES:** Score as follows:
 - Frame in which first strike is made: Score 30
 - Frame in which second strike is made: Score 20 plus the number downed by the first ball rolled in the second following frame.
 - Frame in which third strike is made: Score 10 plus the number downed by the first two balls in the next following frame.
- CONSECUTIVE STRIKES OVER THREE:** Score as per explanation in rule #6 above.
- MARK IN FRAME 10:** A bowler scoring a strike or a spare in the tenth frame shall immediately roll one or two balls, as necessary, to complete that frame. The frame must be completed on the same lane on which the strike or spare is bowled.
- SCORING:** The score sheet, telescope and/or automatic scorer shall remain visible to all players at all times. No unfair tactics will be tolerated.
- RECORDING INDIVIDUAL SCORES:** Except for addition errors, it is the bowler's sole responsibility to see that his/her score is recorded properly **FRAME** by **FRAME**.
- SCORES ARE OFFICIAL:** When records are turned in (to the secretary/statistician) by the captain or official, corrections cannot be made after points are awarded.
 - Secretary/Statistician shall have the authority to make corrections in addition or points on match report sheets. (This rule may be superseded by league or tournament regulations).

PLAYING RULES AND REGULATIONS

BALL RULES

- FAIRLY DELIVERED BALL:** A ball is fairly delivered when, in its forward motion, it touches the playing area before the 10ft. lob line. (Playing area also includes approach area.) Any ball delivered otherwise is deemed a foul.
- FAIR CONTACT:** A ball shall be considered to have made fair contact only when it strikes a standing pin or playable wood before it (the ball) leaves the lane. A ball otherwise shall be considered foul and shall suffer the same penalties as for a **GUTTER BALL**.
- BALL RESTS ON DECK:** If a ball for any reason, comes to rest on the deck, it must be removed by authorized personnel designated by the bowling establishment.
- REBOUNDED BALLS:**
 - Should any ball, after making fair contact, for any reason rebound from any object on the deck or pit area, the pins so downed shall count in the scoring.
 - If the ball did not make fair contact, the pins shall not count in the score.
- GUTTER BALL:** If a ball leaves the lane without making fair contact and comes back knocking down pins, the pins downed by that ball shall not count in the scoring. Only pins downed by fair contact shall count.
 - If the first ball is foul and comes back to down pins, the pins shall be reset, the bowler shall forfeit that ball and count only the pins downed fairly with the next two balls. (The first ball is considered foul even if no pins are downed by it).
 - If the first and second balls are foul and come back to knock down pins, the pins shall be reset after each ball, the bowler forfeits both balls and shall count only the pins downed by the third ball.
 - If the first and third balls are foul, but the second is fair. The player will score only the pins fairly downed by the second ball.
 - If all three balls are foul. The player will score zero for the frame.
 - If the first ball is fair and the second and/or third ball(s) is/are foul. The pins shall not be reset. The player will forfeit all pins downed by the foul ball or balls and score only those downed by the balls that were fair. If no pins are left standing by the foul action of the second ball, the player shall score only the pins downed by the first ball.
 - Bonus balls rolled in the gutter on a strike or a spare.
 - First ball is foul, reset pins if necessary. The bowler shall forfeit that ball and count only pins downed fairly by the second ball.
 - Both bonus balls foul, score zero for bonus.
 - First ball is foul, bowler scores zero for bonus.
- EXTRA BALLS:** Rolling extra balls in any frame will constitute a foul. Penalty of a zero for frame.
- BOWLERS DROPPING BOWLING BALLS DELIBERATELY** on the approach shall be warned. If a second offense occurs the bowler shall be penalized under the deliberate foul rule.

PIN & DEADWOOD RULES

- DOWNED PINS - DEADWOOD LINE:** All downed pins, called wood, remaining on the lane entirely behind the deadwood line are live and playable. Those touching or forward (toward the bowler) of the deadwood line are dead and shall be removed. Wood shall be judged live or dead only after it has stopped moving.
- QUESTIONABLE DEADWOOD:** Any questionable deadwood shall be removed by a designated official.
- PIN - PIT AREA:** A pin that sticks up out of the pit area is not playable.
- WOOD - ACROSS DECK AND GUTTER:** Where wood is partly on the deck or lane and partly in the gutter, the ball must make fair contact with the wood while the ball is still touching the lane for any pins downed to count in the scoring.
- BALL HITS DEADWOOD IN GUTTER AND CORNER PIN:** If a ball makes contact with deadwood in the gutter at the same time as making fair contact with a corner pin or playable wood, the pins downed by such action shall count.
- DOUBLE DEADWOOD IN THE GUTTER:** When there is double deadwood in the gutter, it shall remain.
- REBOUNDED PINS:** Pins knocked down by pins rebounding from the sidewall, machine, rear cushion or any other object in the deck or pit area shall count as pins downed.
- PIN DOWNED, THEN STANDS UP:** If a downed pin is caused to stand erect again in the playing area, it shall be judged as down and shall remain on the lane to be played as wood.

- PINS THAT FALL AFTER THE RESET BUTTON IS PRESSED** or the pinsetter sweep is in motion shall not count in the score.
- MOVING WOOD:** A bowler must wait until all wood has halted motion under penalty of foul. (Pins felled by ball shall not count.) However, if the wood has apparently stopped rolling and then starts rolling again while the player is in the act of delivering the ball, or while the ball is in motion, there shall be no penalty.
- PINS FALL BEFORE FAIR CONTACT:** If a pin or pins fall after the ball is fairly delivered but before making fair contact, the following shall apply:
 - ON FIRST BALL:** The bowler resets and is entitled to three balls in the frame.
 - ON SECOND BALL AND OR THIRD BALL:** Bowler is credited with making fair contact.

(Example) Bowler knocks down nine pins with the first ball. Second ball is fairly delivered but before making fair contact, pins fall. Bowler is credited with spare.

FOUL RULES

- FOUL LINE RULE:** A player in delivering the ball must not let his/her action cause him/her to slide over, step on or over the foul line, nor permit any part of his/her body or clothing to come in contact with the lanes, gutters, ball returns, division boards, walls, uprights or floors which are beyond the foul line, at any time after the ball passes over and beyond the foul line, nor until he shall have picked up a ball and completed his succeeding delivery, under penalty of foul. (See foul line and lob line penalty).
 - Any object which falls from the pocket or person of a bowler shall not constitute a foul.
 - Bowlers are not allowed beyond the foul line under any circumstances.
 - When a bowler, while in possession of a ball, accidentally fouls while taking a practice slide, the bowler will lose that ball. The penalty is the same as the foot foul rule.
- LOB LINE RULE:** Bowling is a game of rolling, not throwing balls. Any ball that does not, in its forward motion, touch the playing area before the lob line, shall be considered a lobbed ball and shall suffer the foul penalty. See foul line and lob line penalties below. Note continuous infractions of this rule will result in disqualification.
- FOUL LINE AND LOB LINE PENALTIES** are the same as for gutter balls.
- CLEARED GUTTERS:** Both gutters must be cleared of any pins or balls before the first ball is delivered in any frame. The penalty is the same as if the first ball is a foul.
- DELIBERATE FOULS:**
 - Any bowler who deliberately commits a foul shall score a zero for the frame in which the infraction occurs. If the bowler is working on a mark and deliberately fouls on bonus balls, the mark will remain but he or she receives a zero on the mark and a zero on the frame which he or she is working.
 - Any bowler who deliberately rolls two balls simultaneously will score a zero for the frame. If a bowler is working on a mark and deliberately fouls on bonus balls, the mark will remain but he or she receives a zero on the mark and a zero on the frame on which he or she is working.
- ANY BOWLER ABUSING THE EQUIPMENT** or premises shall be warned. If a second offense occurs, the bowler shall be penalized under the **DELIBERATE FOUL RULE**.
- IF DELIBERATE FOUL RULE** infractions keep occurring, the bowler involved will be disqualified.
- PINSETTER IN MOTION:** No ball shall be delivered before the setting machine has completed its cycle. Penalty shall be the same as **GUTTER BALLS**.
- FOOT FOULS:** In any case where electric foul light units are not available or become inoperative during a match, a competent foul line judge, seated at the foul line (one for every eight lanes) must be employed for the remainder of the event. (rev. 6-7-2005)

INTERFERENCE RULES

- INTERFERENCE:** If any pins, standing or down, move because of outside interference, the pins will be reset and the bowler will bowl the frame over. If the interference occurs after the ball or balls have been delivered on a strike or a spare, it will not affect the scores already established on the strike or spare, but the frame will be bowled over only to establish the score for that frame. (rev. 6-7-2005)
- BOWLER INTERFERENCE:** All bowlers are expected to exercise the highest standards of sportsmanship in competition. No unfair tactics will be tolerated and in the case of any interference with a bowler, all pins will be reset and the entire frame re-rolled.

- RESET BUTTON PRESSED BEFORE FRAME COMPLETED:**
 - BY THE BOWLER OR TEAMMATE:** If a bowler or anyone on his team pressed the reset button after the first or second balls, except when a strike or spare has been made, the bowler is finished for that frame and scores only the pins downed when the button is pressed.
 - BY OPPOSING PLAYER OR NEUTRAL:** If the reset button is pressed by an opposing player or neutral person or the pinsetter cycles, the frame shall be bowled over. If the interference occurs after the ball or balls have been delivered on a strike or spare, it will not affect the scores already established on the strike or spare, but the frame will be bowled over to establish the score for that frame.
 - FOR LANES EQUIPPED WITH A FOOT RESET:** Should a bowler accidentally step on the foot pedal reset button while delivering the first ball, the bowler will lose that ball but have two remaining balls after the reset. On the second ball frame is complete.
- FOREIGN OBJECT ON LANE:** If a ball, fairly rolled, comes in contact with a foreign substance on the lane before it strikes the pins, it shall be declared dead, the pins shall be reset and the entire frame re-rolled.

GENERAL PLAYING RULES

- GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP:** All bowlers are expected at all times to exercise the highest standards of sportsmanship.
- QUESTIONABLE INCIDENTS:** Whenever there is a question of the validity of any incident and no official is present, good sportsmanship dictates that the bowler be given the benefit of the doubt.
- WRONG LANE OR OUT OF TURN:** If a bowler rolls on the wrong lane or out of turn, he/she shall complete the frame and the pins downed shall be credited to his/her score. Then he/she shall move to the correct lane or position.
- LATE ARRIVALS:** Any bowlers arriving after the first bowler on their team begins their sixth frame, cannot compete in that string. They may be allowed to compete in subsequent strings to be played.
- NON-BOWLERS IN BOWLING AREA:** In a match or league play, no spectators or substitutes other than scorers will be allowed in the bowling area.
- EVERYONE EXCEPT BOWLER MUST BE SEATED:** The scorer and all players, other than those actually bowling, must be seated.
- MECHANICAL PROBLEMS:** When one machine on a pair of lanes "breaks down" during a league match or in any tournament, the bowlers will continue to roll alternately on one lane until the machine is again in operation. Any teams finishing late due to slow bowlers or machine breakdowns must spread out as soon as there are other lanes available.
- EVERY GAME MUST BE COMPLETED** before another may be started.
- RIGHT OF WAY:** In the event of a controversy in a game as to which bowler shall roll first, the one on the right lane shall have the right of way and roll first.
- PRACTICE OR WARM-UP BALLS:** No practice or warm-up balls will be allowed any bowler while he or she is involved in a match or roll-off. (penalty of forfeit string).
- LEAGUE MATCHES:** League matches shall take no longer than two hours to complete. This provides for ten individuals bowling three strings each or 30 strings per pair of lanes.
 - There must be two bowlers on each pair of lanes, regardless of slow bowlers or absent bowlers.
- PLAYER REPLACEMENT:** All player replacement must be done at the completion of a string regardless of the circumstances. Should any bowler be unable to complete the string, the average of the number of boxes or league/tournament average will be used. The lesser of the two will be counted.

(Example)

 - Has a 40 in the 5th box and league average of 90. Divide five (5) into 40 equals eight average per box by 10 boxes, the bowler will receive 80 for that string.
 - Same as above except bowler has 60 in the 5th box averaging 12 per box, therefore the bowlers average of 90 or 9 per box would be used giving that bowler 60 for 5 plus 45 for five boxes not bowled and a total of 105 for the string.

LEAGUE RULES

League rules should be established by each league. Suggested guide.

LEAGUE RULES SHOULD INCLUDE:

- Number of players on a team:
 - Regular players
 - Substitutes
 - Minimum to play match
- Number of teams in league.
- Number of matches to be played.
- Starting time of matches.
- How long to wait for a late player.
- Score to be taken for an absent bowler.
- Number of strings each match.
- Price to be paid for bowling.
- What money to be allocated for services:
 - Secretary
 - Other
- League schedule to be used.
- Team number given each team.
- What system to use:
 - Rounds
 - One session
 - Two sessions
- Whether scratch or handicap.
- Point system approved.

REQUIREMENTS FOR RECOGNITION

ICBA RECORDS:

The ICBA will only recognize bowling under controlled conditions. Controlled conditions being defined as league play, published tournaments, TV rollofs, TV tapings, state tournaments, pro and amateur tours. All aspects of these events will have the opportunity for a bowler and/or bowlers to break any ICBA records.

RECORD REQUIREMENTS

- Record scores must be bowled on sanctioned lanes and in conformance with all rules and regulations of the ICBA.
- Record scores must have been bowled under controlled conditions: league play, published tournaments, all aspects of TV rollofs, state events and all aspects of pro and amateur tours.
- An approved and working automatic foul detection device or a competent foul line judge (one for each eight lanes) must have been employed during the entire time the score was being bowled.
- Approved balls, pins and pinsetters must have been used.
- The following records are always at stake:
 - The single string record.
 - The record for the total number of strings of the event.
 - Individual, doubles, mixed doubles, teams and mixed teams.
- In more than a three-string event, consecutive strings must be used, beginning with the first string. For example: a bowler cannot use the second, third and fourth string for the three string record, etc.
- At least one week advance publicity must be given.
- There must be at least four bowlers in a regular, publicized shift, two bowlers per lane. In a finals or elimination event where there will be less than four bowlers because of an established format, these bowlers are eligible for records.
- No handicapped scores will be recognized.
- Notification of record breaking must be made to the sanctioning committee within 24 hours. Inspection of lanes, pins, balls and pinsetters used by the bowler and/or bowlers must be done by the lane inspector within 72 hours.
- No waiving of any rules shall be allowed.
- All scores submitted to the ICBA will come before the record committee for approval. All scores submitted must come from the state/provincial association.
- Awards presented to a bowler and/or bowlers will be decided by committee.
- No substitutes allowed. The original starting lineup must be used during the whole match or rolloff.