

HANDBALL

Handball (also known as **team handball**, **Olympic handball**, **European team handball**, **European handball**, or **Borden ball**^[1]) is a [team sport](#) in which two teams of seven players each (six outfield players and a goalkeeper) pass a ball using their hands with the aim of throwing it into the goal of the other team. A standard match consists of two periods of 30 minutes, and the team that scores more goals wins. Modern handball is played on a court 40 by 20 meters (131 by 66 ft), with a goal in the center of each end. The goals are surrounded by a 6-meter zone where only the defending goalkeeper is allowed; the goals must be scored by throwing the ball from outside the zone or while "jumping" into it. The sport is usually played indoors, but outdoor variants exist in the forms of [field handball](#) and [Czech handball](#) (which were more common in the past) and [beach handball](#) (also called sandball). The game is quite fast and includes body contact, as the defenders try to stop the attackers from approaching the goal. Goals are scored quite frequently; teams typically score between 20 and 35 goals each.

The game was codified at the end of the 19th century in northern Europe, chiefly in Scandinavia and Germany. The modern set of rules was published in 1917 in Germany, and had several revisions since. The first international games were played under these rules for men in 1925 and for women in 1930. Men's handball was first played at the [1936 Summer Olympics](#) in Berlin as outdoors, and the next time at the [1972 Summer Olympics](#) in [Munich](#) as indoors, and has been an Olympics sport since. Women's team handball was added at the [1976 Summer Olympics](#).

The [International Handball Federation](#) was formed in 1946, and as of 2013 has 174 member federations.^[2] The sport is most popular in continental Europe, whose countries have won all medals but one in [men's world championships](#) since 1938, and all [women's titles](#) until 2013, when Brazil broke the series. The game also enjoys popularity in the Far East, North Africa and Brazil.

Rules

Two teams of seven players (six field players plus one goalkeeper) take the field and attempt to score points by putting the game ball into the

opposing team's goal. In handling the ball, players are subject to the following restrictions:

- After receiving the ball, players can pass, keep possession, or shoot the ball.
- If possessing the ball, players must dribble (similar to a basketball [dribble](#)), or can take up to three steps for up to three seconds at a time without dribbling.
- No attacking or defending players other than the defending goalkeeper are allowed to touch the floor of the goal area (within six metres of the goal). A shot or pass in the goal area is valid if completed *before touching the floor*. Goalkeepers are allowed outside the goal area, but are not allowed to cross the goal area boundary with the ball in their hands.
- The ball may not be passed back to the goalkeeper when they are positioned in the goal area.

Notable scoring opportunities can occur when attacking players jump into the goal area. For example, an attacking player may catch a pass while launching inside the goal area, and then shoot or pass before touching the floor. *Doubling* occurs when a diving attacking player passes to another diving team-mate.

Playing field

Schematic diagram of a handball playing field.

Handball is played on a court 40 by 20 metres (131 ft × 66 ft), with a goal in the centre of each end. The goals are surrounded by a near-semicircular area, called the zone or the crease, defined by a line six meters from the goal. A dashed near-semicircular line nine metres from the goal marks the free-throw line. Each line on the court is part of the area it encompasses. This implies that the middle line belongs to both halves at the same time.

Goals

Each goal has a circle clearance area of three meters in width and two meters in height. It must be securely bolted either to the floor or the wall behind.

The goal posts and the crossbar must be made out of the same material (e.g., [wood](#) or [aluminium](#)) and feature a quadratic cross section with sides of 8 cm (3 in). The three sides of the beams visible from the

playing field must be painted alternately in two contrasting colors which both have to contrast against the background. The colors on both goals must be the same.

Each goal must feature a net. This must be fastened in a such a way that a ball thrown into does not leave or pass the goal under normal circumstances. If necessary, a second net may be clasped to the back of the net on the inside.

D-Zone

The goals are surrounded by the crease. This area is delineated by two quarter circles with a radius of six metres around the far corners of each goal post and a connecting line parallel to the goal line. Only the defending goalkeeper is allowed inside this zone. However, the court players may catch and touch the ball in the air within it as long as the player starts his jump outside the zone and releases the ball before he lands (landing inside the perimeter is allowed in this case as long as the ball has been released).

If a player without the ball contacts the ground inside the goal perimeter, or the line surrounding the perimeter, he must take the most direct path out of it. However, should a player cross the zone in an attempt to gain an advantage (e.g., better position) their team cedes the ball. Similarly, violation of the zone by a defending player is penalized only if they do so in order to gain an advantage in defending.

Substitution area

Outside of one long edge of the playing field to both sides of the middle line are the substitution areas for each team. The areas usually contain the benches as seating opportunities. Team officials, substitutes, and suspended players must wait within this area. The area always lies to the same side as the team's own goal. During half-time, substitution areas are swapped. Any player entering or leaving the play must cross the substitution line which is part of the side line and extends 4.5 meters from the middle line to the team's side.