



# Wheelchair Handball

A proposal on how to play the game





## Introduction & Philosophy

The European Handball World can look back on many years of successful and strong development. Handball has become faster and more popular.

However, not only traditional handball made big steps forward. We also achieved innovations and improvements on the level Beach Handball, Basic Handball, School Handball and Senior Handball.

In order to both enlarge our European Handball Family and open our Handball World to a wider range of people the European Handball Federation would like to implement Wheelchair Handball to our working fields.

Disabled sport can record big attention and great development in the last years. Hundreds of sportsmen and sportswomen show us in various competitions that nothing is impossible as long as you train hard, believe in yourself and always remember your aim.

The European Handball Federation would be honoured to implement Handball to the disabled sports world on European level. Therefore we would like to introduce Wheelchair Handball to our European Handball World.

Wheelchair Handball shall be played according to the rules of traditional Handball and under the spirit and philosophy of Beach Handball [attaching primarily greater importance to the fun aspects of the game rather than to the competitive aspects]. The given inputs shall not be strict rules or regulations but shall give ideas of "How Wheelchair Handball could be played". We are looking forward for receiving your ideas/proposals/feedback on other ideas.

The European Handball Federation would like to motivate all Handball lovers to enlarge our Handball family by taking new ways.

There is nothing to be afraid of - nothing is impossible!

The European Handball Federation are at your disposal for any requests and information. Contact us at: [meth@eurohandball.com](mailto:meth@eurohandball.com).

Wishing you every success!

THE EUROPEAN HANDBALL FEDERATION





Thanks to G. Costas / Oceania Handball Federation  
L. Landgraf/GER and  
A. Zankl / AUT for their great cooperation.

**Note:**

For the sake of simplicity, this rule book generally uses the male form of words with respect to players, officials, referees and other persons.

However, the rules apply equally to male and female participants, except as regards the rules for the size of the balls to be used.

**Imprint:** EUROPEAN HANDBALL FEDERATION  
Hoffingergasse 18  
1120 Vienna - Austria  
Tel.: +43-1-80151-0  
Fax: +43-1-80151-149  
e-mail: meth@eurohandball.com  
Website: <http://activities.eurohandball.com>  
[www.eurohandball.com](http://www.eurohandball.com)

or

Graphics: R. Turner / BG Strategic Business  
English revision: M. Brown / BG Strategic Business  
Lay-Out: N. Huang / BG Corporate Development  
Content: EHF Methods Commission  
Date: September 06

**Table of contents**

**HOW TO PLAY THE GAME**

	Page
1 - The Game	6
2 - The Court	7
3 - Playing Time	8
4 - The Ball	8
5 - The Team, Substitutions, Equipment	9
6 - Playing the Ball	10
7 - Violations	11
8 - The Referees	12

**GAME VERSIONS**

	Page
1 - Basics	14
2 - Main version	14-17
3 - Additional version 1	18-19
4 - Additional version 2	20





---

## 1 - The Game

---

All given proposals are based on our experience out of practical experience with Wheelchair players. You are welcome to adapt the proposals according to your needs!

### 1.1. The Game:

Wheelchair Handball is played by two teams of 5 players and 1 goalkeeper (numbers can vary / see rule 6 - Playing the Ball) each. The aim of each team is to score in the opponent's goal and to prevent the other team from scoring.

Wheelchair Handball shall be based on the Fair Play spirit.

### 1.2. Goal:

The European Handball Federation recommends three different variants of Wheelchair Handball (see chapter "Game Versions"). The main goal shall not extend the measures 240cm height / 160cm width. The original Handball goals can be adapted by using a crossbar or covering the sites. The usage of other "goals" will be defined separately.

### 1.3. The winner:

The team that has scored the greater number of points at the end of playing time shall be determined the winner.



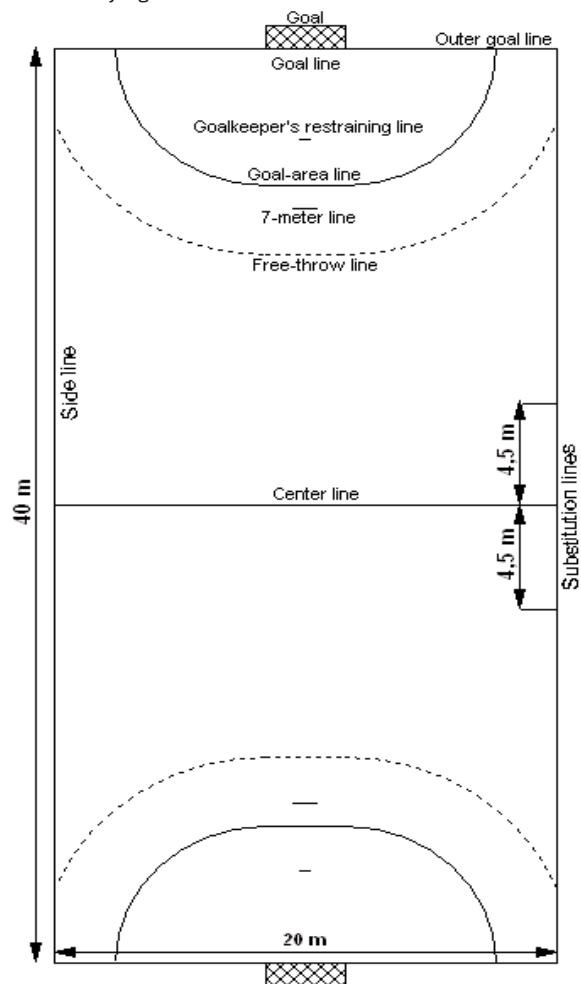


## 2 - The Court

### 2. The Court

The court and line system shall be identical to the general Handball court: 40 meters long and 20 meters wide but can be adjusted according to the given circumstances.

Diagram 1: The Playing Court



## 3 - The Playing Time

### 3. Playing Time

It is recommended to play two halves of 20 minutes or less. The players have to use their hands to move with their wheelchair which is an additional strain and this has to be considered in regards to playing time.

For youth teams the playing time shall be reduced.

The half-time break shall be 10 minutes.

Each team has the right to receive one 1-minute team time-out in each half of the regular playing time. The team requesting a team time-out must be in the possession of the ball.

## 4 - The Ball

### 4. The Ball

The balls must correspond to the IHF Rules of the Game (3:1). To ease the control of the wheelchair and the ball the following ball sizes are recommended:

- Seniors (over 16 years old) - Size 2 (IHF measurements)
- Juniors (until 16 years) - Size 1 (IHF measurements)

#### Note:

When starting out with wheelchair Handball a soft ball can be used to get familiar with the handling.

### 5 - The Team, Substitutions, Equipment

#### 5.1. The Team

Each team shall consist of 12 players. No more than 5 players + 1 goalkeeper shall be present on the court at the same time. The remaining players are substitutes.

The Goalkeeper must be on the court at all times throughout the duration of the game.

The reduction of 6 to 5 court players and the cancellation of the pivot position shall ease the movement of the players.

#### 5.2. Substitutions (Recommendation)

The substitution line for each team shall be extended to 6.5 meters from the centreline. For further substitution rules please refer to the IHF Rules of the Game (4:4).

#### 5.3. Equipment (Recommendation)

The wheelchairs shall be constructed in a safe and fair way without any risk for the player himself, his team colleagues or the opponent team. A wheelchair can be banned from the game if there is any concern about its safety or fairness (referee decision).

### 6 - Playing the Ball

#### 6. Playing the Ball

It is permitted to

- throw, catch, stop, push or hit the ball by using hands, arms, head and torso,
- hold the ball for a maximum of 3 seconds,
- push the wheelchair and dribble the ball,
- place the ball on the lap (not between the knees) while pushing the wheelchair one or two times (not longer),
- to guard the opponent (with or without ball) by using arms and hands as long as the opponent has enough time and distance to react and no danger is present.
- pull or hit the ball out of the hands of an opponent,
- block or force away an opponent with arms or hands,

It is not permitted to

- touch the ball more than once unless it has touched the floor, another player or the goal,
- restrain or hold (uniform, wheelchair), push into an opponent,
- endanger an opponent.



## 7 - Violations

### 7. Violations

Violations shall be handled according to the IHF Rules of the Game:

- Suspension (2 minutes)
- Disqualification
- Exclusion

#### Suspension

- For repeated fouls of the type that they are to be punished progressively
- For repeated unsportsmanlike conduct by a player, on or off the court
- For unsportsmanlike conduct of a type that is judged to warrant a 2-minute suspension on each occasion

#### Disqualification

- For fouls which endanger the opponent's health
- For seriously unsportsmanlike conduct by a player or a team official, on or off the court and for significant or repeated unsportsmanlike conduct during a 7-meter throw
- Due to the third suspension to the same player

A disqualification of a player or team official is always for the entire remainder of the playing time.

For details please see IHF Rules of the game

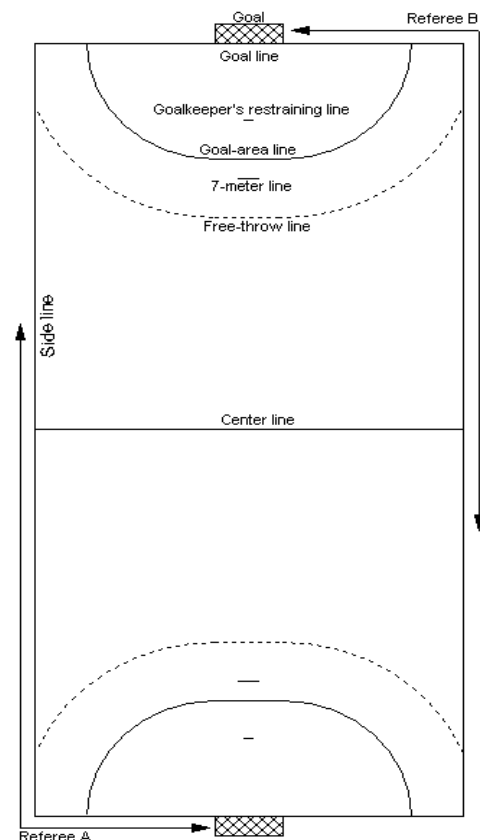
The referees shall use the international hand signals.

## 8 - The Referees

The referees (2 persons if possible) should give special attention to the safety of all players as well as to fairness.

For safety reasons the referees shall not whistle directly on the playing court but shall officiate from the sideline and goal line (see diagram 2):

Diagram 2: Referee position





---

## 1 - Basics

---

### 1. Basics

Wheelchair Handball shall be played based on traditional Handball. Therefore the equipment is the same.

Special attention has to be paid to safety and Fair Play. Furthermore it is recommended to enlarge the substitution area, reducing the number of players and shorting the playing time with reference to the additional strain needed to manoeuvre with the wheelchair.

Since the basics of handball keep the same the procedure for match reports, time-keeping, etc. can be taken over from the indoor regulations.

---

## 2 - Main Version

---

### 2. Main Version

The European Handball Federation recommends 3 variants of playing Wheelchair Handball.

The main variant shall be:

Teams of 5 players + 1 goalkeeper playing 2 x 20minutes.

The main variant corresponds the most to a regular Handball match.





2 - Main Version



2 teams with 5 players + 1 goalkeeper each are competing against each other



It is permitted to throw, catch, stop, push or hit the ball by using hands, arms, head and torso, to hold the ball for a max. 3 seconds, to push the wheelchair and dribble the ball, to place the ball on the lap (not between the knees) while pushing the wheelchair one or two times (not longer), to guard the opponent (with or without ball) by using arms and hands as long as the opponent has enough time and distance to react and no danger is given.



2 - Main version



The goalkeeper is not allowed to leave the goal area in his function as goalkeeper



In general Wheelchair Handball shall be played according to the IHF Handball rules with special attention to safety and Fair Play.



2 - Main version



Wheelchair Handball shall be played with the following positions (recommendation):

- Left wing
- Left back
- Center back
- Right back
- Right wing
- Goalkeeper



3 - Supplementary version 1

3. Supplementary version 1

This version suits best for implementing wheelchair Handball and to make the players familiar with the game:

Supplementary version 1:

Two teams of 5 players + bouncing pyramid/wall or shooting wall.



The players are requested to shoot the ball against the bouncing pyramid/wall. The returning ball has to be caught by a team colleague - valid 1 point.



No point is awarded if the ball is caught by a member of the opponent team or drops to the floor.



### 3 - Supplementary version 1



The bouncing pyramid/wall can also be replaced by a shooting wall.

A successful shot through one of the wholes equals one point.



The bouncing wall and shooting wall are available from our partner NIJHA: [www.nijha.com](http://www.nijha.com)

### 4 - Supplementary version 2

#### 4. Supplementary version 2

A mixed team of wheelchair players and not disabled players will have the most and best integrative influence and can be used for school projects:

Two teams of 3 wheelchair players, 2 handball players + goalkeeper (not disabled). This variant has the most integrated value and fits perfectly for school projects.

The idea is to create 2 teams mixed with wheelchair and not-disabled players.

Before a value shot can be made to the opponent's goal the ball has to be passed at least 2 times to a wheelchair player in each attack. The referees have to make sure that this precondition for a value shot is given.

A direct goal by a wheelchair player counts 2 points while a goal by not disabled player counts 1 point.

