

# TEAM HANDBALL



## HISTORY

Although its popularity spans the globe, the Olympic sport of team handball is just emerging in the United States and often suffers an identity crisis. Most of the world calls the game “handball,” but in the United States there is already another game with that name. Most Americans who hear of team handball envision participants on something like a racquetball court smacking a little ball with their hands.

Team handball is a dynamic court game that is fun to play and exciting to watch. First time spectators describe team handball as soccer with your hands, but they also notice elements that remind them of basketball, water polo, and ice hockey. Participants and spectators alike enjoy the fast continuous play, the body contact, and the goalie saves as both teams – each of which are composed of six court players and a goalie – use their natural athletic skills of running, jumping, throwing, and catching. A versatile game, team handball can be played indoors in a gym or outdoors on the grass, a paved area, or on a beach.

Team handball had its origins in Europe in the late 1920’s, about the same time basketball was developing in the United States, and today enjoys great popularity throughout the world. The International Handball Federation (IHF) consists of 136 member nations and 12 million registered players. A men’s handball competition was included on the Olympic calendar at the Munich Games in 1972, after a 34 year absence, followed by the inclusion of women’s competition in the 1976 Montreal Olympic Games. The US women won the Pan American Games in 1995 and finished 8<sup>th</sup> in the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta. The US men finished 4<sup>th</sup> in the 1995 Pan American Games and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 2003 Pan American Games.

## OBJECT OF TEAM HANDBALL

Handball combines the elements of soccer and basketball, as six players move the ball down a floor that is longer than a basketball court and tries to score by throwing the ball past a goalkeeper into the net. A successful scoring attempt results in the award of a single point. Typical final scores in team handball run in the mid twenties. Games during PE class will begin with a jump ball at center court similar to basketball. A jump ball will also be used after each goal.



## FIELD OF PLAY

The team handball court is slightly larger than a basketball court. Regulation size is 20 x 40 meters or 65’7” x 131’ 3”. All court lines are referred to by their measurement in meters. During PE class there is no out-of-bounds line. Everything is in play.

The most significant line on the court is the 6 meter line or goal area line. In PE class, our goal area will be the 3 point arc on the basketball court. Only the goalie is allowed inside the goal area. Players may jump into the goal area if they release the ball before landing in the goal area. Female students may advance the ball up to the white volleyball end line in front of the goal. The free throw line is used for minor penalties and penalty shots, much like penalty kicks in soccer.

## THE GOAL

An official size team handball goal measures 2 meters high (6’ 7”) and 3 meters wide (9’ 10”). The net is one meter deep at the base of the goal.

## THE BALL

A team handball is made of leather and is about the size of a large cantaloupe. It varies in size and weight according to the group playing. The ball for men's weighs 15 – 17 ounces and is 23 – 24 inches in circumference. Women and juniors use a smaller ball weighing 12 – 14 ounces and 21 – 22 inches in circumference. Youth use smaller varieties of balls for mini-handball. In PE class we will use a deflated volleyball.



## TEAMS

A game is played between two teams. Regulation rules state seven players on each team are allowed on the court at the same time (6 court players and 1 goalie). Unlimited substitution is allowed. Substitutes may enter the game at any time, similar to ice hockey, through their own substitution area as long as the players they are replacing have left the court.

## PLAYING THE BALL

Players are allowed to:

- Dribble the ball 3 times
- Run with the ball for up to 3 steps before or after dribbles
- Hold the ball without moving for 3 seconds
- Play the ball behind the goal



Players are not allowed to:

- Endanger an opponent with the ball
- Pull, hit, or punch the ball out of the hands of an opponent
- Contact the ball below the knees

## DEFENDING THE BALL

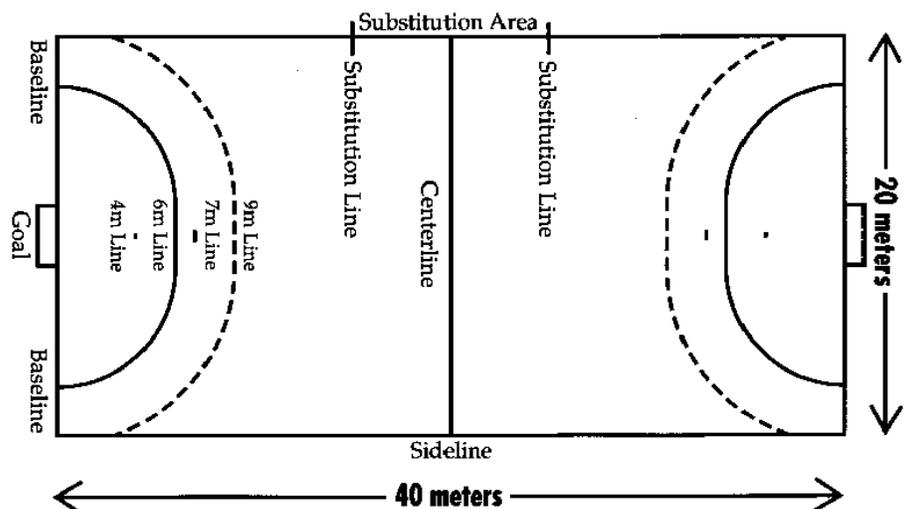
Defensive players are allowed to use their body to obstruct an opponent either with or without the ball. Using the arms or legs to push, hold, trip, or hit, however, is a violation. Offensive players are not allowed to charge into a player, or a free throw is awarded.

## PENALTIES

A free throw is given for the minor infringements of the rules. The defense must remain 3 meters away. The thrower must have one foot continuously in contact with the court, and must make a throw or pass within 3 seconds. A goal must be scored directly from a free throw. If a minor foul occurs between the goal line and the free throw line, the free throw is taken from the free throw line just opposite from where the foul took place. A penalty throw is given for personal fouls of a more serious nature. The majority of penalty throws are given when an offensive player is fouled when shooting. A penalty throw is not awarded, however, unless the referee feels that the offense had a sure chance to score when fouled.

## SCORING

When the ball is thrown from behind the 3 point basketball arc and passed the goalie into the net, one point is scored.



\* Official team handball rules courtesy of Team Handball USA:  
<http://www.teamusa.org/USA-Team-Handball.aspx>