



**WALES TOUCH ASSOCIATION
PLAYING RULES FOR ATOMIC
TOUCH /TOUCHBALL
2nd EDITION**



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Notice

This booklet outlining the playing rules of *Touchball* is the second edition published by the Wales Touch Association (WTA). The name of the game shall be *Touchball* which will be delivered primarily through the *Atomic Touch* programme. These rules shall be adopted for any games of *Touchball* player in Wales and any associated programmes such as *Atomic Touch*.

The WTA would like to thank Kieran Hopkins for his contribution in developing the rules.

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Document History

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1 – THE COURT AND TEAM COMPOSITION

1. Court of Play.

The field of play is rectangular in shape and measures 30 meters in length (end-line to end-line) and 15 meters in width. Touchdown zones shall be provided at either end of the field and shall be 3m long. The Touchdown zone may be positioned in one of 2 positions depending on the available playing area as follows:

- At the end of the field of play (beyond the end-lines) as shown in figure 1
- In field of the end-lines, as shown in figure 2 (recommended)

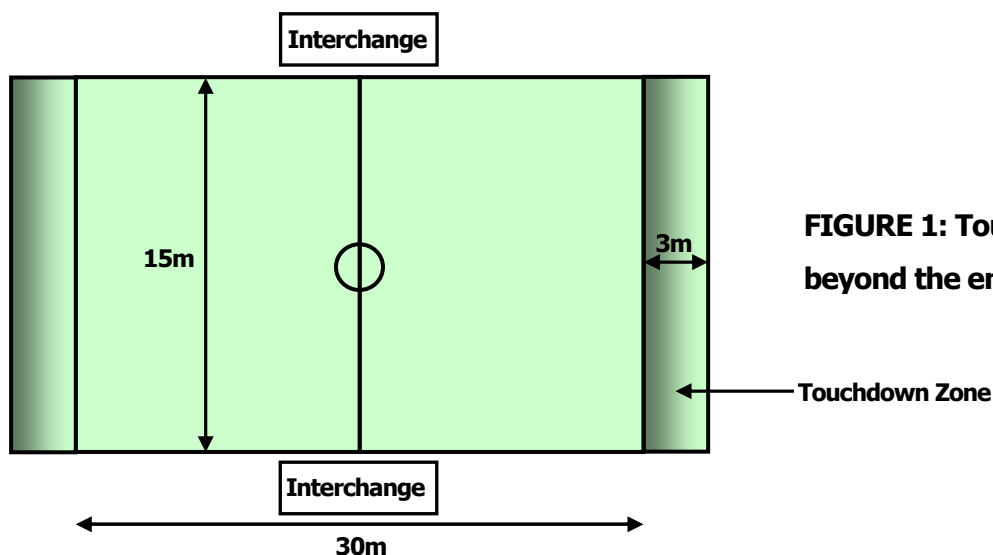


FIGURE 1: Touchdown Zones beyond the end-lines

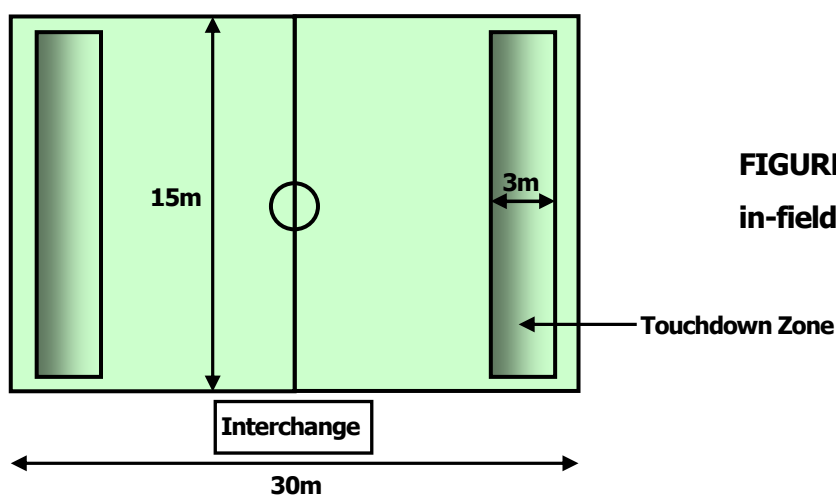


FIGURE 2: Touchdown Zones in-field of end-lines

2. Markings.

Line markings defining the court must be clear and to be laid out as shown in the diagram. (See figures 1 & 2 – The Court of Play).

Interchange areas measuring 10 meters in length by no more than 2 meters in width shall be marked on both sides of the court of play, extending 5 meters either side of the halfway line and 1 metre from the sideline. Alternatively a single interchange area may be provided on one side of the field to be used by both teams.

3. Markers.

Suitably sized markers of a distinguishing colour and made from a safe and pliable material are to be positioned to mark the corners of the touchdown zone and the halfway line.

4. The Ball.

The game is played with an oval, inflated ball. The recommended ball size is 36cm long and 55cm in circumference similar to a size 4 rugby ball. For juniors players (Under 12 a size 3 rugby ball shall be used)

5. Number of Players

A team consists of up to 10 players, no more than 5 of whom are allowed on the court at any time. A minimum of 3 players is required to play. For maximum participation consider teams of 7 players.

6. Mixed Competition

In mixed competitions the maximum number of males allowed on the field of play is three. The minimum male requirement on the court is 1.

2 - MODE OF PLAY DURATION AND SCORING

1. Object.

The object of Touchball is for each team to score touchdowns and to prevent each other from scoring.

2. Mode of Play.

The ball may be passed, knocked, flicked, thrown or handed to attacking players in any direction who may then in turn run or otherwise move the ball in an attempt to score. The ball must be passed twice successfully in order for the touchdown zone to be deemed '*open*'. Teams attempting to score or enter the touchdown zone before it is open will be offside. Attacking teams have three touches before a change of possession occurs* (see rule 4.1 below). Defending players prevent the attacking team from gaining a territorial advantage or scoring by touching the ball carrier.

When a touch is made, play stops and is restarted with a tap (see rule 6.2).

3. Duration.

The match is 27 minutes in duration, consisting of four 6 min quarters with a 1 minute break in between each quarter.

4. End of Play.

When time expires, play is to continue until the ball next becomes dead. Should a penalty be awarded during this period, the penalty is to be taken and play is to continue until the ball becomes dead.

5. Scoring.

A touchdown is awarded when a player, without being touched places the ball on the ground within the boundaries of the touchdown zone. (Assuming that two successful passes have been completed) A touchdown is the only method of scoring and is worth 1 point.

6. The Winner.

The team who at the end of play has scored the most touchdowns is declared the winner. A draw will be declared if both teams finish with equal points.

7. Extra Time.

At the end of a game, when the score is drawn and a winner is required, extra time shall be played until there is a winner via sudden death. The game is restarted by the team who won the toss at the commencement of the game with a centre pass.

Before a winner in extra time can be declared both teams must have had possession of the ball once. If a team scores before their opponents have had possession, the touchdown counts and the match commences as per normal after a touchdown is awarded. Once possession is lost, the winner is confirmed.

3 - COMMENCEMENT OF PLAY

1. The Toss.

Team captains toss a coin in the presence of the referee with the winning captain receiving possession for the commencement of the first half, the choice of direction, and choice of interchange area (if applicable).

2 Attacking Team.

The attacking team is to start the match with a pass from inside the centre circle/ at the centre of the court following the indication to commence play from the referee. The attacking team may stand anywhere on the court except inside the touchdown zone.

3. Defending Team.

The defending team may stand anywhere on the court during a centre pass except inside the touchdown zone and with 2m of the player performing the centre pass.

4. Recommencement of Play.

For the recommencement of play following the end of a quarter, the team who did not start the previous quarter restarts play as described in rule 4.2. For the recommencement of play following a score, the team that scores must hand the ball without delay to the nearest opposing player. The team in possession of the ball can restart play with a centre pass following the indication from the referee. The team in possession does not have to wait for the opposing team to be in position.

4 – POSSESSION

1. Number of Touches

Generally in games of Touch ball, the team with the ball is entitled to **3** touches prior to changing possession with the opposing team. However the number of touches can be modified to suit local conditions as follows:

- For junior or inexperienced players the league or tournament organiser may increase the number of touches prior to turnover to 4 no.
- For elite/ experienced players the league or tournament organiser may reduce the number of touches prior to turnover to 2 no

Following the last touch or the loss of possession due to any other means, players of the team losing possession must pass the ball to the nearest opposing player without delay.

2. Passing.

A player in possession may pass, flick, knock, throw or otherwise move the ball to a player in the attacking team. A player who passes the ball towards a defending player and thereby causes the ball to go to ground shall lose possession.

If the defending player attempts to catch the ball and the ball goes to ground, the attacking team will regain possession. Play is restarted at the mark where the ball goes to ground with a tap with the touch count zeroed.

3. Ball to Ground.

If the ball is dropped to the ground a change of possession results. The mark for a change of possession is where the ball first lands.

4. Interceptions.

Interceptions are allowed by defending players. After an intercept the player in possession can run, pass or otherwise move the ball in an attempt to gain territorial advantage and score. The team who intercepted the ball starts with a touch count of zero and must therefore complete 2 passes before the touchdown zone becomes 'open' - see rule 2.2 above.

5 - BALL TOUCHED IN FLIGHT

1. Contact by Defender.

If the ball goes to ground following a defenders attempt to gain possession, the attacking team retains possession and the touch count restarts. The mark where the tap is performed is where the ball first pitches.

If the ball rebounds from a defending player who has not made an attempt to play at it, and the ball goes to ground, a change of possession results. Play is restarted with a tap where the ball was touched by the defender.

2. Contact but ball not to ground.

When a defending player touches the ball in flight and the ball is retrieved by an attacking player, play continues and the touch count restarts. This doesn't count as a new possession to the attacking team therefore there is no need to re-open the touchdown zone.

3. Intentional Contact and Touched again by Attacker.

If an attacking player attempts to gather the ball after a deflection by a defender, and the ball goes to ground, the attacking team retains possession and the touch count restarts.

6 – THE TAP

1. A player is to perform a tap under the following circumstances:

- a) When a touch has been effected.
- b) When possession changes due to the third touch
- c) When possession changes due to the ball to ground
- d) When possession changes due to any penalty infringement.
- e) To restart play after the ball is dead.
- f) When so directed by the referee.

2. Method.

The attacking player positions themselves on the mark and without releasing the ball, taps it on the floor. In performing a tap players must be stationary with both feet on the floor. The tap must be performed with two hands on the ball.



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The ball must be passed by the player in possession within 2 seconds of completing the tap, or the player in possession may run with it once 2 seconds has lapsed and the referee has called 'live'.

3. Attacking Team.

The Tap must be completed without delay following a legitimate touch. Any other player from the attacking team may receive the ball after a tap has been completed.

4. Defending Team.

Defenders must not move within 1 metre of an attacking player performing a tap unless the attacking player:

- a) Passes the ball
- b) 2 seconds lapses and/or the attacking player starts running with the ball.

7 – THE TOUCH

1. Force.

Players from both attacking and defending teams are to use the minimum force necessary to effect touches, including any accidental. Due to the nature of the game, referees will be particularly vigilant in penalising instances of excessive force.

2. Ball Knocked From Hands.

If the ball is knocked from an attackers hands during the touch, possession and the touch count are retained. Play restarts with a tap.

3. After a Touch.

After a touch, a player is required to stop, return to within 1 metre of the mark where the touch occurred (if they have over run the mark) and perform a tap without delay. If a player performs a tap off the mark a penalty is awarded to the defending team where the offence occurred.

4. Passing After Touch.

A player is not to pass or otherwise deliver the ball after a touch has been affected unless the player has performed a Tap. After a touch-and-pass, a penalty will be awarded to the defending team where the touch occurred.

5. Claimed Touch.

A player must not claim or call a touch unless a touch has been affected. A penalty is awarded where the offence occurred.

6. Touched While Scoring.

In the event of a player being touched the same time they have placed the ball in the touchdown zone to score, no score will be awarded and the touch will count. An attacker touched in the act of scoring must retire 2 metres away from the touchdown zone to restart play with a tap. In this instance the attacking player may not score directly unless they have passed the ball first.

7. Players from either side may initiate the Touch

8 – BALL OUT OF PLAY

1. On or Over Sideline.

The ball becomes dead when it or a player in possession touches or crosses the sideline and a change of possession results. Play is restarted with a tap where the ball was deemed dead. If a player is touched prior to crossing a boundary, the touch counts.

2. On or Over Touchdown Zone. (Only applies for field layout in Figure 1. See rule 1.1 & 1.2)

The ball becomes dead when it or a player in possession touches or crosses the boundaries of the touchdown zone and a change of possession results. Play is restarted with a tap in front of the touchdown zone where the ball was deemed dead.

9 - SUBSTITUTION

1. Substitution.

Players may substitute at any time in accordance with the interchange procedure. There is no limit on the number of times a player may interchange.

2. Subbing Procedure.

Substitute players must remain in their interchange area for the duration of the match. All substitutions must occur at the teams sub box and only after the substituted player has crossed the boundaries of the sub area. Following a touchdown, players may substitute at will without having to wait for the substituted player to enter the sub box.

10 – OFFSIDE

1. Inside the Touchdown Zone.

Any player, attacking or defending shall be deemed offside if they enter into any touchdown zone before the referee has called them 'Open'. A penalty is awarded against the offending team and play is restarted with a tap either in front of the touchdown zone where the offence occurred or where the player in possession had the ball when the offside was identified – whichever gives the greater advantage to the non-offending team.

2. After a Touch.

A defender is deemed offside if they move to within 2 metre of an attacking player performing a tap before they have passed the ball or 2 seconds has lapsed.

11 – OBSTRUCTION

1. Attacking Team

Players of the attacking team are not to obstruct defending players from attempting to affect a touch. In the event of an obstruction, a penalty is awarded to the defending team, with the mark where the offence occurred.

2. Defending Team.

Players in the defending team are not to obstruct or otherwise interfere with the attacking players supporting the player in possession. A penalty will occur to the attacking team, with the mark where the offence occurred.

12 – PENALTY

1. Defined.

A penalty is to be awarded for an infringement by any player in accordance with the rules herein.

2. Location .

The mark for the penalty is set at the location where the infringement occurred. For penalties that occur within or near the touchdown zone, the team in possession must retire 2 metres from the mark outside the touchdown zone.

3. Offending Player.

The penalised player must stand "out of play". That is, beside and away from the player taking the pass and make no attempt to take part in play until the tap has been taken.

4. Method.

After a penalty, play is restarted with a tap as stated in rule 6.2.

13. PLAYER ATTIRE

All team members must be correctly attired in team uniforms.

Footwear with non-marking soles for court must be worn. Footwear requirements will vary due to location. Bare feet, spikes and footwear with screw-in studs are not permitted.

Players are not to wear any item of jewellery that might be dangerous.



14 FOUL PLAY

Foul Play will NOT be tolerated: Any foul play (the referee being the sole judge) will result in the offending player being penalised together with possibly one of the following, depending on the severity of the offence.

- Substituted
- Sent to the sin bin for up to 2 minutes,
- Sent from the field for the remainder of the game,

QUICK RULES OF TOUCHBALL

1 Scoring:

A touchdown will be awarded when a player places the ball on or in between the touchdown zone lines prior to being touched. A touchdown will be worth one point (unless changed by organizer).

2 Substitution Zone:

Teams may interchange players at any time. Players coming on to the field may not do so until the player being replaced has made contact in the substitution zone. Substitutions must occur within the appropriate team's substitution zone.

3 Possession:

A change of possession shall occur:– * After the 3rd touch. * After an incorrect 'tap'. * When ball goes to ground. * When a touchdown occurs. * When there is a touch and pass. * When the ball goes out of bounds (if applicable). * When a player enters the touchdown zone before 'open' is called * Whenever the referee indicates. Play is restarted with a 'tap' at a change of possession.

4 Passing:

A player may pass, flick, knock, throw or otherwise deliver the ball to any player in the attacking team. Passing in any direction is permitted.

5 The Tap:

The tap is taken by the attacking player positions themselves on the mark and without releasing the ball, tapping it on the floor. The player must be stationary in performing the tap. Any player from the attacking team may take the tap.

6 The Penalty:

A player/team will be penalised when they infringe particular rules. When a player/team is penalized the opposing team shall restart play with a tap.

7 The Touch:

Players from both teams are permitted to initiate the touch. A touch constitutes contact with any part of the body, ball, clothing or hair. A minimum of force is to be used at all times. The team in possession is entitled to 3 touches (subject to local variations). Defending teams must retreat 2m from the mark having made a touch and cannot encroach until the play is deemed 'live'.

8 Touch and Pass:

A player is not to pass the ball after a touch has been made. Passing after the touch will be penalised by a penalty.

9 Sideline:

If a player with the ball touches or crosses the sideline s/he is deemed to be out of play and a change of possession occurs. Play restarts with a 'tap' where the player went out. If a touch is made before player goes out, then the touch counts.

10 Obstruction:

Players of the attacking team are not to obstruct defending players from attempting to affect a touch. Defending players are not to obstruct/interfere with attacking players supporting the ball carrier.

11 The Field of Play:

The field is 30m long (end-line to end-line) and 15m wide. Substitution boxes measuring 10m will be placed on one side of court/field. Touchdown zone will be in field of the end-line.

12 Team Composition:

A team may consist of up to 10 registered players. A maximum of 5 are allowed on the field at any one time. A minimum of 3 is required to play. Teams of 7 encourage maximum participation.

13 The Toss & Start of Play:

The captain winning the toss shall receive possession of the ball and a choice of direction. The Referee will supervise the toss. Play will start with a free pass in the centre of the field.



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14 Duration:

The game shall be 6 minute quarters with a 1 minute break between quarters. Organisers may alter the duration of games to suit their particular requirements.

15 Extra Time:

When a match is drawn and a single winner is required, extra time is played. The first team to score a Touchdown wins the match once both teams have had possession.

16 Player Attire:

All team members must be correctly attired in team uniforms. Footwear with non-marking soles for court must be worn. Footwear requirements will vary due to location. Bare feet, spikes and footwear with screw-in studs are not permitted. Players are not to wear any item of jewellery that might be dangerous.

17 Foul Play

Foul Play will NOT be tolerated: Any foul play (the referee being the sole judge) will result in the offending player being penalized, sent to the sin bin for up to 2 minutes, or being sent from the field for the remainder of the game, depending on the severity of the offence.

18 Mixed Teams: A mixed team can be made up of any ratio of male/female players. The team is not permitted to field more than three male players or not less than one male player at any time.

REFEREE CALLS & SIGNALS

The referee is the sole judge on matters of fact on the field/ court of play and is required to adjudicate on the rules of the game during play. The referee may impose any sanction necessary to control the game. All officials, players and coaches involved in the game are under the control of the referee.

1. 'Open'.

A referee will call 'open' when two passes have been by the attacking team and the touchdown zone is open.

2. 'Live'.

A referee will call 'live' when an attacking player has tapped the ball, and has passed the ball or 2 seconds has lapsed.

3. 'One'.

A referee will call 'one' to signify the 1st touch completed.

4. 'Two'.

A referee will call 'two' to signify the second touch completed.

5. 'Three'.

A referee will call 'three' to signify the third touch completed.

6. 'Handover'.

The referee will call handover after calling 'Three' to signify a handover of possession.



WHISTLE SIGNALS

1. Loud Extended Blast.

A loud extended blast shall be used by the referee to signify the following.

- A penalty offence
- When a touchdown is scored.
- To commence the start of and end of each quarter.

2. Short Sharp Blast.

A short sharp blast signifies the following.

- Ball to ground
- Ball out of court
- To commence the start of play after a score