SOUTHWEST X-BALL LEAGUE

DUEL IN THE DESERT | OFFICIAL 1v1 COMPETITION RULEBOOK

Revised November 2026 | Consolidated competition rules

1. Authority and scope

- This document is the official competition rulebook for Southwest X-Ball League (SWXBL) Duel in the Desert 1v1 X-Ball events. These provisions govern competitors, pit personnel, officials, and event administration. The head referee administers on-field rules; the tournament director administers event operations and reviews.
- Only the rules written in this document govern SWXBL competition. Event-specific schedules, approved paint, and venue instructions may be published separately, but may not silently change the competition rules.

2. Eligibility, divisions and registration

- Divisions: D5, D4, and Open. D5 is open to APPA D5 or lower; D4 to APPA D4 or lower; Open is available to all classifications, including players choosing to play up. Playing down is prohibited. A competitor may enter only one division per event.
- Classification is verified through APPA/PBLeagues. If a player advances to a higher classification during the season, they must compete in their new eligible division or higher at later events. Previously earned points remain in their original division.
- Age: minimum 11 years. Competitors under 18 require a parent/legal guardian waiver; no continuing on-site guardian presence is required by SWXBL, subject to venue requirements and applicable law.
- Identification: registration and event check-in require a photo ID. SWXBL does not issue or charge for player ID cards.
- Registration: closes 48 hours before the event. Competitor cancellations before that cutoff receive a refund; fees are nonrefundable once the 48-hour cutoff is reached. Canceled divisions/events receive full refunds.
- Check-in: must be completed at least one hour before the first match of the event begins. Friday check-in is available but optional. A missed deadline results in removal from the bracket.

3. Division size, brackets and preliminary play

- A division requires at least four registered competitors to proceed; if canceled for insufficient enrollment, registered players receive a full refund.
- Brackets, schedules, and randomly assigned home/away designations are published when registration closes, 48 hours before the event.
- Withdrawals before competition begins trigger bracket adjustment and communication of the revised schedule. After competition begins, completed results stand and remaining matches are forfeited.
- Preliminary match count and bracket structure are adjusted to the number of players. Three preliminary matches are the normal target, not a guarantee for smaller brackets. The top four advance to semifinals where the format permits.
- Semifinals: seed 1 vs. seed 4; seed 2 vs. seed 3. Semifinal losers play a third-place match. The championship match is the last match of each division. All matches, including third place and championship, use the standard six-minute format.
- Preliminary standings tiebreak in order: wins, point differential, points scored, head-to-head when applicable, then an elimination shootout. Trade-outs in a shootout replay until resolved.

4. Field, access and field walking

- One competition field, approximately 120 x 100 feet, inside venue netting. Field boundaries must be marked. Touching a boundary line is legal; touching the ground beyond the line is an elimination.

- Friday field walking and optional check-in are permitted. Competitors may also walk the field Saturday and Sunday before competition. Field walking ends 30 minutes before the first match each competition day.
- Markers on the field during a walk must be unloaded, powered off, and fitted with a barrel cover. No firing is permitted.
- The bunker layout is locked when Friday field walking begins, except for safety or damaged-equipment adjustments. After competition begins, field access is limited to scheduled participants and persons authorized by the head referee.
- No player or pit assistant may deliberately alter, move, damage, or reposition a bunker, field boundary, or other field feature. Deliberate alteration during a point eliminates the offending player; deliberate alteration outside active play may result in event disqualification.
- The playing boundary must be clearly marked. Players may not force themselves between bunkers positioned together as a single obstacle.

5. Match structure, clocks and scoring

- Two independent 1v1 matches, A and B, alternate points on one field. Each has its own score and six-minute active-play clock. A clock runs only during its own active point and stops at the point conclusion.
- A point is scored when the opponent is legally eliminated or a concession is recognized by a referee. No opponent-side buzzer or button is required. A four-point lead ends a match immediately (mercy rule).
- The standard turnaround between points is at least 30 seconds. The referee may initiate a 10-second countdown when both players are ready, but the minimum turnaround remains in effect.
- When regulation time expires, the horn ends play immediately; eliminations after the horn do not score. The higher score wins. A tied match proceeds to untimed, one-point sudden-death overtime, replaying trade-outs until a winner is determined.
- If both players are eliminated simultaneously, the referee calls a trade-out; neither scores, elapsed active time is not refunded, and play resumes on the next rotation after the standard turnaround. This applies in regulation and overtime.
- If one of the alternating matches ends, the remaining match continues on its normal clock and turnaround schedule.

6. Starting gates and side rotation

- Home/away designations are randomized with bracket generation. The home player begins the first point at the designated home gate; the away player starts opposite.
- Competitors switch starting sides after every point, including trade-outs and overtime. Side rotation does not reset for overtime.
- A competitor must have their marker barrel physically touching the assigned starting gate when the start buzzer sounds. Contact by another part of the marker is insufficient.
- A player who leaves or lifts their barrel early may return and tag up before the buzzer without penalty, provided they have not fired. Failure to tag up by the buzzer is an automatic elimination and point loss.
- Firing before the start buzzer is an automatic elimination and point loss. Once the buzzer sounds, a properly tagged-up competitor may lift their barrel and shoot immediately.

7. Timeouts, equipment failure and medical stoppages

- Each competitor has one 60-second timeout per match, taken between points with official acknowledgment. Unused timeouts do not carry over.
- A player may attempt to repair a marker during active play without outside assistance; the clock continues. A compliant, inspected backup marker may be substituted between points. Equipment failure provides no automatic extra delay; an unready competitor forfeits the point.

- The head referee may stop an active point for a medical or safety issue. The active point is void and replayed from its start, with the suspended match clock restored to the time remaining when play stopped. Prior score, penalties and timeout usage remain.
- If match A is suspended, match B may continue when safe; A resumes later in the rotation. A competitor unable to continue for medical reasons loses by injury forfeit, with the existing score preserved and no additional points awarded. This applies to playoffs and championship advancement.

8. Hits, eliminations and SWXBL penalty scoring

- A paintball hit counts when a paintball breaks and leaves a visible paint mark on the player, clothing, marker, or carried equipment. A player with a valid hit is eliminated and must stop playing and leave the field promptly. A ball that bounces without breaking is not a hit. A player may request a paint check; requesting a check does not automatically stop play. An unobvious hit followed by unknowing play-on is an ordinary elimination only.
- Obvious hit / continued play (minor): current point to opponent plus one additional point (two total).
- Intentional wiping (major): current point plus one additional point to opponent (two total), and deduct one existing point from offender, with a minimum score of zero.
- The above scoring adjustments are SWXBL-specific and do not require a buzzer press or other scoring action.
- Paint transferred from a bunker or another surface after the paintball broke there (splatter, smear, or spray) is not a valid direct hit. When the source of a solid mark cannot be observed, referees judge whether it reasonably resembles a direct hit. Only a referee may remove a disputed or invalid mark unless permission is given to the player.
- A player must immediately stop participating upon recognizing a valid hit. If a possible hit cannot be self-checked, the player must cease active play and request a referee paint check. A player may not use a paint check to delay or avoid elimination. The referee may eliminate a player for an abusive paint-check request.
- A moving player who suspects a hit may move to the nearest available cover, but may not fire, post, coach, or advance offensively before immediately checking. Continuing to play with an obvious hit is penalized under this rulebook.
- Hit equipment that a player continues to carry or wear eliminates the player. Discarding hit equipment or a pod to conceal a hit is treated as wiping. Picking up hit equipment may result in elimination. Referees determine whether abandoned equipment remains part of the player under the two-meter rule, subject to the listed exceptions for pods, squeegees, harnesses and loaders.
- After elimination a competitor must cease firing and communication affecting play, signal elimination, and exit as directed. No eliminated player may re-enter without a referee's permission. Excessive shooting, intentionally firing from outside the field, or deliberate referee avoidance may result in elimination or a more severe conduct penalty.

9. Marker rules, chronograph and paint

- Markers must be designed for paintball play and maintained in safe working order. Approved full-face paintball goggles must be worn in all designated live-fire areas; goggles must cover the eyes, face, and ears. Clothing and protective padding must not be modified to conceal hits or create an unsafe advantage. Officials may inspect markers, loaders, protective gear, and paint at any time. Unsafe or noncompliant equipment may not be used until corrected and reinspected.
- Velocity: maximum 300 FPS. Pre-match inspection failures may be corrected and retested without penalty if the player is ready on time. During competition, 301-314 FPS: minor (+2 opponent); 315-329 FPS: major (+2 opponent, -1 offender, floor zero); 330+ FPS: immediate event disqualification. Retest is required before return.
- Rate of fire: maximum 10.5 balls per second, using semi-automatic or approved ramping operation. Pre-match correction and retest are permitted. During competition, 10.6–12.4 BPS: major (+2 opponent, –1 offender, floor zero); 12.5+ BPS: immediate event disqualification.
- Paint: only event-supplied or expressly SWXBL-authorized paintballs. Unauthorized paint in playing equipment or unauthorized projectiles result in immediate event disqualification.

- Ramping may begin on the fourth trigger pull after three semi-automatic pulls, provided consecutive pulls are no more than 200 milliseconds apart. After a gap exceeding 200 milliseconds, at least three new semi-automatic shots are required before ramping resumes. A marker may not fire more than one paintball within a 95-millisecond interval.
- Every marker must be inspected and chronographed before its match. Officials may inspect for foreign matter, illegal settings, trigger bounce or runaway, velocity, rate of fire, and a mode that can be changed without tools. A marker that fires more than one additional shot after trigger input ceases, or otherwise fails inspection, cannot enter play until corrected and passed.
- Only one paintball marker with a single barrel and trigger system may be used on the field. .68- and .50-caliber markers are permitted. Double-action triggers are prohibited. Trigger guards must remain intact. Electronic markers must be locked in a legal tournament mode; velocity and regulator adjustments must require tools or substantial disassembly. Players may not adjust marker settings or use tools on the marker during an active point.
- Mechanical markers may fire only one shot per trigger press and release, without reactive trigger assistance. Pump markers must be manually cycled for each shot; pump auto-triggers are permitted where the marker otherwise complies.
- Barrels may have porting, rifling, slots and inserts but not suppressors or systems intended to alter ball curvature. No barrel wraps or barrel stickers are allowed.
- Only one loader is permitted. Loaders may be tinted/translucent but not completely clear. No loader coverings are allowed. A transparent lid is permitted. Stickers on the marker or loader are limited to one sticker per side measuring no more than 2 by 4 inches; stickers may not contain prohibited yellow. Officials may reject markings or loader colors that impair hit judgments.
- Only air or CO2 may propel paintballs. Air systems may not exceed 4,500 PSI or any lower applicable legal limit. Cylinders must be certified, in date, undamaged, fitted with unmodified manufacturer safety devices, and connected to the marker; only one cylinder is permitted on the field. Throwing a cylinder or using an expired cylinder is grounds for event suspension.
- Paintballs must comply with applicable safety standards and be biodegradable, water-soluble and non-staining. The event's approved paint and shell/fill colors control. Altered, toxic, or unauthorized paintballs are prohibited.
- SWXBL's previously adopted velocity and rate-of-fire penalty scoring and event-disqualification thresholds remain controlling; equipment checks and firing-mode requirements above add technical detail without changing those consequences.

10. Safety, misconduct and disqualification

- Goggle or barrel-cover safety violation: first offense documented official warning; second offense immediate event disqualification. Deliberate endangerment may result in immediate disqualification on the first occurrence. Noncompetitor pit personnel may be removed.
- Deliberately shooting an eliminated player, referee, spectator or other nonparticipant results in immediate event disqualification. Officials distinguish intentional misconduct from accidental shots.
- Intentional physical aggression or credible threats of violence result in immediate event disqualification and may result in future suspension.
- Match fixing or collusion to manipulate outcomes or seedings results in event disqualification, forfeiture of remaining matches, playoff ineligibility and possible future suspension.
- Persistent referee or sideline abuse after head-referee warnings may result in a conduct minor awarding one point to the opponent. Players and pit personnel must obey official safety directions and may not interfere with referees or opponents.

11. Field safety and player conduct

- Goggles must remain properly secured whenever a player or pit assistant is in a designated live-fire area. Barrel covers must be properly fitted in non-playing areas and whenever directed by an official. Markers must not be discharged outside authorized play or designated chronograph areas.

- Players must keep markers pointed in safe directions, obey referee commands, and avoid intentional contact with other players. Eliminated players must stop firing and exit as directed. No physical fighting, threatening conduct, or deliberate shooting of nonparticipants is permitted.
- Referees may suspend play or remove unsafe equipment when necessary to protect participants. The specific warnings, disqualifications, and match consequences are set out in the safety and misconduct provisions of this rulebook.
- Paintball goggles must meet applicable ASTM paintball-eye-protection standards, have undamaged lenses, and retain their original full-face and ear protection. Chin straps must be secured. Goggle modifications that compromise protection are prohibited. Goggles are mandatory in playing, chronograph, and other live-fire areas.
- An approved barrel sock must be fitted whenever an air-connected marker is outside an authorized firing or chronograph area, except during supervised cleaning. A barrel plug, squeegee, or removed barrel is not an acceptable substitute.
- Players may wear at most two clothing layers, or three when officials announce temperatures below 50 degrees F. Full-length pants and a long-sleeve outer jersey are required. Clothing must fit properly, remain intact, and not be excessively padded, absorbent, or slick. Jerseys must be tucked into pants or the pod harness. Metal or sharp cleats are prohibited.
- Yellow equipment and clothing are prohibited except for the narrowly limited incidental yellow detailing allowed on clothing. Referees may require replacement of clothing with excessive staining or markings resembling hits. Stickers are not permitted on clothing.
- Players may wear one pair of padded gloves, up to two headwear items, one layer each of unmodified elbow/forearm and knee/shin protection, and unmodified sliding pants or groin protection. Chest protection must be made for paintball, no more than 2 cm thick, and counts as a clothing layer. Close-fitting neck protection may be up to 2 cm thick; scarves are prohibited. Cranial padding may be up to 1 cm thick.
- Players may carry any number of nonabsorbent, unpadded pods and squeegees, one pod harness, and one timekeeping device. Medical or injury-protection equipment must be disclosed to referees and must not provide excessive padding or absorbency.
- Listening, transmitting, surveillance, incendiary, or smoke-producing devices are prohibited in competition. Offensive, discriminatory, or inappropriate markings are prohibited. Equipment not permitted by these rules requires advance head-referee approval.

12. Referees, pit personnel and appeals

- Four referees: head referee near midfield on the scorekeeper side, one referee opposite midfield, and one referee at each starting gate. Officials may reposition for sightlines and safety.
- The head referee communicates the active match identifier, point result, and penalties to the scorekeeper; the scorekeeper acknowledges before the next point.
- Unlimited pit assistants are allowed in designated pit areas. No coaching from outside the designated area during active play.
- Judgment calls and rule interpretations may be discussed respectfully with the head referee and tournament director. Review does not automatically stop the clock. The ruling is final after authorized review. Video footage, including official media, is not admissible for appeals.
- Verified scoring errors may be corrected using official referee and scorekeeper records, including after playoffs or belt presentation. Report within 24 hours after official event conclusion. The head referee and tournament director authorize corrections and notify affected players. Affected playoff matches are replayed as necessary.
- Referees signal an elimination by placing one hand on the head, pointing at the eliminated player, and calling 'HIT.' A clean player may be signaled by crossing the arms. Referees shall consistently use the designated yellow flag for minor penalties and red flag for major or gross-major penalties, with a verbal penalty announcement.
- At the ten-second start warning referees may raise both open hands toward the field; an official timeout is signaled by one hand placed at the opposite wrist. The head referee is the final on-field authority, subject to the existing authorized review

process.

- Official referee and scorekeeper records control if a display malfunctions. Score corrections must be verified and approved by the head referee. Competitors may inspect their recorded results and report a clerical error under the existing 24-hour correction rule.
- Pit assistants and spectators may not communicate, signal, or coach a competitor during active play from outside the permitted pit area. Opposing pits may not be occupied or used to interfere with competitors. Officials may warn, remove, or penalize interference.

13. Forfeits, withdrawals and playoff disqualifications

- A player absent or unready for a scheduled point forfeits that point to a legally ready opponent; repeat as applicable until the player reports or the match ends. If both players fail to appear for a match, record a 0-0 double forfeit and a loss to each.
- An unplayed match forfeited after competition begins is recorded as 4-0 for the opponent. A voluntary withdrawal preserves completed results and season points corresponding to final placement.
- An event-disqualified competitor is ineligible for further matches and playoffs. Completed matches stand; future unplayed matches are 4-0 forfeits. Mid-match disqualification awards the opponent a win with the current score preserved and no added points.
- If both competitors are disqualified during the same match, both receive losses and neither advances; the existing score is retained. In a semifinal double disqualification, the next highest-seeded eligible competitor advances. In a championship double disqualification, the two highest-seeded eligible competitors play a replacement championship.
- Refusal to surrender a marker for an official inspection, intentional activation of a marker after an official orders surrender, malicious shooting, deliberate physical contact with an official, or throwing an air cylinder may result in immediate removal and event disqualification.
- Officials may impose match suspension, event suspension, or removal from the venue for serious unsportsmanlike conduct. A suspension extending beyond the current match requires approval by the tournament director and head referee. A disqualified competitor may not continue playing or enter restricted areas without authorization.

14. Event awards and four-event season standings

- SWXBL plans four Duel in the Desert events per season. Each division awards an event championship belt and a separate cumulative season championship belt.
- Every competitor who participates earns season points based on final placement: first place 100, with a five-point decrement per place (second 95, third 90, and so forth). A 16th-place finisher earns 25. Mere registration without check-in or competition earns zero.
- There is no minimum number of events needed to qualify for the season belt. Points are maintained separately for D5, D4 and Open; points do not transfer upon division advancement. A promoted player remains eligible for the lower-division season title based on previously earned points.
- An event disqualification forfeits season points for that event only; previously earned season points remain intact.
- Season standings ties are broken by most event wins, then most second-place finishes, then third-place finishes, continuing through placements. If still tied, competitors play a standard six-minute SWXBL tiebreaker match with regular overtime rules. Failure to attend the scheduled tiebreaker results in forfeit.
- Season championship belts are awarded following the fourth event after standings and any necessary tiebreakers are resolved, subject to the established 24-hour official scoring-error correction period.

15. Rule interpretation and administration

- Players and pit personnel are responsible for knowing these rules. Where language is unclear, officials shall use the simplest interpretation consistent with the full rulebook; omissions are not permission to exploit loopholes.
- The head referee decides on-field rule interpretations and immediate safety issues. The tournament director decides event administration and confirms any suspension beyond a match. Existing SWXBL-specific 1v1 provisions control wherever they differ from conventional team formats.
- Officials may suspend competition because of weather, unsafe field conditions, equipment failure, or other unforeseen circumstances. When safe, play resumes using the recorded score, time and match status. If completion is impossible, the tournament director announces the event disposition and applicable refunds consistent with the registration rules.
- Competitors and pit staff must remove waste and equipment from their areas and comply with venue cleanup instructions. No person may tamper with safety netting, scorekeeping equipment, or tournament infrastructure.