



Official Rules

CONFIGURATION AND SIZING OF PLAYING FIELD:

1. Occupied zones are always sixteen feet (16') deep and as wide as the appropriate number of players.
2. Buffer zone is Twenty feet (20) across and as wide as the appropriate occupied zones. In highly competitive buffer ball the buffer zone shall increase to twenty-five feet (25).
3. Width of Occupied zones are dependent on how many players are on each team:
 - 2 person will have a width of twenty four feet (24)
 - 3 person will have a width of Thirty feet (30)
 - 4 person will have a width of Thirty six feet (36)

Buffer zone depth: (distance from one occupied zone to the other) can be adjusted for ages and skill levels.

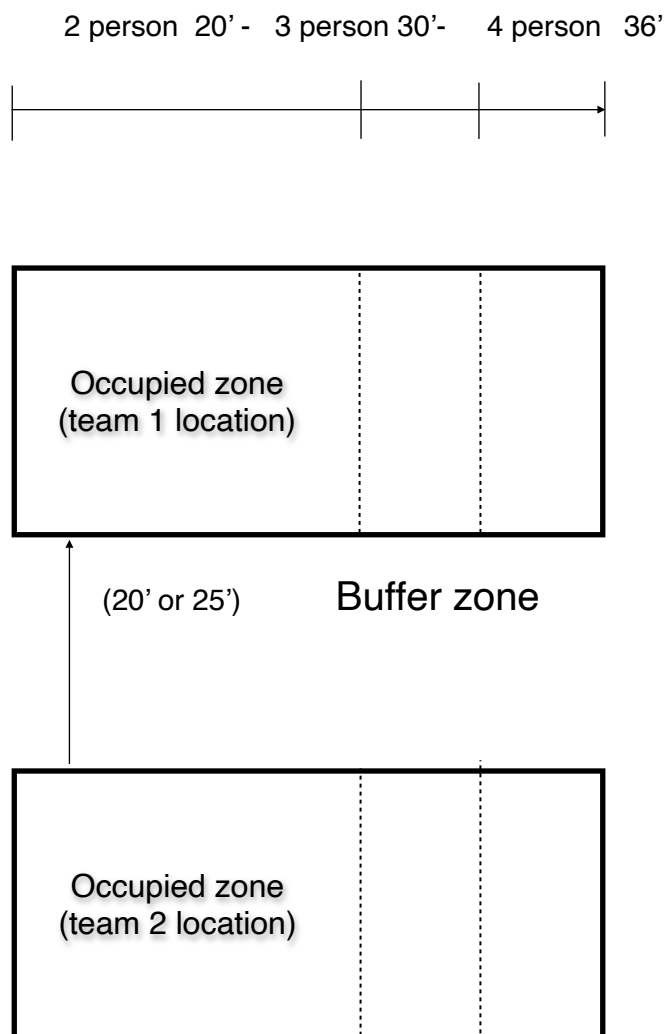
- Normal playing for novice and beginner adults - twenty feet (20) distance
- Beginner or younger players - adjust to whatever distance necessary to make it playable.
- Expert - active and hard hitting players - twenty five feet (25)

Note: During fun play, teams can have as many people as they want in a zone. The recommend sizes and team members of occupied zones is for competitive play only. Put as many people into the zone as possible if you want. However, most of the play will happen in close proximity to the middle of the occupied zone. Therefore if too many people on a team, some will not play balls as much as others.

Configuration of playing field.

Each individual size/distance is marked on the boundary lines and can easily be adjusted to the amount of players participating in Bufferball. (See our set up videos on line.)

Figure 1



DEFINITIONS:

Occupied zone: Area that one team resides and protects the ball from falling into.

Buffer zone: Area between the two Occupied zones

Offensive play: Play/hit that travels, in the air, from one teams' Occupied zone to the other teams' Occupied zone.

Continued play: Play/hits after initial serve that leads to a point

Targeting Play: Play/hit made by one team on another teams' player in the buffer zone or also know as Stokos.

Stokos: Name given to any player either permanently or temporarily in the Buffer zone during a buffer ball game.

Dyo: A two point continued play that is started by the Stokos making the initial play/hit from the opposing team.

Occupation: Player in any "zone" that has two feet within the zone (buffer or occupied) that starts a play/hit with both feet in that defined zone. Feet cannot be on the boundary line.

GENERAL RULES:

1. Buffer ball is played in three zones - two zones on either end are "occupied zones" by two opposing teams and a "Buffer zone" in-between. Players can freely play inside their teams' occupied zone and the buffer zone. Players may not play a ball inside of the opposing teams "occupied zone."
2. Two to four players can participate in a "standard" Buffer ball game. One additional player can participate on a team during permanent Stokos Play.
3. Boundary lines (in or out): During play, balls landing on any portion of the boundary lines shall be deemed "IN" & valid. Players can have their foot on a boundary line or even be outside the boundary lines while making a play with the exception of an "offensive play" into opposing teams occupied zone. If, while completing an Offensive play, a player has a foot on their zone boundary line or outside the boundary, it is not a valid hit/play. During the course of making an Offensive Play, a players feet need to be inside their zone at the start of making a play. Example would be if a player jumped out of their zone to make an offensive hit and feet did not touch the ground until after course of completing the hit/play - this is a valid play. This is only applicable to one hand tips and two handed sets/pushes. Spiking at full force is the exception to this rule.

Exception: When a player is completing a full “wind-up” spike with full force into the opposing teams occupied zone - that players feet must, after completing the hit and landing, must have both feet inside their own occupied zone at the end of the spike.

4. Number of hits: Each team shall have up to four plays/hits of the ball in order to get the ball into the opposing teams zone. A team can only make a play/hit into the other teams occupied zone, known as an “Offensive play”, from within their own occupied zone. A direct hit from either the buffer zone or “out-of-bounds” into the opposing teams’ occupied zone is not allowed.

PLAYING/HITTING THE BALL:

1. Playing/hitting the ball in Buffer ball is similar to other well known “volley” games. The ball must either “bounce” or “ricochet” or “rebound” off the players body. Whether that is hands, feet or any other body part. The ball can be played/hit by any of the following means:
 - hands together below the shoulders
 - two hands separated at or above the elbows - “setting the ball”
 - One hand either with a open hand or closed fist
 - A player can also play/hit the ball with a foot, legs or head
 - A ball that goes off any part of the body or ricochets shall be deemed one play/hit.
2. Illegal play/hits are described as follows:
 - A play/hit below the height of the elbows with hands apart and ball hits both hands separately
 - Any ball that is “lifted” or “held” in the hand and directed

SERVING THE BALL:

1. Opening serve shall be determined by any means the teams can agree upon - Hint - having the first serve may not be an advantage. In successive games, the winning team of the previous game shall serve first. During the game, the team winning the previous point shall serve next. Each time a team receives the opportunity to serve (winning a point), a different player shall serve and throughout game same order of persons serving shall be consistent. Serving out of order initiated at beginning of game shall constitute a loss of serve and point for the other team . If a serving team wins a point, the same player shall serve and continue to serve until point is lost and serve changes to opposing team.
2. Serves shall only be served by a players hand & with an “underhand” method. A serve has to rise above the servers and tallest person on opposing team’s head. If any question as to whether a service is not “high enough” and ball lands in opposing teams zone, a re-serve shall be granted. If that same serve does not land in the opposing

teams zone it is not valid and point and serve is reward to opposing team. No low serves shall be allowed in Buffer ball! Just get it over there! If Stokos is in buffer zone during serve, it will be important that serves are not playable by the Stokos! Serving high and deep, if possible, will be beneficial!

3. Players serve at any location behind their teams occupation zone & cannot step on or over the rear boundary line when serving. When serving, the ball shall be played into the other teams occupied zone. Players on either team can occupy any location in their zone during a serve. There is no "rotation" or "set" positions in Buffer ball. Team members shall take turns serving in order and the keep same order throughout the game. Serving "out-of-order" shall be a point for the opposing team but not loss of serve. The correct server shall then serve after the point awarded.
4. The receiving team is allowed to have one player in buffer zone (Stokos) at the time of service. Other players cannot enter the Buffer zone until after the serve - leaving the servers hand. Upon receiving the serve from the opposing team, the receiving team shall not be allowed to make an offensive play until the second play/hit. After this initial two play/hit from the receiving team, teams only need one play/hit to return the ball to the opposing teams zone.
5. Upon service, if the receiving team has a player in the buffer zone (Stokos and defined as two feet inside the buffer zone), the Stokos shall be able to play/hit a serve (without stepping into their occupation zone). The continued play shall be deemed a "Dyo" - two point play and the team winning the play shall be awarded two points (see Scoring). If this player has to step into their occupation zone or on the line of the same, the play shall not be considered a "Dyo" and one point will be awarded for winning the play. This is why it is important that serves are high and long to prevent the Stokos from playing the ball and possibly losing two points. However, if able to eventually win the continued play, the serving team potentially could be awarded two points.

ACTIVE PLAY -AFTER THE SERVE:

1. During active play, after the serve is in the air & leaves the Servers hand, each team may have players in their Occupation zone, buffer zone or "out-of-bounds" - wherever it is necessary to make a play. However, an "offensive play" - into the other teams Occupation zone, can only occur from your own teams' occupation zone. Valid "offensive" and buffer zone plays shall be defined as both feet inside either area and no foot on boundary lines.
2. If, during "standard" buffer ball game, a player from either team enters the buffer zone and occupies that zone (two feet), they become a target ("stokos") for the other team. See Buffer zone play below.
3. Each team has a maximum of four (4) plays/hits to transfer ball to opposing teams zone. A play/hit into the opposing teams zone (offensive play) has to occur from a player fully occupying his/her teams Occupation zone. "Full occupation" is defined as two feet in zone & within the boundary lines. If a player has a foot on or over (on the ground) any boundary line in his/her occupation zone while playing/hitting (offensive play) the ball

into an opponents zone a point shall be awarded to opposing team. This is only when the immediate play/hit is played directly to the opposing teams' zone (offensive play). During other plays/hits leading up to this offensive play/hit, players can be out-of-bounds or in the buffer zone in order to get the ball into their occupied zone to make an offensive play.

4. A player may jump over a boundary line in order to complete an offensive play/hit into an opposing teams zone, as long as the play/hit is complete prior to feet touching the ground. In short, players can jump "over the line" in continuing and finishing an offensive play. The Stokos can do the same when entering his/her occupation zone. This is only applicable to tips and sets/pushes into the opposing teams occupied zone. ****This is only applicable to one hand tips and two handed sets/pushes. Spiking at full force is the exception to this rule.
Exception: When a player is completing a full "wind-up" spike with full force into the opposing teams occupied zone - that players feet must, after completing the hit and landing, must have both feet inside their own occupied zone at the end of the spike.
5. A play from either out-of-bounds or the buffer zone into the opposing teams' zone shall be deemed an invalid play/hit - Play shall be stopped and point shall be awarded to opposing team.

BUFFER ZONE PLAY:

1. When a player occupies the buffer zone he/she is considered a target or "Stokos". An opposing team can direct the ball at the Stokos and if it hits them or if the Stokos makes the initial play directly from the opposing teams "offensive play" then there is the potential for a two point play. (See Scoring and Stokos play.)
2. In Standard Buffer ball, at the time of service, the receiving team can have up to one player (Stokos) in the "buffer zone". The Serving team cannot have a player in the Buffer zone until after a serve has left the hand of the server. After the serve, team members are free to play in occupied zone, buffer zone or out-of-bounds to make plays/hits. Players have to remember that they are Stokos when not in their occupied zone and can create a "dyo" by being hit by opposing teams' offensive play or hitting/playing the ball themselves while not in their own occupied zone.
3. No player in the buffer zone can interfere with an opposing teams 4 play/hit continued offensive play. If interference, which would include: hitting the ball or blocking, whether on purpose or accidental, the opposing team from playing a continuous 4 play/hit shall lose the play & opposing team will score a point. A defensive player may play/hit a ball in the buffer zone during an opposing teams continued 4 play/hit only when an opposing player is not making an attempt to play the ball. They may also play/hit if it is deemed necessary to play the ball because it might land on his/her boundary line or they choose to play it for own advantage to start a potential "dyo" - ball must go back into his/her offensive zone in order to continue to play.

4. Players cannot play/hit the ball into the opposing teams occupied zone while in the buffer zone. All offensive plays/hits need to take place from their teams occupied zone.

SCORING:

1. Games shall be played to either 11, 15 or 21 points. A team must win by two points. Buffer ball allows for either one or two point plays. Two point plays shall be deemed "Dyo", Pronounced "deo".
2. Scoring single points during regular buffer ball play occurs in the following ways:
 - ball drops to ground in occupied zone - opposing team gets point(s)
 - more than 4 successive plays/hits of the ball by any team - opposing team gets point(s)
 - lands either in buffer zone or out-of-bounds after a team hits the ball -opposing team get point(s).
 - an illegal play/hit (two handed hit, interference with play etc)- Opposing team get Point(s)
3. A "dyo" , the potential to score a two points, is started by a play/hit from or on a Stokos in the Buffer zone. A team can use their offensive play, to attempt to hit the Stokos with the ball (targeting play). If successful in hitting a Stokos and the ball falls to the ground and the Stokos' team members cannot play the ball, it shall give that team the "dyo" - two points. If, during this targeting play, the ball ricochets/bounces off the Stokos and is able to be played by his/her team following normal playing rules, then the play continues. At the end of play the team winning the play scores "dyo" - two points.
4. A "dyo" play can also be entered in a second way - If the Stokos makes the first play/hit after the opposing team makes an offensive play, a "dyo" is opened. This can happen if a team makes an offensive play into opposing teams' zone and the Stokos manages to touch, tip or play the ball to his/her teammates. Remember, the Stokos cannot be inside his/her occupied zone but have both feet either in the buffer zone or out-of-bounds in order for "dyo" to be valid. Upon this happening, a "dyo" is announced and play will resume under normal playing rules & the winner of this play will be awarded the "dyo" - two points. This rule is also valid during serves. This makes it very important for the server to avoid the opposing Stokos.
5. Teams shall "switch sides" or occupied zones after each game if playing more than one or playing multiple games.

PERMANENT STOKOS PLAY:

1. Any Buffer ball competition, 2-4 players, can add a permanent “Stokos” player. This player is added to the team and is confined to the Buffer zone for the entirety of the game. They will not serve during the current game. This player may only play balls that are in the buffer zone, fully occupying the buffer zone (two feet) or the out of bounds area attempting to put ball back into teams zone for a valid offensive play.
2. The Stokos may not play/hit balls while in his/her teams’ occupied zone during the game. The Stokos may cross boundary lines during play but only can play/hit balls while occupying the buffer zone or out-of bounds. A Stokos may not interfere with the opposing teams’ continuous 4 hit/play as earlier mentioned. Stokos will be a target for the opposing team during the duration of the game and Stokos rules for scoring shall apply.
3. During Permanent Stokos play, other players may enter the buffer zone and out-of-bounds to make plays/hits but need to remember they are also Stokos when they occupy those areas. These other players can move freely about all areas and move back into their occupied zone. Only the designated permanent Stokos cannot play in the teams’ occupied zone.
4. A Stokos is not allowed to play a ball with foot on any line - they can only play from the buffer zone or “out-of-bounds” and then only to their team. A Stokos player may never make an “offensive” play.

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