PCA Rules of Play

YEAR ONE FOUNDING EDITION | OCTOBER 2026

PCA competitions share a consistent set of equipment, scoring, pitching, and conduct standards, while Clubs may choose the tournament formats that suit their events.

1. Scope and Authority

- These rules govern PCA-sanctioned Club, District, State, and Keystone Cup events.
- Event formats may vary in bracket structure, rounds, partners, and advancement. Changes to core gameplay rules require PCA approval.
- Hosting Directors make initial match rulings. Disputes and appeals are handled under Section 10.
- Rules are enforced consistently, with fairness and player safety as priorities.

2. Equipment Standards

Professional-Quality Boards

Item	PCA Standard
Playing surface	Professional-quality wooden cornhole board, nominally 24 in. x 48 in.
Hole	6 in. diameter; centered 9 in. from the back edge and 12 in. from either side
Front height	Approximately 3-4 in.
Rear height	Approximately 12 in.
Surface	Smooth, consistent, stable, and free of defects or foreign substances that materially alter play
Placement	27 ft. front edge to front edge for standard adult competition

Legal Bags

- ACL, ACO, and TCL stamps are accepted, as are future PCA or ACC stamps. Expired stamps remain legal when bags meet PCA equipment standards.
- Unstamped professional-style bags from **any manufacturer** are legal when they meet PCA size, weight, thickness, construction, and safety standards.
- Each player must use a **matching set of four bags**. A Director may permit a replacement set following damage or another valid reason.

- Bags may not be restitched, refilled, chemically treated, coated, sanded, heated, ironed, or otherwise altered to change performance.
- Powders, sprays, tack products, and other foreign substances may not be applied to bags or boards.
- Directors may inspect questioned equipment and exclude bags or boards that are damaged, altered, unsafe, or noncompliant.

Physical requirement	PCA permitted range
Bag width	5.75-6.25 inches
Bag weight	15.5-16.5 ounces
Bag thickness	1.1-1.5 inches when lying flat

Manufacturers must obtain PCA permission before placing PCA branding on their bags.

3. Court Setup and Match Start

- Boards must be **27 feet apart**, measured front edge to front edge. The front edge of each board is the foul line.
- Players must pitch from the designated pitcher box on the correct side of the board. Foul-line restrictions include follow-through (Section 5).
- Courts should provide safe footing and reasonable clearance. Known low ceilings, obstructions, or unusual conditions should be disclosed before play when practical.
- Before play, players confirm the court, opponent, and match format. Opening-throw, lane-choice, and warm-up arrangements are announced by the hosting Director.

Bag-Color Conflicts

Opposing bag sets must be readily distinguishable. If a conflict arises, the **higher seed keeps its bags** and the lower seed changes. In an unseeded match, a **coin toss** determines which player or team changes bags.

4. Standard Gameplay and Scoring

Rule	Standard
Bags per frame	Each player throws four bags. Opponents alternate throws.
Bag in the hole	3 points
Bag on the board	1 point
Dead / off-board bag	0 points
Frame score	Cancellation scoring: only the net frame difference is added to the game score.
Winning score	First player or team reaching or exceeding 21 **after a completed frame** wins.
Bust rule	No bust in standard PCA competition. A non-points specialty event may use a bust rule only if clearly advertised in advance.

Scoring a Frame

- Resolve uncertain frame scores before removing bags.
- Do not move live bags until the frame is complete and scored.
- For a disputed frame, leave the bags in place and call the Director or designated official.
- Electronic and manual scorekeeping are permitted. Players must verify the recorded score.

5. Pitching Rules

- Bags must be delivered **underhand** from the appropriate pitcher box.
- Players may not step on or cross the foul line at any point in their pitching motion, **including follow-through**. A violation results in a dead bag.
- Players alternate until all eight bags have been thrown.
- Players remain in their assigned lanes unless the Director corrects an initial setup error or authorizes an accommodation.
- Players must be ready to pitch when their turn begins.

Pitch Clock

The **current ACL pitch-clock standard** applies. Club and District matches use honor-system enforcement. At State Championships, **either player may request a shot clock**.

6. Fouls and Dead Bags

A dead bag scores **zero**. Remove it when leaving it in play could affect another throw. A bag is dead if:

- The pitcher steps on or crosses the foul line during delivery or follow-through.
- The bag contacts the ground before reaching the board, including bouncing from the floor onto the board.
- The bag contacts an unintended obstruction before reaching the board.
- The bag comes to rest touching the ground while supported by the board.
- The player intentionally throws from the wrong pitcher box or continues from the wrong lane after being corrected.
- The bag or board is intentionally manipulated while live bags remain in play.
- The Director rules the bag dead because of equipment failure or an unusual circumstance.

Live Bags and Hanging Bags

Live bags may not be moved until the frame is complete and scored. A bag earns **three points only after passing completely through the hole**. A hanging or pinched bag remains worth one point unless it falls through.

Obstructed hanging bag. When bags beneath the hole prevent a hanging bag from dropping, the Director appoints an **independent person** to clear only the obstructing bags from below. The hanging bag must not be touched and must settle naturally. It earns **three points if it falls completely through**, or **one point if it remains hanging**.

7. Damaged Equipment and Equipment Challenges

- Damaged bags may be replaced with a comparable legal **set**. Do not mix individual replacements into a set when a complete replacement is available.
- Stop play if a board becomes unsafe, unstable, wet, damaged, or inconsistent. The Director must correct the condition or move the match.
- Raise equipment challenges before play when practical. Directors may deny bad-faith challenges following an unfavorable result unless a genuine safety or integrity concern exists.
- Directors may remove any bag or board that is clearly altered, unsafe, damaged, or outside PCA equipment standards.

8. Match Administration

- Players must report results **accurately and promptly** through the event scoring system. **Scoreholio** is the official results platform for PCA points events.
- Correct score-entry errors promptly.
- A completed match may be reopened only for a verified reporting error, rule violation, or other Director-approved circumstance.
- Duplicate accounts, false identities or statistics, and manipulation of registration, classification, seeding, or standings are prohibited.
- Directors may use random seeding, PCA seeding, Swiss, Round Robin, Double Elimination, Switcholio, Blind Draw, or other approved event formats as permitted for the event level.

9. Sportsmanship and Competitive Integrity

- Players, Directors, and spectators must respect opponents, officials, and event staff.
- Cheating, intentional score manipulation, equipment tampering, threats, fighting, harassment, or deliberate disruption may result in immediate event removal and additional PCA review.
- Competitive conversation and celebrations are permitted unless they interfere with an opponent, staff, or event safety.
- Directors must enforce published rules consistently and avoid conflicting event-specific interpretations.

10. Officials, Disputes, Discipline, and Appeals

- Most matches are player-officiated. Resolve straightforward scoring questions respectfully.
- For a contested ruling, call the Director or official **before moving the bags**.
- The hosting Director's decision governs the match unless State leadership authorizes a correction.
- **Immediate discipline:** Directors may remove players or other participants from an event and impose immediate disciplinary action, including a ban, when misconduct, integrity, or safety concerns warrant it.
- **Appeals:** All disciplinary rulings and bans may be appealed. Appeals are reviewed by a panel of **PCA Directors and players serving as arbiters**. The appeal does not prevent necessary immediate action to protect the event.
- Refer unresolved or broader disputes to State leadership.

11. Accessibility and Special Circumstances

- Directors should provide reasonable disability accommodations that do not create an unfair competitive advantage.
- The same core rules apply across divisions, age groups, and specialty competitions unless an authorized exception applies.
- For weather, venue, equipment, or safety problems, the Director may pause, relocate, shorten, or adjust an event while protecting fair play and player safety.

12. Rulebook Governance

- PCA may clarify a rule when an unforeseen situation reveals a gap.
- Material changes during the season are limited to fairness, safety, or essential operating needs.
- The PCA Director Board and Player Board will review Year One before recommending Year Two changes.
- These Rules of Play govern PCA-sanctioned competition until replaced by an officially issued revision.

Event-specific instructions may supplement these rules. Any exception to core gameplay requirements requires PCA authorization.