

KEY RULES

Game Basics: Handball is played between two teams of seven players – six outfield players and one goalkeeper.

The aim is to score by throwing the ball into the opponent's goal while defending your own. The game starts with a throw-off from the centre line after the referee's whistle.

Passing and Movement: Players can hold the ball for up to three seconds and take a maximum of three steps before passing, dribbling, or shooting. Continuous dribbling is allowed, but double dribbling (dribble, stop, then dribble again) is not permitted. Teams pass and move quickly to create space and shooting opportunities.

Scoring and Goal Area: A goal is scored when the whole ball crosses the goal line inside the posts and under the crossbar. Players cannot step into the goal area (the D zone) when shooting – if they do, the goal will not count. The goalkeeper is the only player allowed inside this area.

Defending and Fouls: Defenders can block the ball using their hands, arms, and body but must not pull, push, or hit opponents. Contact from behind, tripping, or dangerous play will result in a free throw. More serious fouls can lead to a penalty throw from the seven-metre line.

Fair Play and Safety: Players should show respect to referees, teammates, and opponents at all times. Rough play or unsporting behaviour is not allowed. Games are played in two halves, and the team with the most goals at full time wins. Teamwork, honesty, and self-control are key parts of good handball.

NATIONAL GOVERNING BODY (NGB)

England Handball Association: Responsible for developing and promoting handball across England in schools, clubs, and competitions.

Scottish Handball Association: Supports handball participation and performance pathways in Scotland.

Welsh Handball Association: Oversees handball growth, training, and events across Wales.

Irish Handball Association: Manages handball in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, supporting grassroots and youth programmes.

USEFUL LINKS

England Handball Association: englandhandball.com

Scottish Handball Association: scottishhandball.com

Welsh Handball Association: welshhandball.com

Irish Handball Association: gaahandball.ie

European Handball Federation (EHF): eurohandball.com

Your School Games Handball: yourschoolgames.com/taking-part/our-sports/handball