



**NORTH AMERICAN
ISMAILI GAMES**

THROWBALL RULEBOOK

Introduction The North American Ismaili Games (NAIG) is a premier regional sporting event that brings together athletes from across North America in a spirit of excellence, sportsmanship, and healthy competition, aligned with international standards.

Beyond competition, NAIG serves as a platform for unity, belonging, and shared growth—fostering meaningful connections and collective pride across regions. The Games are designed to be inclusive and accessible, enabling participation across age groups, skill levels, and regions.

NAIG also promotes lifelong active living and continuous improvement, while extending its impact through complementary programming such as development clinics, leadership forums, mentorship, and community engagement.

Click [here](#) for more information on the Laws of the Match from the official governing body (ITF - [ITF Thrbl Rules book.cdr](#))

Highlights

- A set is won by the team that first scores twenty-five (25) points with a minimum lead of two (2) points. In the case of a twenty-four to twenty-four (24-24) tie in points, play will be continued until a two (2) point lead is achieved (e.g. 26-24).
- If the set is still tied at twenty-six to twenty-six (26-26) in points, then the team scoring the twenty-seventh (27th) point will win the set with only a one (1) point lead.
- A match is won by the team that wins two (2) out of three (3) sets.
- In case of a one-to-one tie (1-1) in sets, the deciding third (3rd) set will be played to fifteen (15) points with a minimum lead of two (2) points. In the case of a fourteen to fourteen (14-14) tie in points, play will be continued until a two (2) point lead is achieved (e.g. 16-14).
- If the set is still tied at sixteen to sixteen (16-16) in points, then the team scoring the seventeenth (17th) point will win the set and match with only a one (1) point lead.
- A team can win the point without holding serve (PAR – point-a-rally system). A team scores a point:
 - By grounding the ball on the opponent's court.

- When the opponent team commits a foul.
- When the opponent team receives a penalty.
- A team can have a maximum of fifteen (15) players. A match may not start if either team consists of fewer than seven (7) players.
- The team shall consist of seven (7) players on the court. Five (5) substitutes are allowed for each set.
- Additional team members who arrive during the set/match MUST check in at the scorekeeper's table and verify their names with their identification badge. Athletes who arrive late may or may not be allowed to join the game depending upon the referee's discretion. An exception is an athlete returning from medical treatment or a situation related to the JG-OT.
- Preferred court size will be 40.03 feet x 60.04 feet (12.20 meters x 18.30 meters) with a neutral box 1.5 meters (4 feet 11.04 inches) on either side of the center. The net will be 7.55 feet (2.3 meters). Matches shall be played indoors.

If standard court size is not available, the court size will be 36 feet x 60.04 feet (10.97 meters x 18.30 meters) with a neutral box of 1m (3.30 feet) on either side of the center - This is the standard volleyball net size (pole to pole)

- The ball must be served within five (5) seconds after the whistle has been blown by the referee, and the service is performed from the service zone without crossing the end line. A player can jump while serving the ball. The service ball must not touch the net.
- Any ball after catching (during rally) shall be thrown within three (3) seconds, only from above the shoulder-line and only with one (1) hand.

Throwball Court

The diagram below is an illustration of a throwball court:

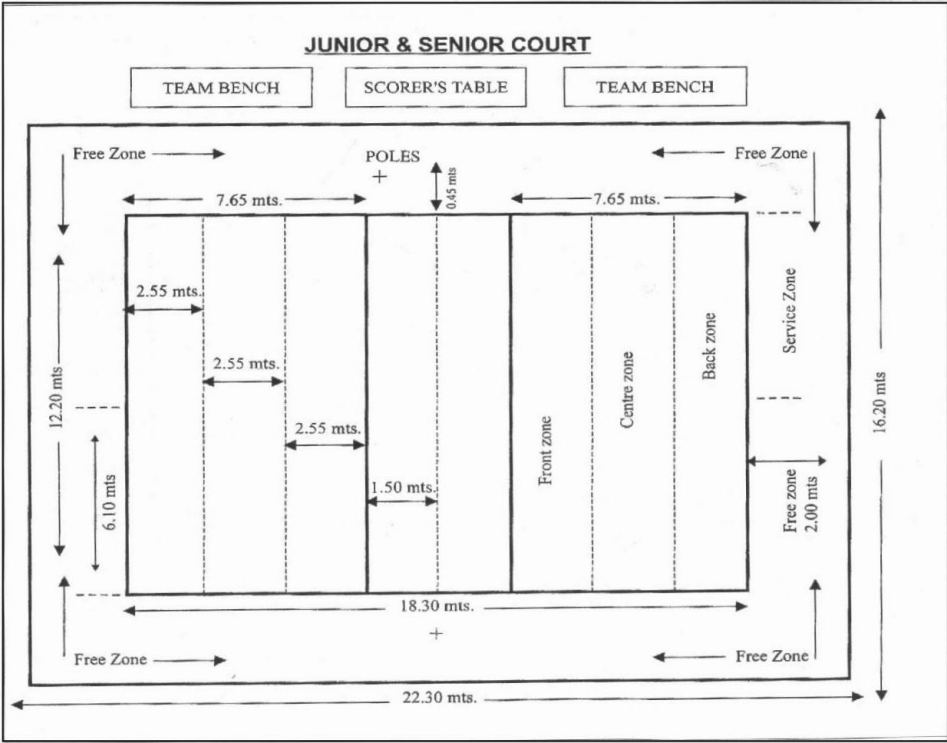


Figure 1 - 12.20 metres x 18.30 metres (40.03 feet x 60.04 feet)

Throwball Player Rotation Order

The diagram below is an illustration of a throwball player rotation order:

There shall be seven (7) players in each side and must stand in the order of position in the line as per standing order mentioned below:

Standing Order

1 _____ 2

3 _____ 4 _____ 5

6 _____ 7

The same rotation position must be maintained throughout the set. The rotation of the position of the player should be in “Z” form, i.e., after the service change the player standing in No. 7 position will go to No. 1 position, No. 1 to No. 2 and so on.

Equipment

- Knee pads are permitted.
- Ball circumference shall be seventy centimeters (70 cm) to seventy-two centimeters (72 cm) and weigh between four hundred grams (400 g) to four hundred fifty grams (450 g). The ball shall be spherical, made of either flexible leather or synthetic leather material that is hand sewn, with a bladder inside made of rubber or similar material. Only balls marked with the official ITF or TFI logo shall be used.
- The net will be placed vertically over the center line and the top of the net shall be set at a height of 7.55 feet (2.3 meters).
- Tape may only be used on fingers, hands and wrists.
- Gloves, casts or any other equipment that gives an artificial advantage will not be permitted.
- Jewelry cannot be worn at any time on the playing surface. If jewelry cannot be removed it must be taped over only if the referee determines that taping over the jewelry does not pose a safety risk to the athlete or other athletes. All other matters pertaining to jewelry will be left to the referee’s discretion.
- Players may wear corrective eyeglasses or contact lenses at their own risk (it is highly advisable that sport goggles be worn for safety considerations).

Throwball Rules

Method of Scoring

- A team scores a point:
 - By successfully grounding the ball on the opponent's court.
 - When the opponent holds or lifts the ball with the palm upwards.
 - When the opponent holds the ball for more than three (3) seconds (delay).
 - When the ball touches the opponent's body.
 - When the opponent touches the ball two (2) consecutive times.
 - When the opponent touches the box line or the dead zone.
 - When the return ball crosses or touches the net outside the antenna.
 - When the opponent fails to send the ball at shoulder level.
 - When the opponent is juggling the ball in her hands at the time of holding.
 - When the return ball goes out of court, passes under the net, or touches an object outside the court.
 - When the opponent shifts the ball from one hand to the other hand.
 - When the server at the time of service after the referee blows the whistle dribbles the ball on the court.
 - When the server takes more than five (5) seconds for service after the referee's whistle.
 - When the opponent team receives a penalty or personal warning.
- If the serving team wins the rally, it scores a point and continues to serve.
- If the receiving team wins the rally, it scores a point and now holds service.

Tie Games

- A match is won by the team that wins two (2) out of three (3) sets.
- A set is won by the team that first scores twenty-five (25) points with a minimum lead of two (2) points. In the case of a twenty-four to twenty-four (24-24) tie in points, play will be continued until a two (2) point lead is achieved (e.g. 26-24).
- If the set is still tied at twenty-six to twenty-six (26-26) in points, then the team scoring the twenty-seventh (27th) point will win the set with only a one (1) point lead.
- A match is won by the team that wins two (2) out of three (3) sets.
- In case of a one-to-one tie (1-1) in sets, the deciding third (3rd) set will be played to fifteen (15) points with a minimum lead of two (2) points. In the case of a fourteen to fourteen (14-14) tie in points, play will be continued until a two (2) point lead is achieved (e.g. 16-14).
- If the set is still tied at sixteen to sixteen (16-16) in points, then the team scoring the seventeenth (17th) point will win the set and match with only a one (1) point lead.
- A team can win the point without holding serve (PAR – point-a-rally system).

The Toss

- Before the match, the first (1st) referee carries out a toss in the presence of the two (2) team captains. The winner of the toss chooses either the right to serve or the side of the court to receive.
- If a deciding set is to be played, a new toss will be carried out.

Players

- A team can have a maximum of fifteen (15) players. A match may not start if either team consists of fewer than seven (7) players.
- The team shall consist of seven (7) players on the court.

- Five (5) substitutes are maximum allowed for each set. Any player can substitute among the fifteen (15) players at any time during the match.
- Name of the players should be entered in the score sheet along with their respective jersey numbers before the commencement of the match. Only players who have been entered in the score sheet are eligible to play or substitute.
- The action of substitution shall not happen during the period of team timeout or technical timeout or at any moment when the game is stopped for any reason. But once the players are back to their positions, then substitution shall be permitted.
- Substitution shall happen in front of the scorer table, exactly in the neutral box, in which the outgoing player shall leave the court first and then the incoming player shall enter the court.
- No substitution is permitted at 7th or service position.

Positions and Rotation

- The rotation of the position of the players shall be in “Z” form, i.e., after the service change the player standing in the number seven (7) position will go to the number one (1) position, number one (1) position to number two (2) position, number two (2) position to number three (3) position and so on.
- After the set ends, service must be taken by the team of the opposite side to that of the team who started the set.
- The player standing in position number seven (7) shall take the position to serve the ball from outside the end line.
- Players must stay in the standing order position during the serve.
- Change of position of players is allowed once the ball is released from the servicing player’s hand.
- The players must occupy their original positions once the rally is completed, unless the team wins the rally, in which case it will rotate in the “Z” form.

Serving

- A player should serve the ball by palm within five (5) seconds after the referee's whistle from the service zone without touching the end line.
- The player standing in position number seven (7) shall take the position to serve the ball from outside the end line.
- The ball shall be served using the palm and the ball should not touch any part of the body, by using any of the skill above the shoulder level in one (1) course of action.
- Any player serving the ball before the referee's whistle shall be considered as foul and a yellow card shall be shown for the first time and for similar sort of fouls subsequently made by the same team then the point shall be awarded to the opponent team.
- The service ball touching the net/antenna shall not be permitted.
- A player should serve or throw by using the antenna limit during the service or in play.
- The service ball shall be returned by only one player of the opponent team and the second touch is not allowed.
- The service ball falling on all lines of the playing area shall be considered a good ball, except box line.
- Players must stay in the "Z" form position during the serve.
- Change of position of players is allowed once the ball is released from the servicing player's hand.
- The players must occupy their original positions once the rally is completed, unless the team wins the rally, in which case it will rotate in the "Z" form.
- Jump service is allowed.

- After the set ends, service must be taken by the team of the opposite side to that of the team who started the set.
- If a deciding set is to be played, a new toss will be carried out. The winner of the toss chooses either the right to serve or the side of the court to receive.
- The service ball or return ball must not touch the antenna.

- Service Box should be 6.10 meters (20.01 feet) from the end line (behind position #7). There is no violation for a player to step outside of the service box as long as they have one foot inside the box by the time the ball is released from their hand.

Game Play

- A player should serve the ball by palm within five (5) seconds after the referee's whistle without touching the end line. A service executed before the referee's whistle is canceled and repeated.
- Each team must play within its own playing area and space.
- Any ball after catching (during rally) shall be thrown within three (3) seconds, only from above the shoulder-line and only with one (1) hand.
- The ball must be thrown by the player from the shoulder and above level only. Player receiving the ball at below/over head level should bring it to shoulder level and throw in course of one (1) action only.
- A player can't take more than one (1) step in a position. A player after receiving the ball is permitted only one (1) step forward, backward or sideways.
- A player must catch the ball with both hands, without any sound or movement of the ball within the hands (dubs), and the player should have contact with the ground.
- A player must return the ball with only one (1) hand without touching any part of the body.
- Two (2) players are not allowed to catch the ball simultaneously.
- Spot jump is allowed while throwing the ball to the opponent court however after stepping, jump is not allowed.
- Jumping when catching the ball is not allowed.
- If a ball slips or rebounds unintentionally from the hands of any one (1) player, another player can catch the ball and return it to the opponent's court before the ball touches the ground. The same player cannot catch the ball for the second (2nd) time. Also, you can't have a third player touch the ball if it unintentionally slips or rebounds from the second player.

- A player while receiving or returning the ball to the opponent's court, no part of her body shall touch the box line.
- After receiving the ball if a player crosses the side line or end line that is allowed with one (1) leg in contact with the court.
- Change of position of players is allowed once the ball is released from the servicing player's hand, but the players should occupy their original position once the rally is completed unless the team wins the rally, in which case it will rotate in the "Z" form.
- Any ball falling on the box line or in the dead zone is a foul, and the opponent will get the point and will get to serve.
- The ball can neither be shifted (passed) to the left or right hand, nor deliberately pushed.
- Any ball during service or rally that falls on the side line or the end line is a good ball.
- The service or rally ball must not touch the antenna.
- Contact with the net by a player between the antennae, during the action of playing the ball, is a fault. Using the net between the antennae as a support or stabilizing aid and creating an unfair advantage over the opponent by touching the net are also considered faults.
- Players may not interfere with opponents while the ball is in play, which includes yelling at opponents or hindering an opponent's legitimate attempt to play the ball, which will result in a fault.
- Players are not allowed to cross their feet or any other part of their body across the center line.

Fouls

- Juggling: Ball slipping in the hands at the time of player receiving the ball
- Double contact: Player receives the ball in his hands and bounces in hand two (2) times.
- Dead ball: Any ball that touches the ground in the free zone box and the point is given to the opponent team.
- Body Touch: While throwing/returning/receiving the ball touches any part of the body.
- Delay: A player keeping the ball for more than three (3) seconds or the server serving the ball five (5) seconds after the referee's whistle.

- A ball rebounding or bouncing from the net can be received by another player and is not a foul, but intentionally throwing the ball to the net is a foul.
- The service ball touching the net or antenna is considered a foul. The rally ball must not touch the antenna.
- Movement: A player taking more than one (1) step forward or backward after receiving the ball.
- Clash: Catching the ball simultaneously by two (2) or more players.
- Jumping and receiving the ball is not allowed, however, jumping and throwing the ball is allowed.
- Any ball falling on the box line or in the dead zone is a foul, and the opponent will get the point and will get to serve.
- Shifting: A player shifting the ball from the right side to the left side of her hands or vice-versa during play.

Substitutions

- Substitution is the act by which the referee authorizes the player to leave the court and another player to occupy the same order position.
- Substitution must be done from the specified substitution area with the permission of the referee /umpire.
- Five (5) substitutions is the maximum permitted per team per set.
- Substitution will be allowed when the ball is dead upon the referee's/umpire's signal.
- A player may be re-substituted in the same set.
- No substitution is permitted at 7th or service position.
- After the five (5) substitutions, if any player gets injured, the remaining players have to continue.
- Only the injured player will be allowed to re-enter the game once clearance given by medical staff and permitted to enter by the referee/umpire.
- A player who arrived after the scheduled start time due to medical treatment or a situation relating to the JG-OT will be eligible to play in that set provided the five (5) substitutions are not used up.

Time-outs

- Each team may call a time-out in a set at any time.
- The time-out will be allowed when the ball is dead.
- Referee/umpire may call an official/technical time-out if required.
- All time-outs that are requested last for 1 minute.
- Each team may request two (2) time-outs per set.
- After each set, the teams change courts, with the exception of the deciding set. All intervals between sets shall last three (3) minutes.
- In the deciding set, once the leading team reaches eight (8) points, the teams change courts without delay and the players' positions remain the same.

Warm-up

- Prior to the match, teams are entitled to a five (5) minute warm-up period together at the net.
- If either captain requests separate official warm-ups at the net, the teams will be allowed two (2) minutes each.
- Players not in play may warm-up during:
 - Play without balls in the warm-up areas.
 - Time-outs in the free zone behind their court.
 - Set breaks in the free zone with balls behind the court.

Coaching

- Coaching is considered to be communication, advice or instruction of any kind to a player.
- Coaching can be provided to the player(s) during the two (2) one (1) minute time-outs allotted per team per set, and during the three (3) minute interval break between sets.
- In the above regulation breaks during a match, the coach must return to his/her designated chair/seating area as soon as the referee announces that the time-out or interval break is over.

- Throughout the match, the coach conducts the play of his/her team from outside the playing court. The coach selects the starting line-ups, the substitutes and takes time-outs. In these functions, the coach's contact official is the second (2nd) referee.
- The coach or captain records or checks the names and numbers of his/her players on the score sheet and then signs it.
- During the match, the coach sits on the designated chair/seating area but may leave it, and gives instructions to the players on the court. The coach may give these instructions while standing or walking within the free zone in front of his/her team's designated seating area.
- Where a head coach is not present or available, an assistant coach, team manager or team captain may assume the role of a coach.
- Under no circumstances can coaching be provided when the ball is in play, in any manner that distracts the opposing player(s) or disrupts or delays the match.

Injury and Bleeding

Illness

- A player who suffers an illness that involves neither an injury nor bleeding must either continue to play immediately, or the team may use the one (1) thirty (30) second time-out allowed during a set or substitute the player who is ill.
- This includes conditions such as a cramp, nausea, breathlessness and asthma.
- A team is declared incomplete if it has fewer than seven (7) players on the court and shall forfeit the match but shall retain any points already scored and any sets already won.

Injury

- Should a serious accident occur while the ball is in play, the referee shall stop the set immediately and permit medical assistance to enter the court. The rally will then be replayed.

- If the referee is not satisfied that the injury is genuine, s/he must advise the captain/coach to decide whether to resume play immediately, substitute the player or use the one (1) thirty (30) second time-out allowed during a set for recovery.
- If the referee deems the injury to be genuine and the injured/ill player cannot be substituted legally, the player shall be given a three (3) minute recovery time, but not more than once for the same player in the match.
- After the three (3) minute recovery time, if the player does not recover, the team may request a legal time-out during the match of thirty (30) seconds. If the player still has not recovered, the team is then declared incomplete.
- A team is declared incomplete if it has fewer than seven (7) players on the court and shall forfeit the match but shall retain any points already scored and any sets already won.

Bleeding

- Whenever bleeding occurs, the bleeding must be stopped before the player can continue.
- Play shall be suspended immediately lasting not more than three (3) minutes and the player shall receive medical treatment.
- Play shall not resume until all traces of blood have been removed from the playing surface.
- If immediate medical treatment does not rectify the injury, the player must be substituted or replaced until the bleeding is stopped and the blood is removed from their uniform.
- After the three (3) minute recovery time, if the player does not recover and the player cannot be substituted legally, the team is declared incomplete.
- A team is declared incomplete if it has fewer than seven (7) players on the court and shall forfeit the match but shall retain any points already scored and any sets already won.
- Bloodstained clothing must be replaced.

For all other issues not addressed in these Official Throwball Rules, please refer to The United States Ismaili Games General Rules and Regulations.

National/ Regional Changes To Note:

- The preferred court size is: 40.03 feet x 60.04 feet (12.20 meters x 18.30 meters) with a neutral box 1.5 meters (4 feet 11.06 inches) on either side of the center. The net will be 7.55 feet (2.3 meters). Matches shall be played indoors.
- If standard court size is not available, the court size will be 36 feet x 60.04 feet (10.97 meters x 18.30 meters) with a neutral box of 1m (3.30 feet) on either side of the center - This is the standard volleyball net size (pole to pole) -Flexible at local & national levels.
- The international rule is that throws must be made above shoulder line and local, national tournaments will also follow those rules.
- The international rule is that throws may not be made underhand when athletes' backs are facing the net and local, national tournaments will also follow those rules.
- Crossing the line after the service ball has not passed the net IS allowed.
- Only 7 players will be allowed on court (switch from 9)