



THE RULES OF KORFBALL

-

**EXCEPTIONS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
COMPETITION REGULATIONS**

2026

**Valid as of 1st September 2026
Adopted by the
International Korfball Federation (IKF)**

The contents in this document are the
Official Rules of Korfball
- Exceptions and Recommendations for
Competition Regulations
created by
IKF | Playing Rules Committee

IKF | International Korfball Federation
Orteliuslaan 1041
3528 BE Utrecht,
The Netherlands
office@ikf.org

Every reproduction should identify
the author and propriety
June 2026,
All Rights Reserved



Table of contents

INTRODUCTION	1
1 FIELD	2
1.2 Field of play	2
1.7 Border area	2
1.9 Substitution spot	2
2 MATERIAL	2
2.1 Posts	2
2.2 Korfs	2
3 EQUIPMENT	2
3.3 Shot clock	2
4 PERSONS	3
4.1 Players	3
4.2 Substitute players	3
4.4 Coach and assistant coach	3
4.5 Other persons attached to the team	3
4.6 Referee duo	3
4.7 Jury	3
4.8 Timekeeper	3
4.10 Scorekeeper	4
5 THE GAME	4
5.1 Teams	4
5.2 Playing time	4
5.4 Start of the game	4
5.5 Goals	4
5.6 Zone changes and changes of ends	5
5.8 Time-out	5
5.9 Substitutions of players	5
5.10 Treatment of injured players	5
6 INFRINGEMENTS OF THE RULES	5
6.9 To passive play	5
6.16 To exceed the allowed time-limit in the attack zone	5
6.17 To shoot when one plays without a personal opponent	6
7 SANCTIONS & DISCIPLINARY	6
7.4 Free pass	6
7.6 Disciplinary	6

INTRODUCTION

“The Rules of Korfball” are the official korfball rules. These rules shall be used in full, without making use of any “exceptions”, in IKF Official, patronage and recognised Tournaments and in Friendly International Matches.

In all seniors top national leagues and national championships or cups over the World, certain rules may be exceptionally adjusted, provided that the reason is duly justified and prior approval is obtained from the IKF before such adjustment is implemented. However, certain rules may be adapted, by decision of the national organisations to suit different lower level and youth competitions and local circumstances.

In this document are published all exceptions of the rules or recommendations where Competition Regulations (“CR”) may change or adapt the requirements of the main rules of korfball.

It is not allowed the use of any other deviation from the rules in any korfball competitions besides the exceptions and recommendations published in this document, except in experiments authorised by IKF - Playing Rules Committee upon official request.

1 FIELD

1.2 Field of play

CR may allow:

- ✓ smaller dimensions of the field of play where a normal pitch size is not possible and in games for young players. The length to width ratio must always be 2:1;
- ✓ advertising to be placed on the floor and/or a contrasting coloured strip used along an outside line provided that the floor remains non-slippery and all lines are clearly visible.

For Top Level, it is recommended the CR prescribes that the free height must be at least 9 m.

1.7 Border area

For Top Level, it is recommended the CR prescribes a border area of at least 2 m.

1.9 Substitution spot

CR can allow a field of play without substitution spots.

2 MATERIAL

2.1 Posts

CR can prescribe or permit posts made of other materials, shorter posts, resulting in the top of the korf being less than 3.50 m above the ground, e.g. for matches with young players.

2.2 Korfs

CR may allow:

- ✓ another approved colour, when the yellow colour does not contrast sufficiently from the background;
- ✓ advertising on the korfs as long as it complies with the IKF Korf Regulations;
- ✓ other korfs to be used, for example, in youth or in recreational competitions.

When CR allow korfs made of cane (rattan) then the fixing of the korf to the post must also comply with the following:

- ✓ no fixtures of more than 1.0 cm may protrude inside or outside the korf;
- ✓ if metal support is used underneath the korf, it is only permitted over no more than one-quarter of the circumference nearest to the post;
- ✓ if metal strips are used against the outside of the korf, they are only permitted over one-third of the circumference.

For more details see the IKF Korf Regulations.

3 EQUIPMENT

3.3 Shot clock

CR may prescribe:

- ✓ the non-use of shot clock;

- ✓ more than one shot clock at each end is used. If so, then each shot clock must face the centre of the zone outside of which it is placed;
- ✓ the maximum height allowed;
- ✓ that in addition to the shot clock, LED lights may be affixed to each post to further indicate the counting down of the clock.

4 PERSONS

4.1 Players

CR may allow uniforms without numbers.

4.2 Substitute players

CR may prescribe until a maximum of 8 substitutes being 4 male and 4 female.

4.4 Coach

CR may determine whether a coach can use communications equipment in the bench area.

4.6 Other persons attached to the team

CR may allow different number of other persons attached to the team.

CR may determine whether a person serving a disciplinary measure is allowed to sit on the bench as one of the four other persons and, if not, where such a person may be situated during a match.

4.7 Referee duo

When CR allows matches without timekeeper, the referee duo controls the timing of the game.

When CR allows matches without a scorer, the referee duo controls the scores and the result of the game.

CR may allow matches without referee duo.

b) to indicate the starting, stopping and restarting of the game

CR can prescribe that when a timekeeper is appointed and there is a time clock with sound, the signal for ending each period of the match shall be done by the timekeeper.

4.8 Jury

CR may prescribe that requests for time-outs and substitutions shall be made via timekeeper or scorer.

CR may allow matches without a Jury. If so, all the tasks of the jury shall be the responsibility of the referee.

4.9 Timekeeper

CR may allow the timekeeper and the scorekeeper are combined.

CR may allow matches without a timekeeper; if so, the timing of the game shall be the responsibility of the referee.

Whenever a timekeeper is appointed then the CR may prescribe that the end of each period shall be on the sounding of the timekeeper's signal and not on the referee's whistle.

4.11 Scorekeeper

CR may allow the scorekeeper and the timekeeper are combined.

CR may allow matches without a scorer.

5 THE GAME

5.1 Teams

CR may prescribe the teams shall toss to decide which one will start with the ball and attack which korf in the first half.

CR may prescribe each team shall declare in advance to the referee or jury, which of its players shall be in its first attack zone, in its first defence zone and its substitutes.

5.2 Playing time

In competitions where teams have to play daily a series of matches in a short period of time, it is highly recommended the CR prescribe the playing time of two (2) halves of 20 minutes of real playing time and each half is divided in two (2) equal periods by a technical time-out of a one (1) minute break.

For youth and lower level competition the CR can prescribe other playing time.

CR can determine:

- ✓ the technical time-out of one (1) minute dividing each half in two equal periods is not used;
- ✓ different golden goal time;
- ✓ the half time break;
- ✓ when a match or competition can be played with no real playing time.

The recommended half time break is 10 minutes.

For matches where real playing time is not being used:

- ✓ the recommended playing time is 2 x 30 minutes;
- ✓ interruptions not forming part of the play should not be included in the playing time. This includes time-outs and the time taken for substitutions;
- ✓ the referee can lengthen the duration of that half to compensate delays caused by any outside influence or the treatment of injuries.

5.3 Golden goal

CR can prescribe that a match can end with a draw.

5.4 Start of the game

CR may determine a toss to see who is the home team and who starts with the ball.

5.5 Goals

CR can prescribe a match can end with both teams having the same score after regular playing time.

5.6 Zone changes and changes of ends

CR can stipulate other arrangements, e.g. in matches for young players or in tournaments where the length of the match is much shorter.

5.8 Time-out

CR may determine a different number of time-outs per team according to the competition, level of play or age group.

CR can prescribe a different procedure for a time-out request.

When jury/timekeeper has not been appointed, the coach can request a time-out to the referee only when the play is stopped.

5.9 Substitutions of players

CR can determine different number of substitutions are allowed.

CR can determine a substituted player cannot return to the game. If so, then a maximum of four (4) players can be substituted and once a player has been substituted he cannot, under any circumstances return to the match (including cases of injury and replacing a player with a red card).

When jury/timekeeper was not appointed, the coach can request a substitution to the referee only when the play is stopped.

5.10 Treatment of injured players

CR may determine a different period of time for a player to be assisted on the field before being replaced.

6 INFRINGEMENTS OF THE RULES

6.9 To passive play

When real playing time is not being used, it can also be considered passive play:

- ✓ throwing the ball far outside the field;
- ✓ kicking the ball when the game has been stopped;
- ✓ time wasted when changing zones;
- ✓ time wasted during the preparation of a throw off;
- ✓ time wasting during substitution.

In these situations, the referee is allowed to add time on to compensate for the time lost.

6.16 To exceed the allowed time-limit in the attack zone

CR may prescribe in which matches this playing rule is used.

CR may also prescribe the length of the shot clock period (especially in games with younger players).

The shortest possible period is 20 seconds and the longest possible period is 40 seconds. It is recommended that such a period should be in multiples of 5 seconds.

CR may prescribe that the shot clock is no longer used when the game clock is showing less than the fixed shot clock period.

6.17 To shoot when one plays without a personal opponent

For youth, recreation and lower level competitions, it is recommended the CR prescribes the use of this rule.

This occurs when the defence zone has only three (3) players playing against four (4) attackers. The numerical advantage of the attack over the defence may be due to one side not being able to field a full team, or after agreeing with the referee and the other team not to field a full team even when possible (e.g. due to partly injured or large difference in player competences), or due to one or more players leaving the field due to injury or to being sent-off by the referee and not being possible to replace them by a substitute.

In this case the coach of the attacking side must inform the referee and the other coach of which of his attackers will not shoot. The coach is entitled to change his decision during the match, but only after informing the referee and the other coach at a time when play has stopped (i.e. the referee has blown for an infringement, a goal etc.). This change of an attacker is only allowed twice between a change of zones.

A goal can be made from a penalty by an attacker without a personal opponent.

If a player who is playing without a personal opponent throws the ball and it hits the korf, then this shall be considered, to be a shot and is penalised under this rule.

If the coach of the attacking side fails to inform the referee, then the referee must see to it that he does so at once.

7 SANCTIONS & DISCIPLINARY

7.4 Free pass

CR may prescribe that the four (4) second period for the players taking their positions can be adapted for matches between young players.

7.6 Disciplinary

CR can prescribe different times when the jurisdiction of the referee starts and ends with respect to occurrences of misconduct for which a card can be shown.

Misconduct outside this period may still be reported to the appropriate authority in accordance with the CR.

CR can prescribe or allow that yellow and red cards are not used when a formal warning is given to a player, or when a player is sent off if the players taking part in the game are under a certain age limit.