



American Cornhole League Rules and Regulations

1. Equipment

a. Boards

- i. Boards shall be made of wood for use in ACL sanctioned events. The most common types are birch and oak.
- ii. Boards shall have a finished coat that features a smooth texture.
- iii. Boards must measure two feet wide and four feet long, with a $\pm 1/4$ inch tolerance.
- iv. The hole must be 6 inches ($\pm 1/8$ inch) in diameter, centered width-wise.
 1. The center of the hole must be 9 inches ($\pm 1/8$ inch) from the back edge of the board
- v. Boards must have a minimum top layer thickness of $\frac{1}{2}$ inch with cross-section support, or $\frac{3}{4}$ inch without cross-section support.
- vi. Boards must have a weight of at least 15 pounds.
- vii. The front edge of the board should be raised between 2.5 and 3.5 inches above the ground.
- viii. The top of the board should rest 12 inches above the ground ($\pm 1/2$ inch).
- ix. No foreign substances may be applied to a board after it has been purchased from a manufacturer.
 1. Substances include but are not limited to baby powder, cleaning spray, and silicone sprays.
 2. A dry cloth may be used to wipe down a board prior to play.

b. Bags

- i. Players must supply their own bags for play in an ACL sanctioned event. See the [ACL Bag Policy](#) for a full list of rules and regulations regarding ACL Approved Bags and ACL tournaments
 1. Directors may provide players with bags as long as they meet the bag criteria listed below.
- ii. Regardless of division, bags used in play must be on the Approved Bag Manufacturer List published annually.
- iii. Bags must measure 6 inches wide and 6 inches long ($\pm 1/4$ inch).
- iv. Bags must weigh between 15.5 and 16.25 ounces.
- v. Bags must have a thickness no less than 1.125 inches and no greater than 1.5 inches.

- vi. After purchase from the manufacturer, bags may not be altered in any way.
 - 1. Alterations include repair, stitching, removing resin, adding resin, ironing, and any other manipulation that results in a bag becoming different than the original state of purchase.
 - 2. Players may wash bags using fabric softener and/or detergent and dry in a dryer.
 - 3. Players may break in bags using ACL Approved products as long as the directions are followed as outlined in the packaging
 - 4. Players may label their bags with initials or a name with a permanent marker. The label should not exceed 5 in², reasonable judgment by the director should be used to determine if the written label alters the integrity and/or functionality of the bag.
 - 5. Bags with holes where plastic resin can leak will not be allowed.
- vii. Players may dry bags but no foreign substances can be applied to the outside of a cornhole bag.
 - 1. Sweat is not a foreign substance unless it is applied intentionally. Players may not intentionally apply liquid to a set of bags. If a player is found to be intentionally applying liquid to bags, the director reserves the right to either:
 - a. Force the player to switch bags mid game
 - b. Forfeit the player for that game
 - 2. Players should use a cloth or towel to remove sweat from themselves. If a player is found to be intentionally applying sweat to a bag or an opponent's bag, the same penalty for applying liquid may be enforced.
- viii. All bags in a set of four must have the same design and color for each corresponding side on all four bags.
 - 1. For example, a player may use a gray suede side and a red duck cloth side for a cornhole bag. All three of the other bags must have a red duck cloth side and a gray suede side.
 - 2. For example, a player *cannot* have four bags that have a grey suede side and alternating colors of red, blue, yellow, and green on the duck cloth side of a bag.
 - 3. A Player may not switch bags during a game (but can after a single game in a series) unless a bag is unintentionally damaged and leaking, or if a bag mid-game has been unintentionally altered such that it affects the play of the game differently for one player in comparison to the other. In the event of a damaged bag all 4 bags in that set must be swapped out at the end of the round for a new set of 4 bags (intentional damage leads to a forfeit of the game)

- ix. If a player finishes a tournament and has earned prize money for his or her performance, the director reserves the right to inspect all bags used by that player throughout the tournament.
 - 1. If any bags used by that player are inspected and found to not meet the criteria above, the player will forfeit all of his or her prize money for that tournament.
- x. The tournament director reserves the right to conduct random bag inspections of any player's bags at any time, or non-random inspections if a director suspects that a player is using bags that are not compliant with the current bag policy
 - 1. Upon a random bag inspection, if a bag or set of bags is found to not meet the bag policy criteria, that player is no longer allowed to use those bags for the remainder of the tournament and the director reserves the right to forfeit any prize money potentially earned by the player in that tournament

2. Layout

- a. Court
 - i. A court is defined as the total area of play for a cornhole game consisting of two boards.
- b. Pitcher's box
 - i. A rectangle measuring 3 feet wide by 4 feet long (length of board) on either side of a board designates a player's pitcher's box.
- c. Lanes
 - i. A lane is defined as two pitcher's boxes directly across from one another on two different boards on one court.
 - 1. If a right-handed player is in the pitcher's box forcing his right hand to be directly over a board, the other pitcher's box in his or her same lane would be on the opposite board forcing his right hand to be on the outside towards the edge of play.
 - 2. In doubles play, players on the same team will line up directly across from each other in the same lane, not diagonally from each other in opposite lanes.
- d. Boards
 - i. 2 boards should be located 27 feet ($\pm 1/2$ inch) apart, from front of one board to front of another.
 - ii. The front edges of the 2 boards must face each other.
- e. Foul line
 - i. The foul line is designated as the front end of the board, which is also marked by the front edge of a player's pitcher's box.
- f. Vertical Clearance
 - i. For play indoors or under covering, the minimum vertical height of a ceiling or covering is 12 feet.
- g. Score tower

- i. 1 score tower per court (2 sets of boards) should be used and shall be placed a minimum of 1 foot behind one board, outside of the field of play.

- 1. Score towers are not *required* for play.

3. Pre-game

a. Coin Toss

- i. Each game begins with a coin toss, including each individual game of a three or more game series or the ending to a double elimination tournament where the losers bracket team wins the first game. One player or team flips a coin and the other player or team calls their choice of “heads” or “tails”
- ii. In singles play, the winner of the coin toss will choose which lane he or she will pitch in for the entirety of the game.
- iii. In doubles play, the winner of the coin toss will *either* choose (not both):
 - 1. The lane and location of each player of that team which will be permanent for the entirety of the game.
 - 2. The player matchup for each board.
- iv. In doubles play, the loser of the coin toss will get to decide the outcome of the other option in the previous bullet not selected by the winning coin toss team.
- v. In all divisions, the winner of the coin toss will choose which team or player will throw the first bag of the game.

b. Practice

- i. Unless unanimously decided otherwise by all players on a court, it is customary to complete a “down and back” practice round before beginning a game.
 - 1. For singles play, players will complete one round of practice throws, walk down to the other board staying in their same corresponding lanes, and then complete one additional round of practice throws before the game begins.
 - 2. For doubles play, competing players on one board will complete one round of practice throws, and then each player’s corresponding doubles partner will complete a practice round throwing from the opposite board in the same lane as their partner before the game begins.
 - 3. In a series of more than one game played by the same teams/players in a row, the “down and back” practice round does not occur after the first game unless all players unanimously agree to have the practice round
 - 4. Additional practice rounds must be unanimously agreed upon by all players in the game

c. Bag Challenging

- i. If a player or team believes that the opposing player or team is using a set of bags that does not abide by the bag policy, they may challenge the bags *before* the beginning of the game.
 - 1. To complete a challenge, an American Cornhole League director or board member (also referred to as an official) not currently playing in the game must be contacted and he or she will complete a bag inspection.
 - a. If the set of bags are approved, the game is set to begin as scheduled.
 - b. If the set of bags are not approved, that player or team is given a warning and the bags cannot be used for that game. The team or player must find an alternate set of bags to use for the remainder of a tournament.
 - 2. If a player or team already with a warning during one season has the same set of bags challenged OR has a different set of bags challenged that are, in turn, disallowed, that player or team forfeits all remaining matches in that tournament and is given a 1 month suspension from the American Cornhole League
 - 3. If a player who has already served his or her 1 month ban is found to be playing with bags in an ACL sanctioned tournament that do not meet the bag requirements again, he or she will be suspended for the remainder of the season.
- ii. Bags that are not challenged *prior* to a match are deemed acceptable for use during that match.
 - 1. As mentioned previously, the ACL still reserves the right to inspect a player's or team's bags used in a tournament at its conclusion. If any of the bags do not meet the bag requirements, that player or team will forfeit the winnings for the tournament.

4. Gameplay

a. Proper pitching technique

- i. A pitch is defined as one player throwing a cornhole bag towards the opposite board from which he or she is standing attempting to make the bag onto the board or into the hole.
 - 1. A player is not necessarily *required* to attempt to contact the board. He or she may voluntarily choose to earn zero points on a pitch by pitching the bag intentionally off to the side or short of the board.
- ii. A pitch of a cornhole bag may be underhand or overhand.
- iii. When pitching a bag, players must release the bag before any part of the player's body touches the ground on or beyond the foul line

- iv. Upon release of the bag during a pitch, a player must have at least part of one foot inside the pitcher's box with contact to the ground and not across the foul line
 - 1. No part of a player's body, except for a hand or arm, may cross the midpoint of the board in the direction of the opposing player's pitch box (i.e. a player may not straddle the board in order to attempt a shot)
 - 2. Players may not step on the cornhole board while pitching a cornhole bag or after the follow through of a pitch. Penalty for this is the same as 4.a.v as outlined below
- v. A player may not step on or beyond the foul line before the release of the bag during a pitch/throw
 - 1. In the event of a player stepping over a line, an official can be called to the court by the opposing team. A director may also voluntarily officiate the game without a request from the opposing team.
 - 2. Once the official is contacted, he or she will come watch the remainder of the match.
 - 3. If the player steps over or on the foul line during this observation, the player will receive a warning from the official. An official may also voluntarily officiate a game at any time.
 - 4. For every pitch from that point in the game onward that the player steps on or over the foul line, he or she will have the bag corresponding to that pitch forfeited. In the event that an official's first witnessed foot-foul violation is viewed to be intentional, the director can skip the warning and proceed straight to the penalty for violation.
 - a. A forfeited bag will be removed from the area of play during that round by the official with as little disturbance to play as possible.
 - i. If the forfeited bag has already caused bags in play to move, the player or team opposing the player who pitched the forfeited bag decides to *either* (not both):
 - 1. Have an official place the moved bags back in their original location as best as possible per instructions by both teams.
 - 2. Accept the new bags' locations and proceed through the remainder of the round.
 - b. Any scoring that is unavoidable when removing the bag from play will still count.
 - 5. In the event that a player is utilizing a follow through step after the release of the bag over the foul line, the player must

get back behind the foul line before their opponent's next throw is delivered. A failure to get back behind the foul line in time will result in the same penalty for a foot-foul violation. This rule will be officiated in the same manner as foot-foul violations with a warning followed by immediate action by the director.

- a. The opposing player may not throw their next bag until the previous player's bag has come to rest at the other end of the board

b. Sequence of Play

i. Rounds

1. A round is defined as a complete sequence of 8 bags thrown by two players (4 each) towards one board.
2. Scoring is calculated at the conclusion of each round.
3. A Player may adjust the board *to* which he or she is pitching only *before* a round if it is misaligned or not at the correct distance.
 - a. A player may adjust the board *from* which he or she is pitching at any point as long as it does not disrupt the opposing player's pitch, in which case that player would have his or her next bag forfeited.

ii. Pitch Sequence

1. A game begins with a round in which the winner of the coin toss chooses who pitches the first bag.
2. The opposing player at the same board in the opposite lane then pitches his or her first bag.
3. Pitching alternates until all 8 bags (4 by each player) have been pitched which concludes the round. A player must wait for their opponent's previous bag to come to a complete stop on the board, off the board, or in the hole before delivering the next pitch.
 - a. Reasonable judgement will be made by an ACL Official in the event that a player intentionally did not wait for a bag to come to a complete stop before delivering the next bag. In the event that the official deems that the player intentionally did not wait for the bag to come to rest and delivered the next bag, the director may apply the same rule as touching bags as outlined in 4.b.iii.3.c
4. For singles play, the players will then walk to the other board, remaining in their designated lane, and complete another round of pitching.
5. For doubles play, the two players' partners at the opposite board will then complete a round of pitching.

6. Play continues until a score of at least 21 points is achieved by one team at the conclusion of a round.
 - a. A player or team does *not* have to win by a minimum of two points.
 - b. A player or team is not penalized for achieving a score over 21 points, the game is finished and that player or team wins the game.
7. If a player pitches in an incorrect sequence, the bag that is incorrectly pitched is forfeited.
 - a. Then, to reestablish the correct sequence of pitching, the opposing player will pitch two consecutive bags.
 - b. If a player pitches in an incorrect sequence and it is not called/identified immediately, then the round finishes out as it started (which is the incorrect sequence). If that particular round finishes in a wash/push, the next round is then played in the CORRECT sequence as it was supposed to be played previously. If that round finishes with one team scoring points, that team will start the next round.
8. If a player refuses to finish a game, that player will forfeit the game by a score of 21-0.
9. If one partner of a doubles team cannot finish the match for any reason that game will be forfeited by the team that could not finish by a score of 21-0.

iii. Timing

1. Each player will have 20 seconds to pitch his or her bag from the moment that the opposing player's bag comes to rest on the other end.
 - a. A player may request that the "pitch clock" be enforced by having an ACL official come to the board and enforce the rule. If a player calls for an ACL official to do this, then the pitch clock is enforced for BOTH players effective immediately.
 - b. An ACL official may ALSO choose to enforce the shot clock if they feel it is necessary.
 - c. If a player has the first pitch in a round, they will have 45 seconds from when the last bag from the previous round comes to rest on that side of play for doubles and 1 minute for singles play.
 - d. Failure to pitch a bag in time results in loss of bag.
2. Bags must not be picked up while still moving. Players can pick up bags 3 seconds after the bag comes to a complete stop.
3. In singles play, each player is awarded (2) 90 second timeouts. A player may only call a timeout when he or she

has the next bag to throw (i.e. no “icing” the opposing player), or in between rounds. Reasonable judgment from the director will be used to grant timeouts in between rounds if the team that does not have first throw in the next round requests a timeout.

- a. During a timeout, a player may leave the pitcher’s box to view the other board.
- b. The opposing player who did not call the timeout may also leave the pitcher’s box in order to view the other board.
- c. Touching of bags that are in play is prohibited. A bag in play is defined as any scoring bag that is being scored as 1 point “on the board”. If a player (or a player’s teammate) touches a bag that is in play during the timeout (or during play outside of a timeout before the round is complete), the round **immediately ends** and all bags are transitioned to the next round at the other board.
 - i. In addition, if the team that touched the bags still has just 1 bag left and their opponent has 0 bags remaining, that bag is dead and the round is ended and scored just like any cornhole round.
 - ii. If the opposing team of the team who touched the bags still has a bag left then the round is over and the opposing team will earn (3) points in the round for each bag still in hand and every bag still in play on the board. For example, if the opposing team of who touched the bags had (1) bag in the hole, (1) bag on the board, (1) bag off the board, and (1) bag left to throw, that team would earn (9) points for the round, with the only bag not counting for points would be the bag off the board.
 - iii. The team that touched the bags will receive a valued score totaling the points scored **only** in the hole for that round for that team prior to the touching.
 - iv. For example, Team A has two bags in the hole and one bag on the board with one bag left yet to throw. Team B has one bag in the hole and two bags on the board with one bag left yet to throw. Team A touches the bags on the board and moves them from their original place. Team A receives a valued score of 6 for the

round for the two bags in the hole and Team B receives a valued score of 12 for the round. The round is over and Team B earns 6 total points towards the overall score using cancellation scoring.

- v. If all bags are believed to have been thrown and both teams/players clear the board of bags and proceed to start the next round only to find that a single bag has not yet been thrown, the round is still over and the points are scored as the round finishes. The single bag leftover is simply forfeited.
 - vi. If a player stomps, jumps, or completes another action that causes bags to fall into the hole in the middle of a round, the same touching rules are applied.
 - vii. If a third party spectator, official, or other outside force touches bags causing them to move, the best reasonable judgement by the players in the game and a director/official will place the bags back into their original position.
 - viii. If a team begins to remove bags from the hole while the opposing team still has one bag remaining, that remaining bag is scored at a value of 3 points and the round is immediately over. This rule only applies if no bags on the board were touched. If bags on the board were touched, see above rule regarding touching bags in play. If the team begins removing bags from the hole and there are bags on the board, and no bags on the board are touched, the team with the bag remaining can either choose to accept a 3 point value for the bag in hand or can choose to throw the final bag as the round stood prior to touching bags in the hole. Picking up bags that are off the board does not apply to this rule.
- d. Rules for touching the board
- i. In most cases touching the board will not impact the bags, however, if bags are impacted then the same rule is in effect as if you touched the bags (see rules Timing - 3ci and 3cii above)
 - ii. Adjusting a board that players are throwing towards is only acceptable in between rounds. If a board is moved in the middle of a round,

rule 4.b.iii.3.d.i (directly previous to this rule) is followed. Boards from which a player is playing may be adjusted at any time as long as it is not during an opponent's throw. The penalty for adjusting the board during an opponent's throw is the forfeiting of the next bag.

- e. If a player crosses the foul line prior to pitching a bag attempting to get closer to the opposing board for viewing purposes, it is inferred that that player is choosing to take a timeout.
 - f. Timeouts taken in excess of the allowed timeouts will lead to that player or team forfeiting all remaining bags during that round.
4. In doubles play, each team is awarded (1) 90 second timeout. Partners may not call timeouts during their partner's throw.
- a. Same timeout rules apply as above

c. Scoring

- i. Scoring is always completed at the end of a round, not during.
- ii. A bag lying on top of the board at the end of a round is valued at 1 point.
 - 1. Bags "hanging" in the hole are valued at 1 point.
 - 2. If a bag is pinned by another bag and is hanging off the side of the board touching either the ground, board support brace, or board legs, the pinned bag is immediately deemed dead. An official must be called to remove the pinned bag. If the other bag remains on the board after the official has removed the pinned bag, the bag will count as 1 point. If the other bag also falls off the board when the pinned bag is removed by the official, the bag counts as 0 points.
 - 3. If a bag is hanging off of the front of the board, on top of another bag which is on the ground, an official must carefully remove the bag lying on the ground, if the bag on top falls to the ground as well, it is valued at 0 points. If the bag stays on the board, it is valued at 1 point.
- iii. A bag through the hole at the end of a round is valued at 3 points.
- iv. A bag that neither went through the hole nor is lying on top of the board at the end of the round is valued at 0 points.
 - 1. Bags that are lying on top of the front edge of the board but are touching the ground are valued at 0 points.
 - 2. Bags that touched the ground or any other surface before touching the board or going into the hole are valued at 0 points and must be removed from the board by an official.

- a. If this bag causes other bags on the board to move, the final resting places of the bags in play will count.
 - 3. In the event that a bag is thrown and it is short of the board but laying up against the board, it should be removed before the next throw.
- v. All scoring for a round features cancellation.
 - 1. For example, Player A pitches 3 bags in the hole and 1 bag on the board for a total of 10 points. Player B pitches 2 bags in the hole and 2 bags on the board for a total of 8 points. Player A will then earn 2 points ($10-8=2$) towards his or her overall score (or team's score for doubles play).
- vi. In some instances, the bags in the hole will stack on top of each other until they reach the threshold of the hole. In this instance, a player may ask an official or spectator to "sweep" the bags from under the hole.
 - 1. If a player throws a bag and it "hangs" in the hole but is touching a bag in the hole, an official must come and, if at all possible, "sweep" the bags in the hole without disturbing or touching the hanging bag. If an official is not present, an unbiased spectator must complete the sweep. If an unbiased spectator is not present, the team who can least benefit from additional bags falling into the hole should complete the sweep.
 - a. If the hanging bag does not fall into the hole after a correct "sweep", the bag is valued at 1 point.
 - b. If the hanging bag unavoidably falls into the hole after a correct "sweep" the bag is valued at 3 points.
- vii. Players must wait 3 seconds after a bag comes to a stop on the board before the players may pick up a bag at the end of the round. If a bag is slick enough that it begins to slide down the board, players must wait for that bag to come to a complete stop before proceeding with a round.
 - 1. Players may not jump or complete other actions that cause vibrations of the cornhole board during the 3 second waiting period. Any action like this will waive the 3 second waiting period.
- d. Player Interaction/player conduct
 - i. Players may not make contact with each other during gameplay with the intent to disrupt pitching motions.
 - 1. If a player disrupts another player's pitch with obvious intent, an official reserves the right to disqualify a player for that game resulting in a forfeit.
 - ii. Players may not interfere with an opponent's bag during its flight path.

1. If a player interferes with the flight of a bag, the rest of that player's bags are forfeited for the remainder of the round and the pitching player gets to re-pitch the bag.
 - a. If bags in play are moved as a result of the interfered bag, see section 4.a.v.4.a for how to proceed.
- iii. Talking, yelling, and movement that is distracting to the opposing team is *not* permitted.
 1. The ACL and its officials reserve the right to deem any behavior inappropriate if it harms the integrity of the game.
 2. Officials may award warnings to any players who display inappropriate behavior.
 3. If a player continues to display inappropriate behavior during a tournament after receiving a warning from an official, the official reserves the right to forfeit the remaining bags of a player for a round/next round OR disqualify the player for the remainder of the game/tournament.
- iv. "Coaching" of players by spectators or coaches is allowed during gameplay.
- v. Player conduct
 1. The ACL and its officials reserve the right to deem any behavior inappropriate if it harms the integrity of the game or the reputation of the ACL.
 2. Officials may award warnings to any players who display inappropriate behavior including but not limited to negative references toward the ACL, throwing bags in anger, cussing, fighting, inappropriate gestures and comments disparaging the ACL, its staff, sponsors, players and fans.
 3. If a player continues to display inappropriate behavior during a tournament, on social media or in the presence of sponsors after receiving a warning from an official, the official reserves the right to disqualify the player for the remainder of the tournament and/or ban them from playing in the ACL for the entire season.
 4. Celebrations after throws will happen. Excessive celebrations that cause major delays are not acceptable. If a player celebrates a shot, the shot clock for the opponent will begin when the appropriate celebration by the player ends. Excessive celebrations may lead to disciplinary actions as outlined in the ACL Player and Fan Code of Conduct.
 5. All players when entering into an ACL tournament are agreeing to abide the ACL Player and Fan Code of Conduct Policy which is located [here](#)