



Southeastern PA Pinball League Rules

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0. Acknowledgement

These rules borrow elements from the rules used by both the [Free State Pinball Association \(FSPA\)](#) and the [National Pinball League \(NPL\)](#), along with some original elements developed from experience running 13 seasons of league play at the Pinball Gallery. The FSPA rules were used a template for documentation of these rules.

1. Introduction

The Southeastern PA Pinball League (SEPAPL) rules provide a format for running a friendly league competition for pinball players of all skill levels. These rules are designed for leagues of six to thirty-two players, playing on five or more machines at a single location. Scoring is based

on how well one does relative to players of similar ability. The nature of the league system used by the SEPAPL allows players of all skill levels to play in a single league which is fun and competitive for everyone.

1.1 Overview

The following section gives an overview of the league rules. For more details, please refer to the specific topic sections later in this document.

1.1.1 Seasons

The SEPAPL has 3 seasons per year (Spring, Summer, and Fall). Each season has 10 weeks of regular play followed by one week of playoffs.

1.1.2 Groups and Scoring

At the start of a season, players will be ranked and assigned into groups of 3 or 4 people based on their current IFPA ranking. You compete only against the other people in your group that week, playing five different games. Players earn *game points* for each game played based on how their machine score compares to others in their group. 1st place gets 5 points and last place gets 1 point. Depending on the number players in the group, an intermediate number of points are awarded to 2nd place (3 points for 3 and 4 player groups) and 3rd place (2 points for a 4 player group). Players that have to forfeit a game get zero points.

At the end of each week, *match points* are calculated based on the sum of that week's *game points*.

As the season progresses, until the divisions are locked down, *season points* are calculated based on the sum of each week's *match points*. After the divisions are locked down and intra-division play ensues, the *season points* are reset to zero and separate *season points* are calculated for each division.

1.1.3 Divisions

After week 6, the divisions are “locked down” and the players are segregated into divisions based on their current total match scores. When there are 2 divisions, roughly $\frac{1}{2}$ the players in the league with the top total match scores will be placed into Division A with the remaining players placed into Division B. When there are 3 divisions, the same thing is done except the

players are separated into $\frac{1}{3}$'s.

1.1.4 Playoffs

After week 10, the playoffs are held. Roughly $\frac{1}{2}$ of the players from each division will qualify for the playoffs based on their total match scores. The playoffs are segregated for each division. For more details, see the Playoffs section below.

1.1.5 Extra Balls

On machines set to 3-ball play, you may play 1 earned extra ball (EB); on machines set to 5-ball play, you may not play any extra balls. Any EB's earned above these limits must be plunged. You may not flip or otherwise touch the machine once the ball is in motion. (If the machine gives you a "ball saver", you must plunge that away, too.) Sorry, you can't "buy-in" an extra ball, even if you scored a replay during your game.

1.1.6 Etiquette

Basic rules of courtesy apply. Do not touch a machine when it's someone else's turn. When your turn comes up, be ready to play. If you need to step away for a moment, let your group know where you are and when you'll be back. Tilting your ball imposes no penalty other than that imposed by the machine (usually loss of ball and bonus). "Slam tilting" the machine, however, will cause you to forfeit that game; multiple violations may cause you to forfeit the season!

1.1.7 Preplays

You can miss up to 15 games (equivalent to 3 weeks of play) and not forfeit a game if you pre-play the games. It is recommended that you pre-play all the games at least once to avoid forfeits for either planned or unplanned absences. Your set of pre-play scores can be supplemented if needed as the season progresses. All standard league rules apply to pre-plays (e.g. restrictions on extra balls). Playoffs may not be preplayed!

1.1.8 League Dues

Dues are \$30 for the full 10-week season including the finals (due on/before the Week #1). Dues are used to pay for food and drinks for the end-of-season party and the trophies awarded to the

winners in the finals.

1.2 League Supervision

In these rules, *LS* stands for League Supervisor. For situations requiring an immediate decision or rule interpretation, this refers to a designated Pinball Gallery staff member.

1.3 Discretion of League Supervisor

These rules are a guide. At times situations will arise that aren't specifically covered by these rules. In these cases, the *LS* will make a decision in the spirit of the rules. This decision shall be documented for later reference, and be applied consistently should the situation arise again.

Additionally, the *LS* may choose to override specific rules in this guide if he/she deems that such modifications are beneficial for the league. Any such modifications shall be made prior to the start of the season, and announced to players at the Pinball Gallery and on the [Pinball Gallery Web site](#).

2. Attendance and Tardiness

The *LS* will designate a specific day and start time for the league, as well as length of season. This info will be published on the [Pinball Gallery Web site](#). League players are expected to attend all matches of the season.

2.1 Start Time

Any games in progress by league players at league start time are immediately halted. Players join their assigned group and begin league play immediately.

2.2 Announced Tardiness

If the *LS* is notified before league start time that a player will be late, then players in the affected group will wait up to 15 minutes before beginning play.

2.3 Unannounced Tardiness

If a player arrives after his group begins play, the player may join the game in progress if possible. Joining the game is permitted if the machine permits it, and the last player of the group has not started ball 1.

2.4 Forfeits

If a player is not present and eligible to play a game, and does not have pre-play scores for that game, a forfeit will be recorded for that player. The forfeiting player will receive zero (0) points for that game. The remaining players in the group will still play the game, and game points will be assigned based on the number of eligible (non-forfeiting) scores recorded.

If only one player in a group is present and eligible to play and his/her opponents do not have

any pre-plays, that player is moved to a group with 3 or less people. Preferably to a lower ranked group if possible. If not possible then a higher ranked group. If no players are present in a group, a game is picked at random and preplay scores are used if available.

Players who join a league after the first game of a season will not accumulate forfeits for the games they did not play prior to joining the league.

2.5 Forfeit of Season

If a player misses multiple weeks of the season without having any preplays and without notifying the LS in advance, the LS may decide that the player has forfeited the season, and may not play in the league again until the next season begins.

2.6 Inclement Conditions

The *LS* may cancel a league match due to inclement weather or other inclement conditions, particularly if travel conditions are deemed unsafe for players. The *LS* will set conditions under which league play will automatically be cancelled, such as the closing of a local school or government office, and advise all players of this condition prior to the start of the season.

2.7 League Cancellation

If the Pinball Gallery should close down during league play (e.g., due to inclement weather), if less than two games have been played by any group, the match shall be cancelled and not recorded. If two or more games have been played by all groups, then scores will be recorded only for those games played by all groups. (Other games will be recorded as forfeits; these forfeits will not count toward individual player forfeit totals.)

If a league match is cancelled for any reason, the *LS* must announce prior to the next scheduled meet whether the cancelled match will be dropped (shortening the season) or made up.

2.8 Guests

Non-SEPAPL members may play as a guest in the league at the *LS*'s discretion. A guest's scores do not count and each game with a guest is scored as if the guest did not play the game at all.

3. Machine Play Rules - General

3.1 Extra Balls

On machines set to four (4) or more balls per game, extra balls must be plunged and not played. On machines set to three (3) or less balls per game, one (1) extra ball may be played per player per game. Other extra balls must be plunged and not played. Extra balls that must be plunged and not played are referred to as "unallowable" or "plunged" balls in this document.

When a player is required to plunge an extra ball, the player may touch the machine to set up a skill shot before launching the ball. Once the ball is set into motion, the player may no longer

touch the machine. If the ball is returned to a launcher lane that requires a manual plunge (e.g. by a ball saver), the player may re-plunge the ball.

If a plunged extra ball becomes stuck somewhere on the machine, the player may attempt to nudge the machine to free the ball. If nudging fails to free the ball, and there is no operator present to free the ball, the player (or *LS*) will be required to tilt the game in an attempt to free the ball. No compensation is provided in this event, nor is it considered a major malfunction.

Buy-ins for extra balls are not allowed, except as noted in sections [4.2](#) and [4.3](#).

3.2 Replays and Specials

No award is given for credits earned by replays or specials during league play. If a machine awards extra balls for replays or specials, they are played as prescribed in section [3.1](#).

3.3 Malfunctions

Pinball machines are complex assemblies that can exhibit many unintended behaviors during play. To keep league play on track and prevent excessive focus on minor glitches, only a major machine malfunction can affect league play. A major malfunction is one that results in a loss of a playable turn that is not a normal part of the game (i.e. premature loss of turn). A "playable turn" includes the player's current turn at play, and any other balls that the player is entitled to play. This does not include ["unallowable" extra balls](#). Note that an active multiball is part of the "current turn at play" and therefore a major malfunction during multiball is only counted once.

In disputed situations, the *LS* shall decide whether or not a malfunction is considered major.

The following are examples of major malfunctions:

- A player is forced to tilt the ball in an attempt to dislodge a stuck ball (unless it is an unallowable extra ball; see section [3.1](#)).
- A turn ends prematurely (i.e. with 1 or more balls in play).
- A ball is auto-plunged or otherwise shot into play prematurely.

The following examples would not be considered major malfunctions:

- A player tilts away a stuck ball when it was not clearly necessary.
- A multiball round ends prematurely but does not result in loss of turn.
- A ball goes airborne and drains.
- A lit kickback fails to kick the ball back into play.
- A ball saver fails to work.
- A player tilts another player's ball. (This is [Interference](#).)
- If a problem with a machine is announced to league players by the *LS* before league play is started, then that problem is not considered a major malfunction even if the result is loss of ball in play.

If two (2) major malfunctions occur to a player during the course of a game, the player has two options. At the end of the ball on which the second malfunction occurred, he may either continue

the game as is, or end his current game and replay it after everyone else in the group has finished their game. The player must announce a decision to all players in the group before the next player starts playing the next ball. The deciding player is responsible for ensuring that the next player does not begin play before a decision is announced. If he allows the game to continue, then it is presumed that he wishes to continue playing the game. If the game is replayed, the second (replay) score becomes his score on that game, regardless of whether it is better or worse than his previous effort. The rest of the group waits for the player to finish the replayed game before starting their next game.

The *LS* can declare a machine unplayable at any time if it is not functioning properly and the resulting malfunction(s) will, in his estimation, impair the ability of players to obtain fair scores. If the first ball played by all players result in major malfunctions, or if play cannot be continued on a machine for any reason, the machine is automatically declared unplayable for the rest of the meet, or until the machine is repaired. In these cases, the entire game is replayed immediately on a machine designated by the *LS*.

Catastrophic malfunctions such as slam tilt, total machine failure, fire due to overheated components, main processor halts, and similar events are handled on a case by case basis, using the malfunction rules described above if possible. Frequently, catastrophic malfunctions will invalidate all scores for that group on that machine. However, depending on when the malfunction occurs, the scores as played may stand if so decided by the *LS* (e.g. catastrophic malfunctions on the last ball of the game). Any recorded scores on the machine at the time of failure will be used if the machine is brought back into service and affected players replay, or players accept agreed-upon scores.

It is recommended that the league prepare a maintenance sheet on which is noted any malfunctions that are found on the various machines during league play. This list should be passed on to the site's management to assist in the proper maintenance of the machines.

3.4 Positive Malfunctions

If a malfunction causes a player to receive an exceptionally unfair advantage over the other players, and there is no reasonable way to avoid it, then the game is stopped and a new game is started either on the same or a different machine at the *LS*'s discretion. If a positive malfunction can be avoided (such as the awarding of extra points by repeated tapping of a flipper button), then this behavior shall be reported to the *LS* and shall be avoided during subsequent league play. At the discretion of the *LS*, the game may be replayed if it is felt that an unfair advantage was already gained by one or more players due to the malfunction. In this situation, the *LS* may also rule that completed scores on the game are to be discarded. It is the responsibility of all members of a group to ensure that positive malfunctions are not abused.

Note that a one ball "multiball" is not considered to be an exceptionally unfair advantage.

3.5 Gameplay Promptness

When a player's turn comes up in a league match, he is expected to begin play promptly. If a league player does not begin play in a reasonable amount of time, the *LS* may plunge the ball for him, and the player may not play the ball.

3.6 Practice Games

Once league play starts, a player may not practice games that he is scheduled to play later in that match. Practice games are allowed on machines that a player is not scheduled to play during that match, if it does not interfere with league play by his own or other groups. Practice games must be ended immediately if a league group is ready to begin a scheduled game on that machine.

3.7 Distractions

In general, random distractions that occur during league play (including minor physical bumps) are considered normal play conditions and no allowances are made for the effects of such distractions on a player's game.

3.8 Non-League Players

League players do not take precedence over other customers at the league location. Having a non-league customer play your ball is considered a distraction and not interference; control of the ball should be regained as quickly and politely as possible. Close attention should be paid by league players to their game in progress to guard against this situation.

4. Illegal actions

4.1 Playing Own Unallowable Extra Ball

If a player nudges, flips, or otherwise plays his own unallowable extra ball, he must stop as soon as the error is recognized, and must plunge his next "allowable" ball without playing. If the error occurs on or after the player's last "allowable" ball, his final machine score is reduced by 25%.

4.2 Playing Opponent's Ball

The violator shall attempt to trap the ball(s) on a flipper as soon as the error is realized. On a first offense (per meet), the violator must plunge his next ball as if it were an unallowable extra ball. If the violator has already finished the game, then that player's final machine score for the game will be reduced by 25%. On the second or greater offense (per meet), the violator receives a machine score of zero for the game.

If the affected ball was an unallowable extra ball, there is no additional compensation for the victim. Otherwise, the victim may choose one of three options: continue playing the erroneously plunged ball (if control can be recovered), drain the plunged ball and play an additional ball through a buy-in or (normally unallowable) earned extra ball, or replay the entire game. The player must announce a decision to all players in the group before play resumes. The deciding player is responsible for ensuring that the next player does not begin play before a decision is announced. If he allows the game to continue without announcing a decision, then it is presumed that he wishes to continue the game and play an additional ball. If the game is replayed, the

second (replay) score becomes his score on that game, regardless of whether it is better or worse than his previous effort. The rest of the group waits for the player to finish the replayed game before starting their next game.

4.3 Interference

Interference in another player's game is not tolerated. Interference includes (but isn't limited to) intentional slam tilts, tilting an opponent's ball, or nudging the machine during another player's ball, even if the action does not cause the victim to lose the ball. It also includes intentional distraction of a player during his play. Talking or coaching is not considered interference, unless the player at the machine specifically requests that he not be talked to during play.

If a player interferes with another player, causing a drain and/or loss of turn, the victim of the interference may either replay the entire game, or continue the game and play one (1) additional ball to replace the interfered ball (using either an earned, normally unallowable extra ball or a buy-in ball). If the next player starts play with no decision announced, the victim is presumed to wish to continue his game. The interfering player is required to pay for the replayed game or the buy-in ball, even if there are credits on the machine.

Interference is a [serious violation](#) of league play rules, and a penalty will be assessed on the violator.

4.4 Slam Tilts

An **intentional slam tilt** is one caused by an aggressive and excessive shove of the machine, or by an attempted bangback or deathsave, and is considered [interference](#). Any other slam tilt is considered accidental. All slam tilts are handled as [catastrophic malfunctions](#).

4.5 Serious Violations of League Rules

Serious violations are those so designated in these rules, as well as any conduct by a player that the *LS* determines to be exceptionally detrimental to the league.

Serious violations are cumulative over an entire season, not just one match. For these violations, the following penalties are assessed:

- First and second offense: Forfeit the current game with a machine score of zero. If the violator's group does not have a "current" game in progress, this penalty will be assessed against the game of the current match for which the violator has the highest league points. If there is more than one such game, the last such game of the match will be penalized.
- Third offense: Forfeit of all games in the current match with machine scores of zero. Behavior which causes a player to be ejected from the establishment by the management will be penalized as an automatic third offense, even if it occurs before or after league play. If the violator's group does not have a "current" match in progress, the match chronologically closest to the violation will be penalized.

- Fourth offense: Forfeit of season. The player's scores are wiped, and the player will be suspended from the league.
Violence of any kind against fellow players, vandalism of pinball machines or other property will be penalized as an automatic fourth offense.

4.6 Not Starting the Proper Number of Games

If too many games are started inadvertently, balls for the extra games are plunged but not played. If too few games are started, additional games are started, if possible, so that the number of games on the machine matches the number of players in the group. If the proper number of games cannot be started by the above means for some reason, the game is ended immediately. In this situation, the player responsible for the wrong number of games being credited (player 1) will note their ball 1 score in the aborted game, and will pay the cost of restarting the game for all players. Prior to launching their last allowable ball (i.e. ball 3 for 3-ball games, ball 5 for 5-ball games), player 1 will add their first-ball score from the aborted game to their displayed score, and record that sum as their final machine score for the game. (In other words, that player's ball 1 score from the aborted game replaces their last ball in the replacement game.) If this player fails to properly record this modified score, then only the ball 1 score from the aborted game will be recorded as their final machine score. All other players play a full game for the restart.

4.7 Deathsaves and Bangbacks

Deathsaves and bangbacks ("biffs") are techniques used by some players to return a ball back into play that has already gone down an outlane or otherwise drained. These techniques are not allowed in SEPAPL league play. A player that successfully performs a deathsave or bangback will receive a machine score of zero on that game, and must plunge any remaining balls without playing them. However, it is allowable for the ball to bounce back into play of its own accord (most common on Gottlieb games).

Since these maneuvers do not interfere with any other player's game, performing a deathsave or bangback is not considered a serious violation of league rules.

4.8 Cheating

Pinball can often be frustrating, especially during competition. The SEPAPL rules are designed to deal fairly with this fact, to encourage people to control themselves, and to compensate for various mishaps that might occur during play. On the other hand, violation of any rules with the clear intent of preventing another player from fairly playing the machine or of unfairly increasing one's own score can only be described as cheating, and is not tolerated. Cheating will result in the player's immediate suspension from the league.

5. Scoring

At the completion of a game, it is not important to record the *actual* scores received by each

player. Instead, it is only important to record the *relative* scores of each player (i.e., who was 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th).

It is each player's responsibility to be sure that their relative machine scores are recorded correctly on the scoresheet as each game is finished. Any possible scoring errors should be brought to the attention of the *LS* as soon as possible. Once notified of a possible error, the *LS* shall contact all the players in the affected group to determine their recollection of the scoring. If all players are in agreement, then the scoring will be corrected. However, if all players in the group do not concur with the reported error, then the scores as recorded on the scoresheet shall stand.

The scoresheet may be “virtual” if software is used to do scoring while games are being played. For example, an iPad may be setup during league for all groups to record their scoring after each game is played in a match. The *LS* will announce at the beginning of the season how scoring will be done during matches.

5.1 Game Points

Players earn *Game Points* for each game played in a weekly match. Game Points are awarded based on the *Game Finish*. Game Finish is defined as the finish of the players of that game based on their relative machine scores. Game Points are awarded for each game as follows:

Game Finish	Game points
1st	5
2nd (for 3 and 4 player games)	3
3rd (for 4 player games)	2
Last	1
Forfeits (player not present and no pre-play)	0

Any ties in Game Finish would be a rare occurrence, but if it happens, it will be resolved by a one ball playoff between the affected players on the same machine. If this playoff does not resolve the tie (a very rare occurrence), additional balls will be played until the tie is broken. Ties that involve a player that is absent and has a pre-play will be resolved via a coin-flip.

5.2 Match Points

At the end of each week, *Match points* are calculated for each player based on the sum of that

player's game points for the week.

5.3 Season Points

Season Points are the sum of the Match Points for each week. For weeks 1-6, League Points are used to rank players and determine groups. After week 6, divisions are formed and locked down (groups are formed within divisions) and Season Points reset. For weeks 7-10, group play is within each of the divisions and Season Points are maintained separately for each division and are used to determine playoff qualification.

6. Player Grouping - Division Qualification Matches

Players are arranged into groups of three or four, initially using IFPA ranking, but after week 1 using a ranking based on Season Points (ties use IFPA ranking), so that players of similar ability are playing against each other during any given match. A match consists of five games, played on five different machines (if possible) during a single meet. All games are played in multiplayer mode (players alternate turns and scores are displayed simultaneously on the machine). At the end of each match, all players are re-grouped for the next match based on accumulated Season Points.

6.1 Group Size

Players are arranged into as many groups of three players as possible, but in most cases there should be at least one four-player group for the lowest-ranked players. The following table shows suggested group sizes for a given number of players in the league.

6 to 8 players: 2 groups

- 6: 3 3
- 7: 3 4
- 8: 4 4

9 to 12 players: 3 groups

- 9: 3 3 3
- 10: 3 3 4
- 11: 3 4 4
- 12: 3 3 3 3

13 to 14 players: 4 groups

- 13: 3 3 3 4
- 14: 3 3 4 4

15 to 17 players: 5 groups

- 15: 3 3 3 3 3

- 16: 3 3 3 3 4
- 17: 3 3 3 4 4

18 to 20 players: 6 groups

- 18: 3 3 3 3 3 3
- 19: 3 3 3 3 3 4
- 20: 3 3 3 3 4 4

21 to 23 players: 7 groups

- 21: 3 3 3 3 3 3 3
- 22: 3 3 3 3 3 3 4
- 23: 3 3 3 3 3 4 4

24 to 32 players: 8 groups

- 24: 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3
- 25: 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 4
- 26: 3 3 3 3 3 3 4 4
- 27: 3 3 3 3 3 4 4 4
- 28: 3 3 3 3 4 4 4 4
- 29: 3 3 3 4 4 4 4 4
- 30: 3 3 4 4 4 4 4 4
- 31: 3 4 4 4 4 4 4 4
- 32: 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4

6.2 Rankings

6.2.1 League Rank

For weeks 1-6, at each meet, all players in the league are ordered in a single League Rank based on Season Points, beginning with the top player in group 1 and continuing down to the last player in the lowest group. This ranking is then divided into groups based on the league size, as shown above, and players within each group compete directly with each other during that meet.

The initial League Rank for week 1 is assigned based on current IFPA ranking. After week 1, Season Points are used to rank players (with IFPA ranking used to break ties).

League Rank is used to determine division placement.

6.2.2 Group Rank

Group rank is the ordering of players within their groups based their League Rank (in weeks 1-6) or Division Rank (weeks 7-10) rank. It is used to determine who gets to select the first machine to be played and play order. After the first machine played, the relative scores for a preceding game is used to determine who gets to select the next machine to played and play order.

6.2.2 Division Rank

For weeks 7-10, at each meet, all players in each division are ordered in separate Division Ranks, beginning with the top player in the first group in that division and continuing down to the last player in the lowest group in that division. This ranking is then divided into groups based on the division size (using the same criteria for number of groups and size as used for the whole league in week 1-6) and players within each group compete directly with each other during that meet.

The initial Division Rank for week 7 is based on the League Rank at the end of week 6.

Ties in Division Rank that affect division placement are resolved by a tie-breaker game. Ties in Division Rank that do not affect division placement are resolved at random to determine group placement and group rank.

Division Rank is used to determine qualification for playoffs.

6.3 Group Movement

After each group match, all players are re-arranged in descending order based on their ladder rank with is in turn based on their total match scores to date. Ties are resolved randomly. This ladder is then divided into groups based on the league size, as shown above, and players within each group compete directly with each other during the next meet.

6.4 Mid-Season Dropouts

If a player drops out of the league, new groupings are determined based on the new league size (minus the player that dropped out).

6.5 Mid-Season Additions

At the discretion of the LS, new players can be added to the league for weeks 2 or 3. For a new player, any games missed before joining the league are considered forfeits with a score of zero. New players are added as the lowest seed to the highest numbered group with only 3 players currently in it. Their ladder rank and group rank will reflect their position within the group (i.e., bottom seed within that group). For machine selection, the first week the new player is added, that player is skipped for the first game, so that others in that group making machine selections are not impacted by the addition of the new player.

7. Machine Selection and Play Order

At each meet, the lowest seed of each group will choose their group's first machine to be played. If that player is not present at game selection time, the next lowest-ranked player in the group will make the choice. Selections can be made from any game that is available and not being played by anyone.

Each meet, a group can pick their first game and start playing if all their players are present (excluding players who it is known will not be attending) and everyone is ready to start.

After the first game is played, successive games played in the match will be picked by the person with the lowest score from the preceding game. The game must be available (not currently being played) and must not have been picked for play by that group earlier in the match.

7.2 Machine Replacement Selection

If a machine should become unplayable during league play, a replacement machine must be designated by the *LS*, subject to as many of the following constraints as possible.

The replacement machine:

- Should be in good working order.
- Should be available.
- Should not be already have been played by the affected group.

7.3 Individual Play Order

Order of play in a game is determined by player selection. For the first game, players sequentially select their play order in the order of their group rankings on the score sheet. For subsequent games, choices for order of play are made in the order of their scores on the previous game (i.e. the highest-scoring player in a game receives first choice of play order in the subsequent game).

8. Playoffs

8.1 Playoff Divisions

To provide a fair chance for players of all skill levels to participate in the playoffs, the league is separated into playoff divisions based on league size. Leagues with 8 or fewer players will consist of a single division. Leagues having between 9 and 22 players will be divided into two divisions (A and B), with A Division containing the top-ranked players. Leagues having more than 22 players will be divided into three divisions (A, B and C). Division sizes are determined by dividing the number of players into equal-sized groups, with any extras being allocated to the higher division. For example, an 11-player league will have a 6-player A Division and a 5-player B Division, and a 26-player league will have 9 players in both A and B Division, and 8 players in C Division.

Division qualification is determined by each player's ladder rank over the season.

Division determination is finalized at the end of the third-to-last meet each season, which allows for two meets of direct competition for playoff qualification before the season ends. Ladder rankings for each player are the sum of match scores for all meets. At the end of the third-to-last meet, all league players are listed in descending order of ladder ranking, and this listing is

divided into divisions as specified above. Player dropouts in the final two meets do not affect the number of divisions or qualifiers in each division.

8.2 Awarding Playoff Spots

Within each division, players with the highest total match scores for the season qualify for playoff competition. There are between 3 and 5 playoff qualifiers in each division, based on division size. Each division in a given league will have the same number of qualifiers, with approximately 50% of the players qualifying for post-season play.

5-player playoffs consist of a semifinal match, followed by a 3-player final match between the top three scorers in the semifinal match. 3- and 4-player playoffs consist of a single finals match. Based on these guidelines, the number of divisions and qualifiers per division are determined from the following table.

Players per Match per Division

League Size	SEMIFINALS	FINALS
5-6	<i>n/a</i>	A-3
7-8	<i>n/a</i>	A-4
9-14	<i>n/a</i>	A-3, B-3
15-17	<i>n/a</i>	A-4, B-4
18-22	A-5, B-5	A-3, B-3
23-27	<i>n/a</i>	A-4, B-4, C-4
28-32	A-5, B-5, C-5	A-3, B-3, C-3

The winner and runner-up of each final match are named Division Champion and Division Runner-Up for the season and are awarded trophies.

8.3 Playoff Format and Machine Selection

Each division playoff match consists of a series of games played between 2-4 players, using the same game scoring criteria as regular-season games.

All head-to-head (2 player) games are played in a best two out of three format to determine the scoring for round (i.e., 5 points total goes to the winner of the best 2 out of 3, 1 point goes to the loser). All 3 and 4 player games are played as single games to determine the scoring for that round.

The advantage in machine selection and play order selection is given to the higher-seeded player. Player seeding in the first playoff match is determined by total match points accumulated during the lockdown (intra-division) portion of the season. Seeding in the second playoff match (if any) is determined by match points accumulated in the first playoff match. Machine picks and play

order are selected by the first player listed for each game in the charts below. (Numbers indicate seed positions.) Machine selections will begin 15 minutes before the scheduled start of a playoff match. All selections must be recorded prior to the start of the match. If a second match (i.e. finals) is scheduled immediately after the first match (semi-finals), machine selections for the second match will begin upon the conclusion of the first match.

Playoff Matchups - Numbers Indicate Seed Positions

Players	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Round 5
Two (*)	1-2	2-1	1-2	2-1	1-2
Three	2-1-3	2-3	1-3	1-2	1-2-3
Four	2-1-3-4	1-4; 2-3	1-3; 2-4	1-2; 3-4	1-2-3-4
Five	2-5; 3-4	1-5; 2-3	1-4; 3-5	1-3; 2-4	1-2; 4-5

(*) There may be only two players in a playoff match if one of the qualifiers is absent or drops out and no eligible substitute is available; see section [8.6](#).

The highest seeded player in each division makes all of his machine picks first, followed by the next highest seeded player, and so on. Players' machine picks must adhere to the following rules as much as possible, subject to machine availability:

- Players must select different machines for each head-to-head (2-player) game in a match.
- A player may not select a machine already chosen for the same round by a higher seeded player in the same division. (ex: in a five player match, if the #2 seed chooses to play Addams Family in round 1, the #3 seed may not choose Addams Family in round 1.)
- A player may not select a machine he is already scheduled to play twice in a match due to picks by higher seeded players. (ex: in a five player match, if the #4 seed is scheduled to play Twilight Zone in rounds 1 and 3, he may not select Twilight Zone for round 5.)
- A player may not select the same machine for a head-to-head (2-player) game against the same opponent in both the semifinals and finals.

If a player is not present when it is time for their machine selections, that player will drop one position in seeding, and the next lowest seeded player will advance, and immediately be asked to provide game selections.

8.4 Ties in Playoff Qualification

At the end of the regular season, if there is a tie in divisional standings based on total match points, the tie is broken by playing a tie-breaker game between the tied players. Coin flip is used to determine who gets to pick the machine. The other person gets to pick play order.

8.5 Ties in Playoff Results

Two-way ties during the playoffs are decided by the head-to-head game between the tied players during that playoff match. In the event there is a three or more way tie, the head-to-head games

are used first as a tie-breaker. If the tie is unresolvable (such as a three-way tie that is circular in the head-to-head games), then the final game played commonly by all tied players is used as the tie-breaker.

If the playoff format used does not culminate in a final game between all the players (e.g. a playoff match of five players), and the head-to-head games are not able to break a tie (e.g. a circular tie), then the *LS* shall randomly select a machine for a one game tiebreaker between the tied players.

8.6 Tardy or Missing from Playoffs

Tardy players may request a 15 minute delay in their match start time per section [2.2](#), though this does not prevent any drop in seeding, as described in section [8.3](#). If a player is not present for their match start time, they are immediately disqualified from the match, all lower-seeded players advance one spot, and the next highest ranked player from the division becomes the lowest-ranked playoff player. If no A-qualified player is available for an A-division spot, the spot is given to the highest ranked B-division player present who is not already in the playoffs. If no B-qualified player is available for a B-division spot, the spot is given to the highest ranked C-division player present who is not already in the playoffs. Under no circumstances can a league player participate in a lower division playoff.

If a player is dropped from the match, other players will be permitted to change their machine selections for games involving the dropped player. Machine selections for games not involving the dropped player may not be changed.

9. Pre-plays

Pre-plays allow a player to submit scores in advance for anticipated or unanticipated absences or tardiness for a league match. Players are strongly encouraged to establish a full set of pre-play scores for all the games in the league location, because if they are not present for a match and a game is chosen and played for which they have no pre-play scores, they will forfeit the game and receive zero (0) points.

If a player will not be able to attend an upcoming league match, the player may schedule a pre-play session. Pre-play games must not be played during league play. Each player may use a maximum of 15 pre-play game scores per season. The allows for someone to miss three full weeks of the season and use preplays to provide their scores.

Another league player or the *LS* must witness each pre-play session. During the pre-play session, all working games at the league location should be played (since the specific games that will be played by the absent player's group are not known in advance). Pre-plays are subject to all normal rules of league play (e.g. extra ball restrictions). The actual score for all pre-plays must be recorded by the player and submitted to the *LS*. Either a paper scoresheet will be provided at

the league location or there will be a software/internet-based method for entering pre-play scores (will be announced by the LS at the start of the season). It is recommended that the person submitting pre-play scores retain a copy of them.

If one or more games are not available during the pre-play session for any reason, the player should record that on their scoresheet and may attempt to schedule another pre-play session for these games.

All pre-play scores are made public to all league players. The LS at the start of the season will announce the method used to do this (e.g., posted on the website, scoresheets kept in a notebook at the league location, etc.). Prior to game selection at each league meet, all submitted pre-play scores will be accessed. After a game is chosen by an absent player's group, the absent player's pre-play score will be used for scoring the game chosen. If the absent player has no pre-play score for that game, the absent player forfeits the game and receive a score of zero.

If a player will miss more than one meet in a row, he may pre-play multiple sets of scores. If this is done, all working games at the league location are played once, and then all the games are played again for the additional set of pre-play scores. The score sets will be clearly marked as played as part of set 1, 2, or 3. Scores will be used from set 1 first and only if a score has already been used as part of set 1 will set 2 be used.

A player may add scores to their pre-plays to either fill in games that were not previously played, provide another score for a game score that has been used, or play a new game that has been recently added.

10. Dues

Dues for the full season are to be paid to the Pinball Gallery on/before the start of the season. Players will also pay for games played during the regular season and during the playoffs. The league maintains a "kitty" which players pay when there are already credits on a machine. At the end of the season, the money collected in the kitty will be matched by the Pinball Gallery and donated to a charity in the name of the league.

11. Prizes

Trophies are awarded to the champion and runner-up in each division based on the outcome of the playoffs. Additional prizes may also be awarded at the discretion of the Pinball Gallery.

Appendix A - Special Rulings

The following section lists rulings on game-specific malfunctions and other situations that have occurred during league play. These rulings detail our ideas on what does or does not count as a major malfunction on the games, as well as special cases (bugs) that call for a special ruling.

Remember that it takes two major malfunctions on one game to get a replay of the game and that a replay must be requested at the time of the second malfunction before play continues. This section is intended to be a dynamic document, subject to expansion and modification as new and unforeseen special circumstances occur.

Under no circumstances will the *LS* modify a player's score to account for points unearned due to a machine software bug or hardware malfunction, unless there is a Special Ruling already on the books. If an unexpected glitch causes a player to be cheated, the score displayed on the machine stands, and the *LS* will attempt to discern if a Special Ruling is necessary for future occurrences. In order for a Special Ruling to be made, the glitch must be reproducible and the cause and effect must be clearly understood. If these conditions are not met, no Special Ruling will be made.

A.1 The Addams Family

Not a Malfunction - Ball falls off habitrail into outlane; fast shots to the staircase ramp sometimes result in a ball falling off the metal habitrail above the playfield; Thing flips ball into outlane or drain; Thing sometimes does not flip accurately; Things flips doesn't activate and the ball drains as a result.

A.2 Demolition Man

Not a Malfunction - After dropping out of ramp habitrail into inlane, ball spins/bounces into outlane; Not getting ball saver after hitting car crash target.

A.3 Flintstones

Not a Malfunction - After dropping out of ramp habitrail into inlane, ball spins/bounces into outlane.

Major Malfunction - If the ball drops off the plastic 'loop-over' over the center drain and drops into the drain without the ball saver returning the ball to play.

A.4 Hook

Not a Malfunction - After dropping out of ramp habitrail into inlane, ball spins/bounces into outlane.

A.5 Judge Dredd

Special Ruling - Due to the way the ball saver works on this game, you may choose one and only one flipper for use during unallowable Extra Balls. You may play this flipper until the ball drains. Once a flipper is chosen you may not change the flipper for the duration of the ball. (Hint: Choose the left flipper.)

A.6 NBA Fastbreak

Special Ruling - Championship Rings are awarded a point value of 50. The displayed score is

increased by 50 points for each ring earned. Earning a ring must be witnessed.

A.7 Scared Stiff

Special Ruling - When plunging an unallowable Extra Ball, if you make the Spin the Spider shot, you may not use the flippers to choose an item on the Spider. This feature will time out and select a random award after a few spins.

A.8 Stargate

Major Malfunction - A shot to the Sarcophagus gets kicked up to the habitrail and rolls down to the outlane where a gate is expected to open to allow the ball to pass into the kickback. If a switch gets triggered (through faulty hardware) before the ball clears the gate, the gate will close draining the ball.

Special Rulings - During the "Eye of Ra" mode each shot to the right target adds a ball, for up to four balls in play. After this the center pyramid is lit for 50 million. If the game is missing a ball, a software bug will keep this mode running as a one-ball multiball, provided the player reached the second half of the mode (50M-point pyramid). When this happens (one-ball multiball) the player must drain the ball and may use an extra ball or buy an extra ball at league expense. This is done both to bypass an unfair advantage of this mode and to prevent a player from being stuck in this mode for the remainder of the ball.

During the "Battle" mode, each shot to one of the 'guards' upkicker awards a progressive amount of points and adds time to the mode timer. Sometimes the upkicker fires repeatedly, unable to get the ball to the habitrail to return to the playfield. If this happens the player must hold the ball 2 seconds, as displayed on the mode timer, for each such 'free' award given.

If the auto-plunger is consistently too weak to plunge the ball for multiball, the player must plunge the ball himself before hitting his second major shot for the multiball mode. The ball may not be left "in reserve" in the plunger lane during multiball.

A.9 Starship Troopers

Major Malfunction - The automatic ball plunger does not always clear the outlane, resulting in the ball draining immediately down the right outlane; If the automatic re-plunge fails to clear the outlane, the ball will drain, and the machine will retry several times. If none of these retries make it into play, the machine will give up, resulting in loss of turn.

Not a Malfunction - The above case (failure of autoplunger to clear the outlane) will not be considered a malfunction on the second and subsequent times that it happens to the same player during the course of one game. A player can override this particular malfunction by quickly manually plunging the ball into play, which he will be expected to do if he has already been a victim of this malfunction once during the game.

A.10 Star Trek: The Next Generation

Major Malfunction - Hitting lock results in end of ball - The lock (top right lane) sometimes

results in immediate bonus tallying (often from choosing Light Lock at launch).

Special Ruling - Final Frontier Kickout: At the start of Final Frontier the game sometimes prematurely kicks out one ball. If this ball drains before Final Frontier starts, the ball ends, Final Frontier is not played, and none of the displayed points are added to the player's score. This is a software bug, and the point value of the artifacts (100M per artifact + 1B per complete set) are added to the player's score. This also counts as a major malfunction.

A.11 Twilight Zone

Major Malfunction - Ball gets stuck on skill shot rollover, and cannot be freed without tilting.

Special Rulings - A player may not plunge the ball while a previous player's buy-in count down sequence is in progress. If the previous player forgets to cancel the buy-in sequence, you must wait for the sequence to end before plunging your ball. (If a player plunges a ball into the slot machine during the previous player's buy-in countdown sequence, and then cancels the buy-in sequence, a door panel is awarded via a bug in the game rom.)

If balls are getting stuck on the skill shot rollovers, attempting skill shots with the Powerball is not permitted. This lighter ball gets stuck much more easily and is nearly impossible to unstick without tilting. If it is sticking very badly, skill shots may be allowed only when the 10M Door Panel is unlit and for Super Skill Shot, or not at all.

Appendix B - Revision Log

This section lists summaries of changes made to this document.

- 5/23/13: Initial version copied from the DPL rules used in previous seasons (which were heavily based on the FSPA rules). Changed the name of the league from the “Downingtown Pinball League (DPL)” to the “Southeastern PA Pinball League (SEPAPL)”.
- 5/24/13: Extensive changes to the rules to reflect changes in scoring, group movement, machine selection, and play order selection.
- 5/25/13: More changes to pre-plays, scoring, an overview.
- 5/29/13: Minor grammatical, spelling, and typographic mistakes corrected.
- 6/3/13: Changed the initial grouping for week 1 to be assigned at random. Change the name of “Longevity Points” to “Skill Points”.
- 6/6/13: Changed to specify that groups are picked at random for week 1.
- 6/10/13: Cleaned up the overview section (removed some repetitive info). Clarified the rules regarding the points and rankings. Specified that League Points are wiped away after week 7 (they are only used to determine division qualification) and then Division Points are kept that are separate for each division for weeks 8-10.
- 2/20/14: Major changes include: now 5 games per match, simple 5-3-2-1, 5-3-1, 5-1 scoring, use IFPA ranking for initial ranking, division lock down after week 6, season

points reset, only intra-division play during lock-down, season points are separate for each division at that point.

- 9/25/14: Modified the scoring rules for the playoffs so that all head-to-head playoff games are played as best 2 out of 3 games to determine scoring for that round.