



# Standard Matchplay Rules 2.0

## Rule Change Summary

### Background

The Standard Matchplay Rules (SMR) version 1.0 did not include rule changes relative to the 2016 rules which it replaced. SMR 1.1 also contained no rule changes, but included corrections to and clarifications of SMR 1.0. SMR 2.0 is the first version of the SMR to include rule changes.

### Purpose of This Document

The purpose of this document is to facilitate communication of the changes to the foosball community by identifying, summarising and categorising the changes in a single place.

The SMR 2.0 document includes three kinds of change:

- New rules or changes to the rules
- Corrections or clarifications to existing rules
- Changes to the document structure

There are some changes to the language used to describe the rules, for example, a change to the way that breaks in play are defined and categorised; while this does not constitute a change to the rules per se, it can inform the way that the rules are interpreted and adjudicated.

While the rules changes are of primary interest to players and referees, the document changes are also of interest to readers who are translating the rules from the English-language source into other languages.

# How Rule Changes Are Made

Changing the ITSF Standard Matchplay Rules is not a simple process. It involves:

- Identifying and selecting Rule Change Proposals for consideration
- Discussion within Rules Commission, problem identification and solution crafting
- Wider review with and feedback from Referees Commission and Sport Commission
- Alerting National Federations and document translators
- Create new version of the SMR document
- ITSF voting and document release

The changes in SMR 2.0 are not radical; we begin with a modest set of changes, to exercise and test this process, with a view to more significant changes in the future.

## What Hasn't Changed

Work remains to be done in many areas. In some cases the need for change is understood but consensus on the most appropriate solution has not been achieved. Sometimes this is because different solutions are possible, but more usually just because the work is difficult. Sometimes consensus is achieved but the devil is in the detail; more time is required to develop the appropriate solutions.

To give some examples, the following topics have not been changed in SMR 2.0 but are areas of continuing interest for future rule changes:

- Rationalisation of the passing rules from 2-5 and 5-3
- Review of the wall contact rules on the 5-rod and rationalisation with 2-rod
- Clarification to the rule that says the goalkeeper and 2-rod are 'one rod'
- Clarification to the 'jarring' and 'impairment' rules
- Fixing confusion between 'Distraction' as an infraction and a penalty
- Collapsing multiple rules, e.g. multiple rules relating to 'Distraction'
- Replacing the Penalty Shot by a 3-rod Possession Award
- A more general mechanism for escalating penalties for repeated infractions
- Changes to the process for calling Time-outs and restarting after a Time-out
- Clarifications to the spinning rule
- Clarifications to the adjustment rule

## What Has Changed

The changes in SMR 2.0 represent a fraction of the topics considered and worked on by the ITSF Rules Commission, the tip of a larger iceberg. The SMR 2.0 changes are not necessarily the most important changes that could or should be made to the rules, but they represent those topics where the identified problems were considered tractable, where consensus has been achieved, and where finalised wording has been crafted in the time available.

# How Changes are Documented

Each major change is described in its own specific document, and each document has the following structure:

- Rule Change Summary
  - A brief summary of the rule change
- Rule Change Driver
  - The reason the change is being made and the purpose of the rule
- Technical Analysis
  - An explanation of how the change is being implemented within the technical framework, structure and lexicon of the SMR
- Player Guidance
  - What players need to know about the change
- Referee Guidance
  - What referees need to know about the change
- Matchplay Scenarios
  - Example matchplay scenarios that elucidate the rule change

## The SMR 2.0 Rule Changes

Each major rule change is described within a specific document for the purpose, as follows:

### ☰ Rule Change - Rationalisation of Breaks

- Not a change to the rules per se, but changes the way that breaks in play are classified; a break is either a pause, a dead ball, a ball off table, or an interrupt, while a restart always follows a break

### ☰ Rule Change - Switch Positions

- Defines when each doubles team loses the option to switch positions during the ready protocol

### ☰ Rule Change - Delay of Game

- Reduces the time limit that a player has to start play after receiving a Delay Of Game Warning from 10 seconds to 5 seconds

### ☰ Rule Change - Precarious Ball

- Players can now relinquish possession of a ball to the opposing 5-rod if it is precariously close to the goal

### ☰ Rule Change - Ball Off Table

- The ball now remains in play if it leaves the playing area and *rolls* on the cabinet top before returning to the playing area

### ☰ Rule Change - Three Walls Reset

- 5-rod wall contacts no longer accumulate across both sides of the table

### ☰ Rule Change - Generic Continue

- The option to continue from the current location of the ball now applies to all rules broken during active play

### ☰ Rule Change - Generic Expiry

- In the absence of a referee, the non-offending team's option to declare an infraction expires if they perform a controlled transition

#### ☰ Rule Change - Restart Time Management

- Players are entitled to a full 5 second pause between points, but play must be continuous during the restart process for putting the ball into play

#### ☰ Rule Change - Miscellaneous

- Miscellaneous changes which don't have their own dedicated document