

Official Cornhole Rules for ACA Tournaments

These are the official rules and regulations of the American Cornhole Association (ACA). The rules and regulations have been developed and ratified by a majority of ACA members for ACA sanctioned tournament play. The rules are not a mandate, but rather a guideline to promote consistent and standard Cornhole / Corn Toss play around the country. It is the responsibility of each ACA member to strive to meet these rules and regulations in all ACA sanctioned tournaments.

(Revised February 24, 2017)

RULE 1 – COURT LAYOUT

Section A. Dimensions

A Cornhole / Corn Toss court shall be a level rectangular area 10 ft wide and a minimum of 45 ft long. The court should consist of two corn platforms, designated pitchers boxes and foul lines. A north-south setting is recommended for outdoor courts to minimize the effects of the sun.

Section B. Pitcher's Box

The pitcher's box is the rectangle 4 ft by 3 ft at each end of the court, parallel and on both sides of Cornhole platforms. Each contestant must remain in the pitchers box while pitching the corn bag.

Section C. Multiple Courts

To eliminate distraction and safely separate activity, Cornhole / Corn Toss courts adjacent to each other shall be a minimum of 10 feet apart. A greater distance (at least 12 feet) is preferable.

Section D. Foul Lines

There are two sets of foul lines: (1) open adult play and (2) junior play. The open adult play foul lines shall be defined as an imaginary line 30 ft. from the beginning of the hole in the opposite Cornhole platform. For Cornhole / Corn Toss sets that meet ACA specifications, this foul line will be parallel to the front of the cornhole platform. The junior play foul lines shall be defined as an imaginary line 21 ft. from the beginning of the hole in the opposite cornhole platform. See the diagram below.

Section E. Covered Or Indoor Courts

The regulations for covered and indoor Cornhole / Corn Toss courts are exactly the same with the additional stipulation that they shall have a minimum 12 foot vertical clearance to the lowest possible obstruction.

RULE 2 – PLAYING EQUIPMENT – CORNHOLE PLATFORMS AND BAGS

Section A. Equipment Standards

The ACA has adopted the following equipment specifications and standards for Cornhole / Corn Toss:

1. Each cornhole platform shall be a 48" x 24" rectangle made of half inch plywood. ACA sanctioned tournaments should only be played with wooden cornhole platforms as there is significant variance in play between wooden and plastic or other surfaces.
2. The hole in the cornhole platform shall be six inches in diameter and be centered nine inches from the top and 12 inches from each side of the cornhole platform edges.
3. The front of the cornhole platform shall be 4" inches from bottom to top and be at near a 90-degree angle to the deck face.
4. The back of the cornhole platform shall be 12 inches from ground to the highest point of the deck at a 90-degree angle to the deck face.
5. The cornhole platform should have solid wood sides with the only opening to the underside of the cornhole platform being through the hole in the cornhole platform. Although portable fold-down platforms are acceptable (with open sides), platforms with solid wooden sides are preferred for ACA sanctioned tournament play as it is sometimes difficult (especially late in the day) to determine if a corn bag was pitched into the hole or came to rest under the cornhole platform by being pitched through the open sides in a cornhole platform.
6. The Cornhole / Corn Toss play surface shall be finish sanded to a very smooth texture and there shall not be any blemishes in the wood surface that might disrupt or distort play.
7. The Cornhole / Corn Toss play surface shall be painted with a semi gloss exterior latex paint resulting in a surface that allows corn bags to slide but is not so slippery that it allows the bags to slide back down the platform. The preferable color is white, but any easy to see color is acceptable for tournament play.
8. The corn bags shall be made from two fabric squares 6-1/4" square with a quarter inch double stitched seam on all four sides. The corn bags should be made from 10 oz / sq yd duck canvas and may be any color that is easy to see during Cornhole play. Each bag shall be filled with approximately 2 cups of feedcorn and finished bags should be a minimum of 6" X 6" square and weigh between 14 and 16 ounces. Due to the recent shortage of feed corn we will allow the use of plastic pellets in lieu of feed corn.

RULE 3 – PITCHING DISTANCES

Section A. Adults

All open adult contestants shall pitch from the pitcher's box behind the 30 foot foul lines. Physically impaired adults or seniors may, if agreed by all contestants, observe the 21 foot foul lines.

Section B. Juniors

Junior contestants may pitch from any place, but must observe the 21 foot foul lines.

RULE 4 – CORNHOLE COURT PREPARATION AND MAINTENANCE

Section A. Court Maintenance

Every effort shall be made to keep the Cornhole / Corn Toss play surface in perfect playing condition. Cornhole / Corn Toss courts should be free of anything that might distract a contestant during play. Each contestant is responsible for making sure the court is in good playing condition prior to starting the match. During a match, a contestant shall not be allowed to alter the Cornhole / Corn Toss court in any manner without the consent of the opponent or a tournament official.

Section B. Distractions During Play

Every effort shall be made to keep from distracting contestants during Cornhole / Corn Toss play. Drinks and other personal belongings should be placed behind the cornhole platform in designated beverage holders or other secure locations to keep from distracting contestants.

RULE 5 – PLAY OF THE GAME

Section A. Singles Or Doubles Play

Cornhole / Corn Toss can be played as doubles or singles. In doubles play two contestants are partners against another team of two contestants; in singles play a contestant competes against another contestant. In doubles play, one member of each team pitches from one cornhole platform and the other members pitch from the other cornhole platform. In singles play, both contestants pitch from the same cornhole platform. All other rules are basically the same for doubles or singles play.

Section B. Innings

Every Cornhole / Corn Toss match is broken down into innings of play. During each inning of play each contestant must pitch all four corn bags.

Section C. Value Of The Corn Bag

1. Corn Bag In-The-Hole – A corn bag in-the-hole (or Hole-In) is a corn bag which is thrown through the hole in the cornhole platform or otherwise comes to rest inside the cornhole platform (knocked in by another player or an act of God). A corn bag in-the-hole has a value of three points.
2. Corn Bag In-The-Count – A corn bag that is not in-the-hole but lands with any portion of the corn bag resting on the cornhole platform is in-the-count. A corn bag in-the-count has a value of one point. For a corn bag to be in-the-count, it must not touch the ground or any other portion of the court prior to coming to rest on the cornhole platform. If a corn bag touches the ground before coming to rest on the cornhole platform, it is a foul and must be removed from the cornhole platform prior to the continuation of play.
3. Corn Bag Out-Of-The-Count – A corn bag which comes to rest anywhere except in-the-count or in-the-hole is out-of-the-count and has no scoring value. A corn bag which is declared to be a foul is considered to be out-of-the-count (no matter where it comes to rest) and must be removed from the cornhole surface prior to the continuation of play.

Section D. Delivery Of Corn Bags

1. In doubles play, the first side of contestants alternate pitching corn bags until they have thrown all four corn bags, then the remaining contestant (pitching from the other cornhole platform) continue to alternate in the same manner until all four corn bags are delivered and the inning completed. Delivery in singles play is handled in the same manner (but from the same platform) with each of the two contestants alternating their pitching of corn bags until all four corn bags have been pitched completing the inning.
2. A contestant may deliver the corn bag from either the left or right pitchers box (see above) but, in any one inning, all corn bags must be delivered from the same pitcher's box. A contestant shall pitch the entire tournament with the same hand or arm, except in the case of a medical emergency.
3. Each individual contestant shall deliver the corn bag within 20 seconds. The time shall start when the contestant steps onto the pitcher's box with the intention of pitching.

Section E. Pitching Rotation During The Game

The contestant who scored in the preceding inning shall pitch first in the next inning. If neither pitcher scores, the contestant who pitched second (last) in the preceding inning shall pitch first in the next inning.

Section F. Position Of Contestants During Delivery

1. The pitcher must maintain constant contact with the designated pitcher's box (See diagram above) during the entire address and release of the corn bag. The only exception is for junior and physically challenged contestants, who must simply remain completely behind the 21 ft. foul line when the corn bag is released. The opponent, while not pitching, shall stand behind the cornhole platform at least 2 feet to the rear of the contestant who is pitching. After a short distance contestant (junior or physically challenged) pitches first they must return to the cornhole platform if the opponent or any contestant on an adjacent court is a full distance pitcher.

2. If both contestants use the same pitchers box to deliver their corn bags, the contestant pitching first should cross over to the other pitchers box in front of the cornhole platform and then move to the proper position. (see #1 above) As the first contestant is crossing in front the second contestant should be crossing over in back and mounting the pitchers box from the rear. If both contestants use opposite pitchers boxes, the contestant who pitches first should step directly back to the proper position described in #1 of this section.

Section G. Foul Corn Bags

A foul corn bag is a corn bag which was delivered in non-compliance with one of the rules of the game. It scores as a corn bag out of the count and is to be removed from the Cornhole / Corn Toss court before any more corn bags are pitched. Corn bags already in the court that have been knocked into foul territory by a foul corn bag should be returned to the scoring area. Additionally, corn bags that are in the count, but are knocked into the hole by a foul corn bag must be returned to their original scoring position.

1. The following are rule violations that must be spotted and called by an contestant or assigned judge. The penalty is to declare the corn bag a foul corn bag, which requires the corn bags to be removed from the court prior to resuming play.

(a) Any corn bag pitched when the contestant has made contact with or crossed over the foul line before the corn bag is released.

(b) Except as provided above, any corn bag pitched when the contestant has started or stepped completely outside the pitching box before releasing the corn bag.

(c) Any corn bag not delivered within the twenty second time limit.

(d) A corn bag pitched from a different pitchers box than the first corn bag.

(e) Any corn bag that contacted the court or the ground before coming to rest on the cornhole platform.

(f) Any corn bag which struck a previously defined object such as a tree limb, wire, indoor court ceiling, etc.

(g) Any corn bag that leaves a contestant's hand once the final forward swing of the delivery process has started shall count as a pitched corn bag. A corn bag that is accidentally dropped by a contestant before the final forward swing has started shall not be considered foul and may be picked up and pitched.

2. A contestant's corn bags shall be called foul if the contestant removes any corn bag before the scoring of that corn bag has been agreed upon. A judge shall be called if a decision cannot be reached. The judge shall determine the scoring for the inning.

Section H. Protests – If a contestant desires to make a protest, the protest shall be made to the judge or tournament official at the time the problem occurs. The tournament judge shall make the final ruling on all protests.

RULE 6 – LENGTH OF THE GAME

Section A. Point Limits

The Cornhole / Corn Toss match shall be played until the first team of contestants reaches (or exceeds) 21 points at the completion of an inning. The winning team does not need to win by two or more points.

Section B. The Inning Must Be finished

The Cornhole / Corn Toss match can never end in the middle of an inning. Thus, if a team that pitches first reaches or exceeds 21 points, the game can not end until the other side is allowed to pitch all of their corn bags and the inning is completed.

Section C. Ties At The End Of An Inning

If the Cornhole / Corn Toss match is tied at 21 or more at the end of an inning, play continues until one team or the other achieves a higher score at the end of an inning and wins the match.

Section D. Skunks

The game shall be played to 21 unless a team scores 7 or more points at the end of an inning before their opponents score any points. In this case the game is a skunk and the team that scores 7 or more points wins the match.

RULE 7 – SCORING

Section A. Simple Scoring

In simple scoring the points are totaled at the end of each $\frac{1}{2}$ inning and the smaller score is subtracted from the larger score and the difference in points is awarded to the team scoring the most points that $\frac{1}{2}$ inning. In this scoring method only one team can score per $\frac{1}{2}$ inning.

Section B. Cancellation Scoring

In cancellation scoring, corn bags in-the-hole and corn bags in-the-count pitched by opponents during an inning or half of an inning in doubles play cancel each other out. Only non cancelled corn bags are counted in the score for the inning.

1. Corn Bags In-The-Hole – Hole-ins (HI's) cancel each other. A corn bag in-the-hole of one contestant shall cancel a corn bag in-the-hole of his competitor and those corn bags shall not score any points. Any non cancelled corn bag in-the-hole scores three points.

2. Corn Bags In-The-Count – Corn bags in-the-count cancel each other. A corn bag in-the-count of one contestant shall cancel a corn bag in-the-count of the opponent and those corn bags shall not score any points. Any non cancelled corn bags in-the-count score one point each.

Section C. Score Calculation:

Cancellation scoring may be easily calculated as follows:

1. The points of both contestants are calculated for hole-ins and in-the-count corn bags.
2. The points of the lowest scoring contestant for hole-in corn bags are subtracted from the points of the highest scoring contestant for hole-in corn bags. The result is the hole-in score for the highest scoring contestant. The hole-in score for the lowest scoring contestant is zero.

3. The points of the lowest scoring contestant for in-the-count corn bags are subtracted from the points of the highest scoring contestant for in-the-count corn bags. The result is the in-the-count score for the highest scoring contestant. The in-the-count score for the lowest scoring contestant is zero.

4. The hole-in score for each contestant is added to the in-the-count score for each contestant to derive the recorded score for the inning.

5. In this manner hole-in and in-the-count corn bags from each contestant or team of contestants are cancelled out and only non-cancelled corn bags are counted in the score.

Section D. Individual Hole-In Percentage Scoring (HI%)

For purposes of calculating individual Cornhole / Corn Toss Hole-In percentages (see Rule 9 below) that is reported to ACA by members for purposes of ACA ranking and awards, ALL corn bags pitched in-the-hole are included in the total used to derive these percentages including those that would be eliminated under cancellation scoring rules. Only corn bags determined to be foul would be excluded from the individual statistical scoring.

Section E. Recording The Score

In tournament play, the score sheet shall be the official record of the game and will be used to submit the Official Tournament Scoring Summaries to the ACA (see Rule 9 below). Contestants are encouraged to pay close attention to the score at all times. It is highly recommended that visible scoreboard (that all contestants can review and verify for accuracy) be used to keep score during tournament play. If a question or discrepancy occurs regarding the correct score, the contestant(s) may approach the scorer between innings to rectify the situation. If the discrepancy cannot be corrected to the satisfaction of both contestants, a tournament judge shall be called to make the final decision.

RULE 8 – APPROPRIATE ACA MEMBER CONDUCT

Section A. On The Courts

An ACA member, while in competition, shall make no disturbing noises or movements that would distract the opponent or competitors on adjacent courts. The first offense shall call for a warning from the judge or tournament official. A second offense shall call for a forfeiture of the game being played. Any further offenses shall call for a forfeiture of all games.

Section B. Off The Courts

Any ACA member who indulges in heckling, unfair rooting, or any other form of unsportsmanlike conduct toward any ACA member or tournament official, shall be subject to expulsion from the tournament and the tournament site. This covers any inappropriate behavior (including profane or abusive language) in, or around, the court area. The member shall also be subject to a one year suspension from the ACA.

RULE 9 – ACA RANKING AND AWARDS

Section A. ACA Rankings And Awards

The ACA shall track and report the Cornhole / Corn Toss results of all members that report their scores from ACA sanctioned tournaments. From these statistical results, the ACA shall select and sponsor the Cornholer of the Year award to be presented to the best ACA member Cornhole player relative to all other members around the country.

Section B. Basis For ACA Rankings And Awards

The ACA uses the Hole-In Percentage (HI%) as a basis for comparative rankings and awards.

The Hole-In percentage is calculated as follows:

$$\# \text{ corn bags in the hole} / (\# \text{ Innings Pitched} * 4)$$

The ACA Cornholer of the Year will be selected and posted on the ACA web site each Labor Day base on play for the previous 12 months.

Section C. Reporting To The ACA

Members hosting ACA sanctioned tournaments will be responsible for submitting ACA Official Tournament Scoring Summaries to the ACA at the completion of every ACA sanctioned tournament. The scoring summaries set forth the names and ACA membership ID numbers for each contestant, the number of innings pitched and the number of hole-ins pitched for the tournament.

Section D. Updating And Reporting

The official rankings will be updated and published on a monthly basis. Monthly and cumulative to date HI% statistics will be reported for each ACA member that authorizes the release of this information in their membership application. ACA Official Statistical Reporting Summaries received by the 25th of each month will be included in that months updated results. Scoring summaries received after that date will be included in the next months results.

RULE 10 – ACA SANCTIONED TOURNAMENT PLAY

Section A. Hosting An ACA sanctioned Tournament

1. Any member of the ACA may host an ACA sanctioned Cornhole / Corn Toss tournament.
2. Responsibilities Of Hosting. The ACA hosting member is responsible for making sure that the equipment meets all ACA standards and that ACA rules of play are enforced during the tournament. The hosting member should also act as judge in resolving any ruling issues at the tournament.
3. Reporting Results. The Hosting member is required to submit the ACA Official Statistical Reporting Summary for all ACA members competing in the tournament within two weeks of the completion of play.

Section B. Tournament Play

The standard method of play for an ACA sanctioned tournament is double elimination seated bracket style tournament play. For smaller tournaments round-robin play may be used where each contestant plays every other contestant. At the end of round-robin play, winners shall be determined by win-loss records or hole-in percentage. If ties occur, they shall be settled by playoff, who-beat-whom or one of the other methods that was not used to determine the winner.

Section C. Publicity For Your Tournament

All ACA sanctioned Cornhole / Corn Toss tournaments will be posted on our upcoming tournaments list on the ACA web site. The ACA will also post your results, pictures and comments requested by any ACA member.

Section D. Handicapping

Handicapping may be used in open tournaments and league play. The amount of the handicap shall be determined by the tournament host or Judge.