

Bayou City Pinball League Official Rulebook

Version 2023.06.19

**Combined Rulebook Covering Both
Tournament and League Play**

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1 Introduction and Acknowledgments

This rule book covers league and tournament play for all events organized under the auspices of the Bayou City Pinball League (BCPL), a league founded by and for law-abiding pinball players of good character, regardless of skill level. Some sections are specific to some types of events. In particular, section 3 applies to only weekly leagues, section 4 applies only to the playoff tournament for weekly leagues, and sections 5 to 14 apply to various types of non-league tournaments.

Thanks to the CPL, FSPA, PPL, SCPL, and PAPA/IFPA as these rules are modified from their originals. Any rulings not covered in this document will refer to the PAPA/IFPA Tournament Rules, linked from ifpabinball.com.

1.1 League Officials

In these rules, “TD” stands for Tournament Director. For situations requiring an immediate decision or rule interpretation, this refers to the highest-ranking league official present who is not directly affected by the decision, with the official in charge of an event (sometimes called the “TD of record”) outranking the Commissioner or other officials who would normally be considered to rank higher. In particular, rulings of malfunctions or interference should be deferred to an uninvolved official. In other cases, it refers to any appropriate league officer, or depending on context, the person overseeing a given league, tournament, or other event. “Commissioner” refers to the official overseeing the entirety of BCPL operations, whether the long-term holder of the title (“Permanent Commissioner”) or an alternate official temporarily assuming the role (“Acting Commissioner” or “Interim Commissioner”). “League Official” refers to any single BCPL official tasked with tournament director or officiating duties, including the Commissioner. “League Officials” refers to one or more such officials, which may or may not include the Commissioner, or depending on context, to any and all such officials including the Commissioner.

1.2 Definitions

“In good standing” with BCPL is defined as not currently banned or suspended by league officials, whether for conduct related to BCPL membership, as a player in other pinball leagues/tournaments, or other conduct detrimental to the image of BCPL. A player is still “in good standing” while on probation as long as he/she is compliant with all conditions of probation, including remaining in compliance with other league rules. “In good standing” with the IFPA is defined as not currently suspended from IFPA benefits, including ranking in WPPR.

“Event” refers to any league meeting, tournament, or non-competitive social gathering held under the auspices of BCPL. “Competitive event” refers to only league meetings (including league playoffs) and tournaments.

A “fine” in the context of law violations includes all monetary penalties or forfeitures, including civil and administrative, regardless of the exact naming convention.

A “fugitive” is the subject of one or more outstanding arrest warrants, whether for a criminal offense or otherwise, or someone otherwise attempting to flee or evade capture by a law enforcement agency, bail bond recovery agent or agency, or other similar official.

A “larger event” is a convention or similar gathering, typically multiple days, where BCPL is running a tournament within that event.

The “temporal vicinity” of an event is defined as the time during which a significant number of players from the event can be reasonably expected to have arrived, be present, or remain present at the venue. Typically, the absolute minimum for that time will be:

- a) for single-day tournaments, one (1) hour before the event start time, to one (1) hour after the time at which play has concluded;
- b) for multiple-day tournaments, one (1) hour before the event start time on the first day, to one (1) hour after the time at which all tournament play has concluded;
- c) for a tournament held as part of a larger event, the entire time from one (1) hour before the larger event is first open to the public on the first day, until one (1) hour after the larger event concludes and closes to the public on the last day;
- d) for a league, one (1) hour before each league meeting to one (1) hour after play has concluded for all groups in that same league meeting;
- e) for a league playoff tournament, one (1) hour before the earliest division start time to one (1) hour after all tournament play has concluded.

These are minimums and the actual temporal vicinity will usually be longer. In some rare cases, the temporal vicinity may be shorter.

The “physical vicinity” of an event includes the entire property of the venue where an event is hosted, including any parking lots. For an event held as part of a larger event, it would include the entire grounds of the venue (e.g. hotel, convention center) where the larger event is being held, including the adjoining parking lots and common areas, with the exception of private areas clearly not part of the event such as hotel rooms.

“Coin drop” refers to any per-game charge to play pinball, and “coin play” or “coin drop basis” refers to any machine set up to accept payment per game (as opposed to “free play”). The references to “coin” are terms of art in the arcade gaming scene and amusement business and, in modern times, are considered independent of the actual payment medium, including per-game charges paid via swipe card, credit/debit card, paper money, cryptocurrencies, etc whether directly (i.e. inserted into an on-machine acceptor or via a mobile app linked directly to the machine) or indirectly (i.e. by first purchasing tokens or adding value to a card).

“Admission fee” refers to any fee payable for admission to the venue, including memberships and admission tickets/wristbands for a larger event surrounding a tournament. Typically an arcade or event which charges an admission fee will have games set to free play as opposed to coin play, though there are cases where an admission fee is charged but the games are set to e.g. nickel or dime play.

“Law” or “laws” includes any applicable government-enacted laws, ordinances, regulations, or other codified government legal edicts, regardless of title.

“Probation” refers to a delayed imposition of a penalty under these rules, not to any sanctions imposed by the courts/legal system. Instead, these rules use the term “community supervision” to refer to action by a court of law, even if that court itself still refers to it as probation.

“Gambling” is defined in rule 22.1.

A “charity” is defined as any organization with a tax exemption under 26 USC §501(c) paragraph (2), (3), (4), (5), (6), (7), (8), (9), (10), (11), (13), or (19).

1.3 Currency

All stated dollar amounts are in United States dollars. All financial transactions related to BCPL are to take place in United States currency, with exceptions to be announced by the TD or Commissioner on an event-by-event basis.

1.4 Communication

Tournaments and league meetings may be canceled, rescheduled, or moved due to weather or conflicts with other events at the original tournament/league venue. Notifications will be communicated via the email list, the website (<https://www.bayoucitypinball.com>), on Facebook, and possibly other methods to be announced at tournaments and league meetings.

1.5 Language

The official language of Bayou City Pinball League is English. While translations of the rules and of instructions by league officials is encouraged, the original English language versions of either shall take precedence in the event of a conflict. English is also the preferred language setting for pinball machines used in BCPL events (see also rule 19.6).

2 Common Rules For Both Leagues and Tournaments

2.1 Eligibility

Bayou City Pinball League (BCPL) events are open to all players in good standing with both the league and the IFPA, and who are not fugitives from justice as defined in section 1.2.

2.2 Age Requirements

2.2.1 General

There are no age restrictions imposed by BCPL beyond those of the venues where we play league and tournament events. League officials will attempt to negotiate the appropriate exception(s) to the minimum age policy at a venue if one exists, but the venue ultimately has final say on who can and cannot be admitted and/or participate in the event.

2.2.2 Minimum Recommended Age

Absent any other requirements by the venue, we recommend a minimum age of ten (10) years in general. This is a recommendation, not a requirement, and younger players who are mature enough to participate in tournament/league play are welcome to participate subject to each venue's minimum age requirements.

2.3 Identification and Privacy

2.3.1 Positive Identification Required

Players agree to confirm their legal identity as needed and bring appropriate photo identification to all league meetings. Acceptable forms of ID include:

- a) state-issued driver license or identification card;
- b) Uniformed Services ID card;
- c) US Armed Forces card;
- d) passport;
- e) tribal identification card;
- f) for current students, a university- or college-issued student identification card; or
- g) for players under twenty-one (21) years of age who do not have any other form of photo identification, a student identification card issued by a high school, middle school, or elementary school.

The day of presentation of the identification document(s) must be on or before the expiration date (i.e. the form of identification cannot be expired). For multiple-day events, the last day of the event must be on or before the expiration date of the identification document(s).

A passport used for identification need not necessarily be issued by the United States, as long as it is current and issued by a recognized government.

Players who intentionally give false or deceptive identifying information or who refuse to confirm their legal identities on request are subject to penalties including an immediate season or tournament forfeit combined with an indefinite ban from all BCPL leagues, events, and tournaments, and forfeiture of any earned prizes, in addition to any legal consequences resulting from such actions.

2.3.2 Player Names, IFPA Player Numbers, and Use of Aliases

Subject to requirements imposed by other agencies endorsing league play (such as, but not limited to, the IFPA) players may use an alias, different from their real, legal names for the purposes of league standings and their player persona. This includes aliases commonly referred to using terms such as “gamer name”, “player name”, or “stage name”. However, players must still identify themselves under their legal name to government and league officials per rule 2.3.1, and the player is required to use the same IFPA player number used in the past if that player has played in at least one previous IFPA-endorsed event, no matter how long ago that event may have been.

League officials are required to keep legal names confidential if the player is playing under an alias, except as required for compliance with legal process (such as subpoenas). Players playing under an alias are expected to trust league officials to maintain this confidentiality of their legal identities to the full extent possible under applicable laws and IFPA rules. Using multiple IFPA player numbers or intentionally making a false or deceptive statement regarding one’s IFPA player record is prohibited, and depending on circumstances, may also be considered either conduct detrimental to the operation of the league (20.1), cheating (19.8), or both.

2.3.3 Names and Locations Are Public

Names as entered into tournament software (such as matchplay.events) and the IFPA website are public information along with the location of the tournament. As such, individuals with privacy concerns (whether parents with concerns for their minor children or adults with concerns for themselves) are encouraged to play or register to play under an alias as appropriate.

2.3.4 Media Coverage/Blogging, Photos and Videos

League officials are forbidden to penalize players or increase penalties for other violations based on that player's status as a blogger, social media poster, or news reporter as long as the information used to identify players matches that made available publicly on the tournament software (such as matchplay.events) or IFPA website, and the player-reporter makes reasonable attempts not to publish information clearly identified as "off the record" or which a reasonable person would consider private and not directly relevant to the broader event.

Photographs and videos of league play are subject to any restrictions issued by the venue and any applicable laws. While it is encouraged to seek permission from parents before taking pictures or publishing such pictures of their minor children, it is not required if neither the venue nor laws restrict these actions.

3 Leagues

3.1 Introduction

The league(s) is/are considered the flagship event(s) of the BCPL. The league rules provide a format for running a friendly pinball league, offering competition for pinball players of all skill levels. These rules are designed for leagues of any number of players, playing on five (or more) machines at a single location. Competition is designed to be exciting down to the last ball of every game, and playoff spots are often not decided until the final ball has drained. The nature of the BCPL league system allows players of all skill levels to play in a single league which is fun and competitive for everyone.

Typically, league meetings are held weekly, skipping weeks to avoid conflicts with other local events and/or accommodate other events being held at the league meeting venue. However, some leagues may only have meetings bi-weekly, semi-monthly, monthly, or on a more irregular schedule.

3.2 Schedule / Format

The schedule currently consists of a six (6) week regular season schedule, followed by one (1) playoff week. Please refer to the calendar or announcement for upcoming meets. Each meet is a Max Matchplay tournament (also called a "roundless robin") with six (6) rounds. Players will be paired in each round and will earn one (1) point for each game won. Points accumulated throughout the season will determine qualification and seeding in the playoffs.

Each league meeting consists of six (6) games played per night, unless a different number of weekly games is stated by the TD prior to the start of the league.

For a six (6) week season, a player's five (5) best week scores out of the possible six (6) will determine their seeding (dropping the one (1) lowest score including a zero score for a no-show), and only players that compete in four (4) or more regular season meets will be eligible to play in the playoffs.

3.3 Determination of Schedule (Dates and Times)

The League Officials must set a complete schedule for a season of league play before that season may begin. Dates will be decided upon, however locations may change. League players are encouraged to attend every week, but full (100%) attendance is not required. You can miss one week of a season without any penalty to your score (as detailed in rule 3.2).

3.4 Start Time

Any non-league games in progress by league players at league start time are immediately halted. The TD will make and/or allow others to make any needed announcements and perform roll call. Once roll call is complete, players join their assigned group and begin league play immediately.

3.5 Placement of Tardy Players

Normally, players not present at roll call will not be allowed to play. However, we recognize that the Houston area is not the easiest metropolitan area to travel in. If you are planning to attend but may be a few minutes late, please contact the TD.

3.6 Forfeits/No Shows

If a player does not show up for a given league meeting, that player will be given no score (a null score value, usually printed as "-").

A player forfeited for cause for an entire league meeting or longer will receive a score of zero (0) for the week(s) in question.

3.7 Abnormal/Emergency Situations

The TD may cancel or postpone a league meeting if for any reason an abnormal and/or emergency situation exists making it unsafe or impractical to proceed as normally scheduled. The TD should make every reasonable attempt to finish out the season with the originally scheduled number of league meetings, including the playoff tournament, when possible and practical to do so, including rescheduling any missed league meetings. Failing this, the TD should make a reasonable attempt to finish the season with a meaningful competitive result.

Further guidance related to emergency management procedures is detailed in section 23.

3.8 League Meeting Cancellation

If a location should close down temporarily during a league play session (i.e. for the night, or multiple days but re-opening before the next league meet), and if less than one-half (50%) of the scheduled games have been played by any player, the meet shall be canceled and the results from the meet shall be void. If one-half (50%) or more games have been played, the results of already played games shall stand and the remaining games from the meet shall be rescheduled for a later date to be determined by the League Officials.

3.9 New Players

Subject to the eligibility requirements in rule 2.1, new league players are welcome and encouraged to join a weekly league at any time!

3.10 Machine Selection and Play Order

3.10.1 Machine Play Order

Play order is determined by the tournament software. The player shown as first player should play first and the player shown as second player should play second.

3.10.2 Machine Replacement Selection

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

An ideal replacement machine should be:

- in good working order;
- one that has not already been played by the affected group; and
- chosen to minimize group backlogs.

3.11 Dues / Finances

3.11.1 Dues Amounts

For normal seasons, league dues are twenty dollars (\$20.00) to play in the league for a full season, plus any fees which may be charged by a payment processor (such as PayPal, Venmo, Square, Stripe, etc). The League Commissioner, TD, or their designee (such as a treasurer) may collect dues from any league player.

A player may attend league without paying dues until they reach the one-half (50%) attendance threshold. For a full season lasting six (6) weeks, the player must pay on their third (3rd) week in attendance.

League dues are in addition to any coin drop and/or admission fees. BCPL receives money only from league dues, and receives nothing from either the coin drop or any admission fees collected by the venue.

League dues amounts may be overridden by the TD in charge of the league or the Commissioner. In the case of seasons without league dues, normally there are no physical awards (trophies) and no cash prizes.

3.11.2 Use of League Funds

All dues collected for the weekly league will be spent on league activities, including cash prizes and physical awards.

3.11.3 Expenditures

Percentages listed below are approximate; amounts may be rounded (e.g. to the nearest dollar) for ease of calculation.

Calculations begin with the total league dues received or receivable as of the end of the season, calculated as the appropriate per-player dues amount times the number of players who owe dues. This amount may be reduced to the amount of cash actually on hand (i.e. omitting the amounts of dues not yet received) at the discretion of the treasurer or Commissioner. This amount is the beginning balance.

The following amounts are then deducted from the beginning balance:

- IFPA fees of one dollar (\$1.00) per player.

- An amount to cover basic league operations (website hosting, poster printing, software subscription fees, etc), nominally estimated at forty dollars (\$40.00) per season, but which may be adjusted to the actual amount if and when exact amounts are better known.
- The cost of physical awards (trophies, medals, plaques, ribbons, etc) including shipping and handling to convey personalized awards to winners after the tournament has concluded. The total cost of awards can vary based on vendor, but league officials will make a best effort to minimize these costs. The number of players awarded physical awards will be determined by the Commissioner.

If any of the above amounts are sponsored by the venue, the operator, or another third party, that amount is not deducted from the beginning balance.

Finally, any additional prize money from sponsors will be added to the total to determine the total prize fund amount.

Sixty-four percent (64%) of the prize fund is allocated to "A" Division prizes, twenty-six percent (26%) is allocated to "B" Division prizes, with the remaining ten percent (10%) set aside for annual/year-end awards. If there is no "B" Division, then ninety percent (90%) of the prize fund is allocated to "A" Division; at the discretion of the Commissioner, the ten percent (10%) for annual/year-end awards may be waived and one hundred percent (100%) of the balance allocated to "A" Division prizes. The exact percentages may vary due to rounding, as it is considered acceptable for the treasurer or other responsible league official to round amounts to an increment up to and including the nearest whole dollar.

Within each division, the top four places shall be paid: 40% to first, 30% to second, 20% to third, 10% to fourth. If for any reason a division consists of fewer than four (4) players, the remaining places shall be increased proportionally: for three (3) players, 45% to first, 33% to second, 22% to third; and for two (2) players, 58% to first and 42% to second.

3.11.4 Kitty / Petty Cash

At establishments with machines set to coin play, if credits are already present on a machine due to previously won replays, players must deposit the amount per play into the kitty. This money is used first to pay for playoff games and additional games mandated by league rules, then towards league expenditures. All money due to the kitty must be paid in cash.

Once a sufficient number of the appropriate number of coins in the kitty, the treasurer or other official in charge of the kitty may make change for players as needed. Players are still encouraged to bring sufficient coins to complete play when possible.

3.11.5 Methods of Payment

It is the option of the TD or his/her designee (such as a designated treasurer) as to which payment methods are acceptable. This can include refusing cash payments in favor of electronic or credit/debit card payments.

3.12 Player Groups

3.12.1 General Rules for Grouping

All of the player's names who are in attendance at the recorded start time of a league night will be seeded according to their league ranking.

If a player does not compete in a match, either due to showing up late or leaving early, that player will receive a loss for that game.

3.12.2 Standings Point Scoring

3.12.2.1 Non-Playoff Games

As these are all two-player games, one (1) point is scored for the winner in each game and zero (0) points are scored for the loser for each game.

3.12.2.2 Playoff Games

For the league playoff tournament, in four player groups points are awarded as follows: four (4) points are given to first place, two (2) points are given to second place, one (1) point is given to third place, and zero (0) points are given to fourth place. In two player groups, one (1) point is given for a win and zero (0) points are given for a loss.

3.12.3 League Standings and Dropped Scores

Weekly points for each player are added to that player's season total every week. Low scores are dropped per rule 3.2.

4 League Season-End Playoff Tournament

4.1 Part of League Season

The playoff tournament is considered part of the league season for the purposes of other league rules, including penalties assessed. It is not a standalone tournament in the same fashion as other standalone tournaments held by BCPL.

4.2 Playoff Divisions

To provide a fair chance for players of all skill levels to compete in the playoffs, the league is separated into playoff divisions based on league size. The chart following the next section explains division breakdowns.

4.3 Awarding Playoff Spots

All league players that participate in at least two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) of the matches are eligible to play in the playoffs. The number of players grouped into each division will depend on the number of eligible players per the following chart:

Players Per Division		
Eligible players	"A" Division Qualifiers	"B" Division Qualifiers
2	2	0
3	3	0
4-6	4	0
7-11	5	0
12-15	6	0
16-19	6	4
20-23	6	5
24-27	6	6
28-31	8	6
32-35	8	8
36-39	10	8
40-43	12	8
44-47	12	10
48-53	12	12
54-59	16	12
60-69	16	16
70-79	20	16
80-89	24	16
90+	32	16

The winner of each final match is named Division Champion for the season. The "A" Division Champion is also named the League Champion for the season.

The "A" Division finals determine the final league ranking for the places within that division. However, the "B" Division finals are for prizes only, and the final league ranking for "B" division players will be determined only by points earned during the regular season.

At the discretion of the TD, an "S" or "Social" Division may be formed from all the otherwise playoff eligible players who did not qualify for "A" or "B" Division play. Any "S" or "Social" Division tournament is strictly for amusement and bragging rights, and no prizes or physical awards will be given for winning an "S" or "Social" Division playoff tournament, nor will "S" or "Social" Division playoff results impact official league standings. The typical format of an "S" or "Social" Division tournament is a group strikeout tournament with two (2) strikes for elimination, as described in section 6.

4.4 Playoff Format

4.4.1 General

In general, playoffs will use four-player groups. Three-player or two-player groups will be used only as necessary.

4.4.2 Two to Four Players

Any division consisting of two (2), three (3), or four (4) players will have one round, the finals, consisting of all players.

4.4.3 Five Players

Any division consisting of five (5) players will have one semi final round before the finals. The semi-final round will consist of the 4th and 5th ranked players in a two-player group with the 1st through 3rd ranked players receiving a bye into the finals.

4.4.4 Six Players

Any division consisting of six (6) players will have one semi final round before the finals. The semi-final round will consist of the 3rd through 6th ranked players in a four-player group with the 1st and 2nd ranked players receiving a bye into the finals.

4.4.5 Eight Players

Any division consisting of eight (8) players will be split into two groups and have one semi final round before the finals. The semi-final round will consist of all 8 players with no players receiving a bye.

4.4.6 Ten Players

Any division consisting of ten (10) players will have two (2) semi final rounds before the finals, for a total of three (3) rounds. The first round shall consist of the 7th through 10th seeded players in a four-player group, with the 1st through 6th ranked players receiving a first-round bye.

4.4.7 Twelve Players

Any division consisting of twelve (12) players will have two (2) semi final rounds before the finals, for a total of three (3) rounds. The first round shall consist of the 5th through 12th seeded players in two separate four-player groups, with the 1st through 4th ranked players receiving a first-round bye.

4.4.8 Sixteen Players

Any division consisting of sixteen (16) players will have two (2) semi final rounds before the finals, for a total of three (3) rounds. The first round will consist of all players in four-player groups, with no players receiving a first-round bye.

4.4.9 Twenty Players

Any division consisting of twenty (20) players will have three (3) semi final rounds before the finals, for a total of four (4) rounds. The first round will consist of the 13th through 20th ranked players in two separate four-player groups, with the 1st through 12th ranked players receiving a first-round bye.

4.4.10 Twenty-Four Players

Any division consisting of twenty-four (24) players will have three (3) semi final rounds before the finals, for a total of four (4) rounds. The first round will consist of the 9th through 24th ranked players in four separate four-player groups, with the 1st through 8th ranked players receiving a first-round bye.

4.4.11 Thirty-Two Players

Any division consisting of thirty-two (32) players will have three (3) semi final rounds before the finals, for a total of four (4) rounds. The first round will consist of all players with no players receiving a first-round bye.

4.5 Other Division Sizes and TD Adjustments

Normally, no division shall consist of a number of players other than two (2), three (3), four (4), five (5), six (6), eight (8), ten (10), twelve (12), sixteen (16), twenty (20), twenty-four (24), or thirty-two (32). In the event of no-shows, the TD may make adjustments to this format, including running the tournament with a different player count not on this list.

4.6 Scheduling Structure of Playoffs Due To Size

For larger league sizes, the TD may reschedule portions of the playoffs to occur as part of a separate meeting. Example: the first two rounds may take place during the first week of playoffs with the remaining rounds to take place the following week.

4.7 Ties in Playoff Qualification

If there is a tie in divisional standings based on total league standings points, this tie is to be broken with a one-game tiebreaker (prior to the playoff tournament), with the machine and playing order to be determined randomly by the TD and paid for out of the kitty.

In the event of a five-way or larger tie, or if the machine chosen for the tiebreaker supports fewer players in one game than players to play (e.g. three players on a two-player machine), this will necessarily involve multiple games, with the recording of each player's scores after each game.

For coin play locations, this game is paid for from the kitty if funds are available.

4.8 Playoff Scoring

Playoff scoring is as defined in section 3.12.2.2. In each semi-final round, the two players with the highest point totals from that round in each four-player (or three-player, if used) group will advance to the next round. For a two-player group, the player with the higher point total of the two players will advance to the next round.

4.9 Playoff Machine Selection

For playoffs, each group will be randomly assigned to a bank of 3 games. Games must be played in order.

4.10 Ties in Playoff Results

If two or more players are tied in points after the semi-final or final has been played, the tiebreaker is a one-game playoff on a randomly selected machine. The choice of order will be given in order of highest regular season rank (highest player followed by next highest, etc). The tie-breaking game cannot be played on a game that was chosen in that round.

4.11 Tardy or Absent from Playoffs

Players are required to sign in for playoffs at a designated time, or risk forfeiting their spot in the playoff tournament. The TD may choose to delay playoffs for a reasonable amount of time if a player is tardy but is not obligated to do so.

4.12 Attendance Requirement

Players must have attended two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) of the regular season meets to be eligible for playoffs. Players who have attended fewer than this number of meets are not eligible for the playoffs.

4.13 Only One Eligible Player

In the extremely unlikely event that there is only one eligible player for a league playoff tournament, that player wins by default and no playoff is necessary.

5 Match Play Tournaments

5.1 Overview

For a match play tournament, players will be grouped into groups of three or four players. (Two player groups will be avoided unless absolutely necessary.) The number of group play rounds will be announced by the TD prior to the event; typically this is five (5) to eight (8) rounds, but may be longer or shorter.

After the initial rounds conclude there is a playoff between the top finishers. Exactly how many will vary by tournament, but this is almost always at least the top four (4) finishers. For larger tournaments, it may be sixteen (16) or more, split into an A division and B division (of eight (8) players each in this case). The exact number of playoff qualifiers will be announced by the TD prior to the event, which could be conditionally based on the number of entries (example: 4 qualifiers for 8 or fewer entries, 6 qualifiers for 9 to 13 entries, 8 qualifiers for 14 or more entries). This is held in a similar format to a weekly league season-end playoff tournament as described in section 4.

In BCPL match play tournaments, IFPA-style scoring (7/5/3/1, 7/4/1, or 7/1) is used during the initial rounds, with playoff scoring (rule 3.12.2.2) used for the playoff rounds.

5.2 Tiebreakers

Ties for playoff qualification will be resolved in this order:

- a) higher number of first-place finishes;
- b) higher number of second-place finishes;

- c) one-game playoff where both the machine and player order are randomly selected by the TD.

For a tie involving three or more players, start over at the top of the list after the order of any one player is resolved by any one tiebreaker (whether higher or lower than the other players).

6 Strikeout Tournaments

6.1 Overview

There are two different types of strikeout tournaments: group strikeout and heads-up strikeout.

6.1.1 Group Strikeout

Players are placed in groups of three or four and play on machines randomly selected by either the TD or event software. In each group, the bottom two players (3rd and 4th place) in four player groups, and the bottom two players (2nd and 3rd place) in three player groups, receive a “strike”. In later rounds, the player who scores lower in a two-player game will receive a “strike”.

6.1.2 Heads-up Strikeout

Players are placed in pairs and play two-player games on a machines randomly selected by either the TD or event software. The player who scores lower in a two-player game will receive a “strike”.

In some later rounds groups of three may be used even in a heads-up strikeout tournament (typically only one group of three per round) where the bottom two players will each receive a “strike”; alternatively, a “bye” may be given to a player as decided by the tournament software.

6.1.3 Common To Both Formats

Players who receive the maximum number of strikes are eliminated; typically this is two (2), three (3), or four (4) strikes, but sometimes a maximum of five (5), six (6), or more strikes is used. Details will be announced by the TD prior to the event.

6.2 Modifications

A modification of this format involves playing a group strikeout tournament until a final group of players (typically from four (4) to eight (8)) remains, then those players playing in a playoff as they would in a match play tournament (section 5). This format will be announced by the TD prior to the tournament if in use.

7 Pin-Golf

7.1 Overview

The objective in a pin-golf tournament is to complete the objective of each “hole” (game) in the fewest number of “strokes” (balls in play). The objective of each “hole” is typically a set score on that game, though it may also be a game objective such as starting multiball, lighting and making a given feature shot, etc.

7.2 Scoring

One “stroke” is scored for each ball in play required to reach the “hole” objective. If the “hole” objective is not completed at the end of the game, the “stroke” count is one plus the number of balls in play for the game for standard scoring. If IFPA Pin-Masters scoring is in use, for score-based objectives, one additional stroke for each 20% short of the objective score, rounded up, is added up to a maximum of ten (10) strokes.

7.3 Extra Balls

Unless otherwise announced by the TD, extra balls awarded are played in Pin-Golf events. When played, extra balls are played as part of the same “stroke”. For example: A player finishing the “hole” objective on an extra ball earned as part of the first ball in play would still receive a score of one “stroke”.

At the discretion of the TD, extra balls may be disabled (i.e. the game will be put into “novelty” mode where an extra ball awards a set point value) to speed game play. The TD should announce this to all players at the start of the tournament and/or by posting signage (at a location such as the check-in desk, or possibly on either the games themselves, the latter particularly if not all games will be set to novelty scoring).

7.4 Alternate Game Forfeit Penalty

Instead of the standard penalty, a game forfeit is assessed as the maximum number of strokes possible for a given hole (game). This is usually 4 (four) for 3-ball games, or 6 (six) for 5-ball games, but may be as many as 10 (ten) if the IFPA Pin-Masters scoring is used for players not reaching the game objective at all.

8 [Reserved]

9 Max Matchplay Tournaments

9.1 Overview

The objective of a Max Matchplay tournament is to have the most net wins at the conclusion of a number of set games. All games are two-player (i.e. “heads up”) and choice of machine and player order is typically handled by the tournament software (such as matchplay.events). A Max Matchplay tournament is organized into rounds, though not all players will necessarily play in each round.

9.2 Extra Balls

Whether or not extra balls are played will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the TD. Typically either all extra balls will be plunged or only the first earned extra ball will be played.

9.3 Players Withdrawing from Tournament

Due to the nature of this format, players should consider showing up to play to be a commitment to play the full tournament. Withdrawing from the tournament early can be very disruptive to an orderly finish of the tournament. Due to this being a relatively new tournament format, the TD has discretion on how to handle players leaving early, which may include:

- voiding the withdrawing player's results entirely (i.e. the results "disappear in a cloud of smoke" as though the withdrawing player never played at all);
- awarding automatic wins to opponents of the withdrawing player's remaining games; or
- other resolutions subject to the TD's discretion.

10 Simple High Score Tournament

10.1 Overview/Summary

Typically as a side tournament to another event, a simple high score tournament is basically what the name says. Players each play one game on a particular pinball machine (or perhaps more than one game, if multiple entries are allowed and purchased/earned).

If the format allows for a player to play more than once, only the highest score is counted and a player may only win one place; if awarded, second place must go to a player different from first place, third place must go to a different player from both first place and second place, etc.

Ranking is determined by the highest score attained in any one entry, thus the winner would be the player with the highest score across all entries.

This differs from a card-based qualifying format (see section 14) in that this is only for the highest score on a single machine.

10.2 Extra Balls

Unlike most other tournament types, extra balls typically are played as part of this tournament and count in full towards the final score. Exceptions will be noted by the TD (such as machines set to novelty play).

11 [Reserved]

12 [Reserved]

13 [Reserved]

14 Card-Based Qualifying Formats

Larger tournaments typically have qualifying sessions to determine the actual tournament players when other formats are simply infeasible for the purpose of generating a meaningful competitive result. These are typically in situations where the player to available machine ratio is higher than about 8:1 (i.e. at least 8 players for each machine available for tournament play).

The qualifier in most common use is called a card-based qualifier.

14.1 Overview

The card-based qualifier format consists of players playing multiple single-player games, each recorded by a scorekeeper onto an entry card (either a physical entry card, or a virtual entry card kept electronically). The best known example of this is the qualifying format used at the PAPA World Championships (no longer being held) where the player selected 5 games out of a bank of 10, with the best possible score being 500 (first place on all 5 games selected).

A group of machines out of those provided for the tournament is selected for qualifying games. On occasion, the entire group may be used for qualifying.

At the conclusion of qualifying, all scores are ranked and at that time points are assigned to each player's card per the conversion scheme in use for that qualifier. The value of each card is the sum total of the scores assigned by finishing place.

The purpose of the qualifier is to determine seeding and advancement of a reasonable number of players to the playoff tournament, usually in cases where there would otherwise be far more players than available time to fit in enough games on the available machines. Typically it is a group match play tournament but other formats may also be used.

14.2 Place to Score Conversion Schemes

The table below shows some of the more common finishing place to qualifying score conversion schemes in use. The “(etc.)” column denotes the additional amount or percentage subtracted per each additional place.

Name	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th	(etc.)	Min.
PAPA	100	90	85	84	83	82	81	80	-1	0
Hella Heart	105	90	80	70	65	60	55	50	-5	0
Top 30	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	-1	0
Top 25	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	-1	0
Top 8	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	n/a	0
Linear / Top 100	100	99	98	97	96	95	94	93	-1	0
90% Decay	100	90	81	73	66	59	54	48	-10	0

15 Entry Fees and Finances for Tournaments

The prize pool amount calculation begins with the total entry fees received by the TD. Funds for group buys of tokens or game cards, if any, are not considered entry fees; such funds would be considered part of the coin drop.

The following amounts are deducted from the beginning balance:

- IFPA fees of one dollar (\$1.00) per player.
- An amount set aside to cover expenses of basic league operations (website hosting, poster printing, software subscription fees, etc). This amount will vary by each tournament and will be smaller per tournament for recurring tournaments held often versus one-time/occasional tournaments.
- If physical awards (trophies, medals, plaques, ribbons, etc) are to be awarded, the cost of the physical awards including shipping and handling to convey personalized awards to winners after the tournament has concluded. The total cost of awards can vary based on vendor, but we will make a best effort to minimize these costs. The number of players awarded physical awards will be determined by the Commissioner.

If any of the above amounts are sponsored by the venue, the operator, or another third party, that amount is not deducted from the beginning balance.

The resulting total is the total prize pool. The prize distribution will vary for each individual tournament.

Some tournaments may not have an entry fee and may only award sponsored prizes (if any) and no other physical awards. Tournaments held for a charity benefit typically will not have a cash prize pool, instead only awarding non-cash prizes donated by sponsors.

16 [Reserved]

17 Scoring

17.1 Player Duties

It is each player's responsibility to be sure that their machine scores are recorded correctly as each game is finished. Any possible scoring errors should be brought to the attention of a league official immediately (as soon as the possible error has been discovered).

The intentional recording of incorrect or fictitious scores is considered cheating (rule 19.8) and will be penalized aggressively and decisively.

17.2 Investigation Of Errors

Once notified of a possible error, the league official 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 originally recorded (whether on a written score sheet or electronically) shall stand.

18 General Rules for Machine Play

18.1 Extra Balls

For tournaments/league meetings with lower attendance, players may be allowed to play one (1) extra ball per game, or possibly more than one. This will be announced by the TD prior to the event.

Otherwise, if a machine awards extra balls, or if a player earns one or more extra balls in excess of the allowable amount, these are considered unallowable extra balls and must be plunged without playing them. Exception: if a player is owed one or more consolation balls, that player may at his/her option play the otherwise unallowable extra ball(s) as a consolation ball(s) instead of starting a new game. This has the advantage of being less expensive in locations priced on a coin drop basis.

Where possible and practical, games will be set to award points in place of extra balls and specials (often referred to as “novelty” mode). Some games will not award points for extra balls, in which case extra balls will be turned off entirely if settings can be adjusted.

A player may touch the flipper buttons for purposes of selecting a skill shot only before the ball has been plunged. After the ball has been plunged, no further flipping is permitted.

18.2 Replays and Specials

No award is given for credits earned by replays or specials awarded as a replay during league play. If a game is set to award special as points (“novelty” mode) these do count towards the final score the same as any other points scored during a game.

18.3 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 or catastrophic machine malfunction can affect league play.

18.3.1 Definitions

A “minor malfunction” is any incident without external cause which deviates from the normal course of gameplay, without directly causing a player’s loss of turn and without providing any player a significant advantage or disadvantage over others.

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.

A “catastrophic malfunction” is one that either results in a premature end of game or makes it impractical or impossible to continue play on the game and obtain an end result fair to all players.

18.3.2 Disputes

In disputed situations, the TD shall decide whether or not a malfunction is considered minor, major, or catastrophic.

18.3.3 Major Malfunction Examples and Counterexamples

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).
- A turn ends prematurely (i.e. with at least one (1) ball still 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.)
- A game kicks two (or more) balls into the shooter lane and the turn ends with at least one ball still on the playfield.
- A switch intermittently not registering.

18.3.4 Announcements Regarding Machine Problems

If a problem with a machine is announced to league players by the TD before league/tournament play is started, then that problem is not considered a major malfunction even if the result is loss of ball in play.

18.3.5 Player Responsibility; Consolation Balls

When a major malfunction occurs, it is the player's responsibility to notify the TD, calmly and promptly. If the TD agrees that the incident is a major malfunction, the player will be provided with one additional ball of play at the beginning of a new game (a "consolation ball"), after the current game has been completed. No attempt will be made to re-establish the state of the machine at the time of the major malfunction. The player's total score on the additional ball of play will be added to his or her previous score, and the new game will be terminated.

At the request of the player, if and only if the TD or other tournament official approves, the major malfunction may instead be handled as follows: The current game will be terminated and the score recorded. A new game will be started, and after the appropriate number of balls have been played in the new game, the new score will be added to the old score to determine the player's total score, and the new game will be terminated. This approach is functionally similar to the previous paragraph, but may afford different strategic opportunities to the player. In no event will a player be allowed to abuse this rule through intentionally seeking a major malfunction.

18.3.6 First Ball, First Player Major Malfunctions

If a major malfunction occurs early in the play of the first ball by the first player, tournament officials may rule that the current game is voided and the score discarded. Machine repairs may be attempted, if possible, and the player(s) will restart their play without needing to track the previous score. If it is not possible to repair the machine at that time, another machine may be substituted.

18.3.7 Declining Major Malfunctions

Under certain specific conditions, a major malfunction may be declined by the player. This must be approved by the TD, and must not result in a situation which provides an unfair advantage to the player.

18.3.8 Multiple Major Malfunctions / Unplayable Machine Rulings

The TD can declare a machine unplayable at any time if:

- it is not functioning properly and the resulting malfunction(s) will, in the TD's estimation, impair the ability of players to obtain fair scores;
- two (2) or more major malfunctions take place during the same game; or
- three (3) or more major malfunctions take place on the same machine during the same league meeting or tournament.

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 league meeting or tournament, or until the machine is repaired. In these cases, the entire game is replayed immediately on a machine designated by a TD who is not involved in the affected match.

18.3.9 Catastrophic Malfunctions

Catastrophic malfunctions such as slam tilts, blown fuses, fire due to overheated components, main processor halts/crashes, blackouts (i.e. power outages), brownouts, or similar events resulting in the abnormal termination of a game and/or memory corruption 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 TD (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 the affected players replay the remainder of the game on the same machine, or players may accept agreed-upon scores.

18.3.10 Maintenance Sheets / Records

It is recommended that the league prepare a maintenance sheet (either paper or electronic) on which is noted any issues resulting in malfunctions on the various machines during league/tournament play. This list should be passed on to the venue management, operator, or pinball technician to assist in the proper maintenance of the machines.

18.3.11 Positive / Beneficial 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 TD'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 TD and shall be avoided during subsequent league/tournament play. At the discretion of the TD, 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 TD 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, nor are missing, incomplete, overly generous, or non-functioning tilt assemblies or slam tilt switches. Note also that missing, incomplete, overly generous, or non-functioning tilt assemblies or slam tilt switches do not excuse machine abuse as prohibited by rule 18.8 below.

Intentional or particularly blatant abuses of a positive malfunction may be penalized as cheating per rule 19.8, particularly if one or more player(s) in a group abuses the malfunction while the other player(s) clearly make a best effort not to.

18.4 Game Play Promptness

When a player’s turn comes up in a game, whether a tournament or league game, he is expected to begin play promptly. If a player does not begin play within the time limit (assumed to be a reasonable amount of time for a player to begin play), the TD may plunge the ball for the player, and the player may not play the ball. The time limit for all events is two minutes (2:00), subject to announced modification by the TD before the event begins. The TD has the option, but never the obligation, of extending this time limit in certain circumstances.

18.5 Practice Games

For league play, once league play starts for the night, a player may not play or 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/her own or other groups. Practice games must be ended immediately if a league group is ready to begin a scheduled game on that machine.

During a tournament, including a league playoff tournament, a player may not play or practice on any pinball machine scheduled to be a part of the tournament at all. This includes other machines of the same title which may not be part of the lineup in the tournament area proper (such as on the show floor of a pinball/arcade show separate from the tournament area).

18.6 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.

18.7 Non-Event Players

Tournament or league players do not take precedence over other customers at the establishment. 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 tournament/league players to their game in progress to guard against this situation.

18.8 Machine Abuse

Tilt sensors are employed to determine what constitutes unduly rough handling of each machine, within the parameters of normal play. Abusive handling such as punching, kicking, lifting, tipping, or rocking a machine, or hitting the glass in any way, is grounds for a penalty, up to and including an indefinite ban, as detailed in section 24 at the discretion of the TD.

19 Prohibited Actions

19.1 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/her final machine score is reduced by 25% (twenty-five percent), or more if needed in the opinion of the TD to restore an equitable outcome for all players in the group.

19.2 Playing Opponent’s Ball

The violator shall attempt to trap the ball(s) on a flipper as soon as the error is realized. The violator receives a game forfeit (machine score of zero for that game). As a tournament or league player, it is your responsibility to know what player you are in the playing order. If you are unsure, consult your score sheet (whether physical or online).

If the affected ball was an unallowable extra ball, there is no additional compensation for the victim. Otherwise, the victim may choose one of two options: continue playing the erroneously plunged ball (if control can be recovered) or drain the plunged ball and play an additional ball through a new 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 not play an additional ball.

If a player does get disqualified from a game, their position in the game is considered open. Any interference caused by player error (for example, tilt-throughs or accidentally playing out of turn) in that position will have no additional consequences to the offending player; however, in the interest of keeping the event moving along, players should refrain from intentionally playing the open position. Any activity played in that open position will be considered void.

19.3 Interference

Interference in another player’s game is not tolerated. Interference includes (but is not limited to) any of the following:

- slam tilts (whether intentional or not);
- tilting an opponent’s ball;
- nudging the machine during another player’s ball, even if the action does not cause the victim to lose the ball; and
- intentional distraction of a player during that player’s turn.

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, a buy-in ball, or the first ball of a new game as a consolation 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 if the game is set for coin play, even if there are credits on the machine.

Interference is a serious violation of league/tournament play rules, and a penalty will be assessed on the violator. During league play, this is a game forfeit at minimum, with a second violation during the same season typically a meeting forfeit, and a third violation a possible season forfeit. During tournament play, this is a game forfeit at minimum, with a second violation during the same tournament typically a tournament forfeit. Future violations after a season or tournament forfeit can result in a suspension or ban from future events and/or other penalties.

19.4 Slam Tilts

A slam tilt is one caused by an aggressive and excessive shove of the machine, by an attempted bang back or death save, or by other abuse of the machine such as hitting the coin door. Anything which causes a slam tilt is considered a prohibited act and penalized the same as other types of interference in rule 19.3. Depending on the circumstances, slam tilts may also be penalized as machine abuse per rule 18.8 and/or conduct detrimental to the reputation of BCPL and competitive pinball per rule 20.1.

19.5 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 and a replay of the machine by all players commences. The player responsible for the wrong number of games being credited (usually player 1) pays any cost of the restart if necessary (i.e. if the location's machines are set for coin play).

19.6 Language Selection

19.6.1 Preferred Language

English is the preferred language setting for games used at all BCPL events.

19.6.2 When a Language Other than English Has Been Operator-Selected

If a language other than English has been operator-selected, the operator should change the language back to English if feasible. If for some reason this is infeasible, or the language change is intentional (e.g. due to a large portion of non-tournament clientele at the location primarily fluent in another language) or due to a machine malfunction, the game should be played as is, with all known English translations being made available to interested players as equally as possible.

19.6.3 When Multiple Languages Are Player Selectable

In the event a game allows for the selection of multiple languages by the player who starts the game and such choice is binding on all players, English must be chosen if available unless all players in the game agree to play using another language offered by the machine prior to the beginning of play (i.e. the first player plunging his/her first ball).

Choosing a language other than English, in absence of an agreement, will result in, at minimum, an immediate game forfeit for the responsible player. The game is then restarted (if coin play, at the expense of the person responsible for starting the game). If a game selects the other language on its own without input by the player (due to an intermittently shorting switch, software glitch, etc), it is considered a catastrophic malfunction upon the objection of any one player.

The selection of an incorrect language by another player besides the player starting the game (for example, accidentally pressing the right flipper button where the left button selects English) is treated as interference and penalized as detailed in rule 19.3.

If multiple languages are selectable by each player and binding only on that player, this rule has no effect.

19.7 Death Saves / Bang Backs

Death saves and bang backs (“biffs”) are techniques used by some players to return a ball back into play that has already gone down an outlane or otherwise drained. Due to the risk of damage to the machine and injury to the player, these techniques are not allowed in BCPL league and tournament play.

A player that successfully performs a death save or bang back will receive a game forfeit (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 and newer Stern games).

Although these techniques are prohibited by rule in league and tournament play, because these maneuvers do not (necessarily) interfere with any other player’s game, performing a death save or bang back is not considered interference or a serious violation of league rules in and of itself. However, slam tilts, tilt-throughs, and damage to the machine caused by a death save or bang back may be penalized separately.

19.8 Cheating

Pinball can often be frustrating, especially during competition. The BCPL 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, any act or course of conduct with any of the following results is considered cheating and cannot be tolerated:

- a) preventing one or more other players from fairly playing the machine;
- b) intentional or particularly blatant abuses of a beneficial malfunction or any other palpably unfair acts outside of normal play which increase one’s own score;
- c) giving one or more other players an unfair advantage, including intentionally not playing to the best of one’s ability (“fixing”, “throwing” or “tanking” games);

- d) colluding with one or more other players to manipulate the outcome of a game or match;
- e) intentionally recording incorrect or fictitious results whether for one's own benefit or that of another player;
- f) fraud or deception related to one's use of an IAPA player number/identity, including the intentional use of another player's name and/or IAPA player number, or false or misleading statements regarding one's competitive pinball history (including what is commonly referred to as "sandbagging"); or
- g) any other attempt, whether successful or unsuccessful, to influence the outcome of a game, match, tournament, or player rankings (including WPPR) to other than its natural competitive result, outside the boundaries of normal and honest pinball play.

In addition, the following specific act is considered cheating and prohibited:

- Picking up the front of the machine to avoid draining a ball, particularly in instances where the tilt and/or slam tilt switches in the game do not trigger when this happens (also considered machine abuse under rule 18.8).

The penalty for a specific instance of cheating will be determined by the league official based on the nature and severity of the offense; in general, however, cheaters should expect to be penalized swiftly and severely when caught. In addition to such penalties, every effort will be made to nullify any attempt(s) at cheating by restoring equity to the players detrimentally affected (as necessary). In addition, all such instances of cheating are subject to review by the Commissioner for additional penalties in addition to those levied by the TD, up to and including an indefinite or permanent ban from future BCPL events and notification of other leagues and tournament directors.

Any league official uncertain he/she has all information needed to make a correct decision based on a given incident is invited to defer to an official of higher rank including the Commissioner.

20 Personal Conduct

20.1 General Conduct Expectations

All players are expected to conduct themselves in a polite and sensitive manner and do their part to help maintain a safe and welcoming environment. BCPL is first and foremost an inclusive organization. The following are considered unacceptable:

- a) outbursts and language which a reasonable person might find offensive, specifically including but not limited to those containing profanity, obscenity, and/or sexually explicit language; and
- b) other conduct which is determined by the TD or a league officer to be detrimental to the operation of any BCPL event, or the reputation of BCPL and/or competitive pinball in general, including any conduct which a reasonable person would judge to be overtly aggressive, disruptive, or otherwise in conflict with a welcoming environment.

Penalties are outlined in section 24.

20.2 Attire / Dress Code

Players must abide by the venue's dress code. In addition to the venue's dress code, clothing items with print or designs considered "hate speech" (promoting or expressing discrimination based on race, nationality, ethnicity, sex, gender, gender expression, etc), which depict or contain widely recognized

“hate symbols”, or which are otherwise in exceptionally poor taste are unacceptable. In the event of a disagreement the TD and/or the venue management may make a ruling. Other than that, players are free to wear clothes that best express their personal styles and that they feel comfortable wearing while playing pinball.

From time to time specific items of clothing considered unacceptable for wear at BCPL events may be identified by the Commissioner or a League Official tasked to make such identifications by the Commissioner.

20.3 Other Venue Customers

Players must be respectful of customers of the venue not playing in the league/tournament. Players scheduled to play a game currently being played by a customer not playing in the league/tournament should politely ask for the next game and wait for the customer to finish. Complaints from non-league/-tournament customers regarding rude or inappropriate conduct from BCPL players will be investigated, and after any such complaints are validated, such conduct will be penalized aggressively.

20.4 Alcoholic Beverages

20.4.1 General Rules

Where allowed by the venue, alcoholic beverages may only be possessed and consumed as permitted by state law. Minors under the age of twenty-one (21) may not possess or consume alcoholic beverages in the physical and temporal vicinity of a BCPL event, and adults may not provide alcoholic beverages to a minor in the physical and temporal vicinity of a BCPL event, except in the cases where an affirmative defense is allowed for in state law, most notably §106.03, §106.05, and §106.06 of the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Code (also see rule 21.1.3).

20.4.2 Venue Prohibition

If a venue prohibits alcoholic beverages on site and/or entry while in an intoxicated state, this must be respected. **This is a zero tolerance rule**; violations will result in an immediate tournament forfeit and/or season forfeit for all events the violator is currently active in, combined with an indefinite ban from future events, and if the violator is reinstated, a high likelihood of a lengthy period of probation upon reinstatement.

20.5 Cannabis

20.5.1 Use, Possession, and Distribution

Regardless of legal status, any use (whether recreational or medicinal), possession, or distribution of cannabis is prohibited in the physical and temporal vicinity of BCPL events.

20.5.2 Under the Influence

Regardless of legal status, players are prohibited from participating in BCPL events, including non-competitive/social events, while under the influence of cannabis (i.e. “stoned”).

20.6 Environment

The rules on player conduct are intended to nurture a safe and welcoming environment. League Officials are expected to prioritize the preservation of such an environment over the ability of previously suspended or banned players to return to future events.

20.7 Harassment

Conduct with the effect of making others feel unwelcome, regardless of intent, is considered harassment. This specifically includes but is not limited to:

- a) offensive comments related to gender identity, gender expression, age, sexual orientation/lifestyle, disability, physical appearance, body size, race/ethnicity, national origin, or religion/creed/beliefs;
- b) sexual images in public spaces;
- c) deliberate intimidation;
- d) stalking, or following;
- e) photography or recording where unwanted;
- f) inappropriate physical contact; and
- g) unwelcome sexual advances/attention.

This prohibition includes conduct both at BCPL events and on electronic public forums accessible via the internet or any similar electronic communications networks.

Harassment will not be tolerated and will generally result in a long-term ban or suspension, with a lengthy period of probation upon any reinstatement. In many cases, harassment will also be a violation of state law and thus a violation of rule 21.1.3 as well. All instances of harassment shall be referred to the Commissioner for further action.

20.8 Minimum Penalties for Certain Serious Violations

Note that these are minimum penalties, and the establishment of a minimum penalty does not preclude a more severe penalty from being imposed.

20.8.1 Player Ejected from Venue / Issued Trespass Warning

Any act by the player causing his/her ejection from the venue, including situations where a player is issued a trespass warning (a legal warning not to return to the premises subject to criminal penalties, as provided by Texas Penal Code §30.05), shall be penalized as:

- a meeting forfeit at minimum during league play; or
- a tournament forfeit at minimum during tournament play.

Any situation where this rule is invoked shall be reviewed by the Commissioner for possible further action.

20.8.2 Violence, Aggressive Acts, and Vandalism

Any act of vandalism or involving elements of vandalism (whether or not involving a pinball machine or other game equipment), or any aggressive or violent act against another player, shall be penalized as:

- a season forfeit at minimum during league play; or
- a tournament forfeit at minimum during tournament play.

Any situation where this rule is invoked shall be reviewed by the Commissioner for possible further action.

21 Character, Citizenship, and Legal Compliance

21.1 Citizenship, Unlawful Conduct, and Player Agreement

21.1.1 General Provisions

The Bayou City Pinball League prides itself on being a league of, by, and for law-abiding players of good character. Our goals are:

- to be a crime-free league welcoming to the broadest segment of pinball players in the greater Houston area; and
- to be a prominent example of people of good character representing the local pinball community, through charitable fundraising and volunteer work in the greater community (i.e. not just within the classic arcade and pinball community, but for other charitable causes unrelated to classic arcade gaming or pinball).

21.1.2 Player Agreement

By paying the entry fee or signing up to enter a BCPL event, players agree to the following:

- Unlawful conduct, whether during BCPL events, in the temporal and physical vicinity of BCPL events, or away from BCPL events, is prohibited and subject to penalties;
- Any act or series of acts intended to or which actually facilitate criminal activity, whether during BCPL events, in the temporal and physical vicinity of BCPL events, or away from BCPL events, is prohibited and subject to penalties; and
- League Officials cooperate with law enforcement agencies to solve crimes and help maintain the crime-free status of the Bayou City Pinball League.

21.1.3 Unlawful Conduct Defined and Elaborated

“Unlawful conduct” includes all conduct in violation of or noncompliance with relevant Federal (US), state (Texas), city and/or county laws, punishable by any form of monetary forfeiture (including fines and civil penalties) and/or imprisonment, and certain civil torts. This specifically includes, but is not limited to, the following laws (sorted by alphabetical order and section number):

- Texas Alcoholic Beverage Code §28.10 (consumption restricted to premises, i.e. leaving with an alcoholic beverage or bringing in an outside alcoholic beverage);

- Texas Alcoholic Beverage Code §106.04 and §106.05 (consumption or possession of alcohol by a minor);
- Texas Health & Safety Code, §161.252 (possession of tobacco/e-cigarette products by a minor);
- Texas Health & Safety Code, §365.012 (littering);
- Texas Health & Safety Code, §481.101 et seq. (Texas Controlled Substances Act, specifically any use, possession or transfer of prohibited drugs, including use, possession or transfer of prescription medications contrary to the prescription under which they were dispensed);
- Texas Penal Code §22.01 (assault, including assault by threat), §22.02 (aggravated assault), and §22.07 (terroristic threat);
- Texas Penal Code §28.03 (criminal mischief, including vandalism) and §28.08 (graffiti);
- Texas Penal Code §31.03 (theft) and §31.04 (theft of service), including “walking a tab” for food and/or beverages and not settling up within a reasonable time;
- Texas Penal Code §42.01 (disorderly conduct, including fighting), §42.06 (false alarm or report), §42.07 (harassment), and §42.072 (stalking);
- Texas Penal Code §47.02 (gambling) and §47.03 (gambling promotion);
- Texas Penal Code §49.02 (public intoxication), §49.031 (open container in motor vehicle), §49.04 (driving while intoxicated), and related offenses;
- Texas Transportation Code §454.0611 (failure to pay public transit fare);
- Texas Transportation Code §545.401 (reckless driving), particularly as it pertains to driving to and from the venue of an event and/or in the parking lots and private driveways near an event, specifically including but not limited to:
 - any driving maneuvers where one or more tires are spinning fast enough to not have full traction and/or the driver is not in full control of the vehicle, such as “burnouts”, “doughnuts”, or “drifting”;
 - in parking lots and on private driveways, either of the following:
 - apparent willful or wanton disregard of traffic control devices or hazards such as other traffic (including non-motorized traffic, such as pedestrians or bicyclists); or
 - excessive speed, defined as any speed in excess of a posted limit, or any speed in excess of ten (10) miles per hour in the absence of a posted limit;
- Texas Transportation Code §545.420 (racing on highway) and §545.4205 (interference with peace officer investigation of highway racing or reckless driving exhibition);
- any applicable local laws prohibiting or regulating smoking, e-cigarette, or tobacco use (Houston: Sec. 21-236 et seq.); and
- United States copyright (17 USC 501 et seq.), trademark (15 USC 1111 et seq.), patent (35 USC 251 et seq.), and trade secret (18 USC 1831 et seq.) laws, even when a violation may not necessarily rise to the level of a criminal act.

Simply put, regardless of what other league or tournament directors may or may not enforce, “illegal”, “unlawful”, “violation of the law”, “against the law”, “crime”, “criminal act”, or any similar phrases all mean “you can’t do it” or “something you can’t do” as appropriate.

21.1.4 Standard of Proof

Violations shall be adjudged on the basis of a preponderance of the evidence, to the satisfaction of the appropriate League Official(s).

Specifically, a “not guilty” verdict, the dismissal of criminal charges, the lack of an arrest or citation, a *nolle prosequi* decision by a prosecuting attorney (i.e. a decision not to prosecute even if circumstances allow), or any similar action which results in a lack of criminal prosecution does not preclude penalties assessed by the BCPL and its official(s).

Also, for BCPL administrative purposes, a “no contest” plea may be considered to be identical to a “guilty” plea for the same charges, and a deferred adjudication agreement may be considered equivalent to a conviction even if the record is later expunged, ordered not disclosable, or otherwise no longer part of an individual’s criminal history.

21.1.5 Penalties

Penalties shall be assessed by the Commissioner or the Commissioner’s designee, which may include the League Official who first became aware of the incident or who is most familiar with the context surrounding the incident. Penalties are defined in section 24.

Factors used to decide the penalties issued may include: the severity of the offense, the circumstances surrounding the offense, whether or not law enforcement made an arrest (including an arrest by issuance of a citation), publicity/news media coverage, the judgment of the Commissioner, and possibly other related factors not enumerated here.

21.2 Civil Torts / Lawsuits

An act or course of conduct comprising a civil tort is not considered an actionable law violation for purposes of this rule, unless a component of that act falls under the definition of unlawful act as defined in rule 21.1.3. However, an action or course of conduct that would give rise to a civil lawsuit may be considered a violation of other rules (most notably 20.1), particularly when involving actions against other players, BCPL itself, venue management/ownership, or the amusement machine owner(s)/operator(s) (including owner(s)/operator(s) of non-pinball machines at the same venue of a BCPL event).

At the very least, conduct which any League Officials learn has resulted in a dispute requiring a lawsuit to resolve will be looked upon very poorly. Please note that the existence of a lawsuit itself is usually public record, even if some (or all) of the court filings of that lawsuit are sealed.

21.3 Fugitives / Outstanding Arrest Warrants

Any player who is the subject of one or more outstanding arrest warrants, whether for a criminal offense or otherwise, is considered a fugitive from justice. Fugitives are ineligible to play in any BCPL events per rule 2.1 and, if discovered at any time before standings are finalized for an event, are subject to penalties including an immediate season/tournament forfeit, suspension/ban, and ineligibility to receive any prizes and trophies, at the discretion of the Commissioner.

Please note that serving parole or community supervision, being released on a bail bond, or any other form of supervised release arising from a criminal charge, does not trigger fugitive status in and of itself as long as the conditions of such release are followed and no arrest warrants are active (see rule 21.5).

21.4 Duty to Report

Players observing violations of these rules, particularly those which are also criminal law violations, in physical and temporal proximity to a BCPL event and involving one or more players in that event, or who know another player participating in league event(s) is a fugitive from justice, have a duty to inform the TD or other league personnel (in addition to the appropriate law enforcement agency if legally required). Put more simply: "If you see something, say something."

The willful or wanton failure to do so is considered conduct potentially detrimental to the reputation of BCPL and competitive pinball in general (as defined in rule 20.1) and will typically be penalized at least as aggressively as the unreported offense.

21.5 Court Orders and Community Sentencing

By paying the entry fee, signing up to participate in, or attending and participating in a BCPL event, a player affirms one of the following statements are true:

- a) the player is not on parole, community supervision, or any other form of supervised release/community sentencing for a criminal charge (including release on bail bond for a pending charge), and is not subject to any court orders relevant to participation in BCPL events; or
- b) the player is in full compliance with any applicable conditions of pre-trial release or alternative sentencing (including community supervision, parole, release on bail bond, or otherwise), and the player is not violating any court orders or conditions of release relevant to his/her play in BCPL events.

Any instances where this affirmation turns out to be false subject the violator to penalties including an immediate season/tournament forfeit, an indefinite ban from future BCPL events, and ineligibility to receive any earned prizes and trophies. Also, upon learning of a situation involving a player at a BCPL event and a violation of a court order or condition of release, the League Official(s) who learned of the violation is/are required to notify the appropriate authorities in a timely manner.

22 Gambling

22.1 Definitions

Gambling is defined as any of the following:

- a) placing a wager on one or more events, or one or more series of events;
- b) knowingly participating in an event with a wager in place on the outcome even if not participating in the wagering itself;
- c) any promotion of such wagering;
- d) any solicitation of such wagering; and/or
- e) any action intended to aid, assist or further such wagering, including actions intended to conceal or obstruct discovery of such wagering by League Officials, venue staff, venue security, or law enforcement.

A wager can be any thing of value, including but not limited to cash money.

For the purposes of this section, “event” includes:

- a) any game or contest, including play of pinball games, video games, redemption arcade games, billiards, air hockey, foosball, darts, laser tag, go-karts, golf, miniature golf, bowling, shuffleboard, or any other amusement devices or activities;
- b) sporting events;
- c) election results; or
- d) any other current events, including programming broadcast via television, radio, or the Internet.

“Temporal vicinity” and “physical vicinity” are defined in rule 1.2.

22.2 Prohibition

Gambling is prohibited in temporal and physical proximity to (i.e. at or near, and during or immediately before and after) all BCPL events whether in a venue accessible to the general public (e.g. bars/barcades, family arcades), or a private venue not accessible to the general public. These prohibitions are in effect even when gambling would otherwise be allowed or permitted by law.

A few limited exceptions for certain specific situations are detailed in this section.

Penalties will be set by the Commissioner and adjusted as necessary; in general, violations of this rule will be penalized aggressively. Periodic reminders of the rule are intended to be heeded as the only warnings players will normally receive (i.e. players should expect to be penalized, not warned, after being caught violating a gambling-related rule).

22.3 Criminal Act at Public Venues

For venues open to the public, gambling may also be a criminal act in violation of the Texas Penal Code (i.e. illegal) and thus may also be penalized as such per rule 21.1.5.

22.4 Before, During, or After Event

It does not matter whether gambling occurs during league/tournament play, or merely in the temporal and physical vicinity of the league meeting.

22.5 Proposition Bets

A proposition bet (“prop bet”) on any other events or statistics of a game or event is still considered gambling. Examples of a proposition bet include: total score of all players, total score of odd numbered players versus even numbered players, time it takes to finish the game, ball times, how many restroom breaks players take during a game.

22.6 Conspicuous Thing of Value

A thing of value placed either conspicuously or easily accessible on game equipment shall be considered a wager and intent to gamble by itself, unless it is a coin placed on a device designated for the purpose of securing one’s upcoming place in line to play attached to a pinball machine or arcade video game (sometimes called a “turn keeper” or “competition coin holder”).

For pinball, this would include any such thing of value on that machine's playfield glass or in its coin return slot. For arcade games, this would include any such thing of value placed on the control panel or the coin return slots. For a pool table, this would include any such thing of value placed on or near the coin slots, in the coin return slots (if available), or on the rails of the pool table.

22.7 Abuse of Coin Return Slots

Coin return slots on coin-operated amusement devices are to be used only for the temporary storage of coins rejected by a coin accepting mechanism, pending the taking back of those coins by their original owner. **There is never a legitimate reason for paper money or other things of value to be stored in the coin return slots of a pinball (or other coin-operated) game during play, and there is never a legitimate reason for anything to be in a coin return slot of a pinball (or other coin-operated) game if the game is set for free play.** Thus, the use of the coin return slots to store money or other things of value is specifically prohibited, even if no gambling is taking place. Such use of the coin return slots is not only considered to be gambling, but also an attempt to conceal or obstruct discovery of gambling, and is an aggravating circumstance which may trigger more severe penalties.

22.8 All Players Involved

In the presence of a wager under rule 22.6, there is a rebuttable presumption that all players playing in a game are gambling on that game if there is a wager in place on that game.

22.9 Exchange or Display of Money

The visible exchange or display of cash money in the area where the games (whether pinball, video, pool tables, or otherwise) are kept creates a rebuttable presumption that the player(s) exchanging or displaying cash money are/were gambling (including soliciting a wager). A reasonable exception will be granted for vending machines, change machines, game card reload machines, snack bars, or similar items or places located next to games, and for transactions which are clearly related to ordering drinks from a bar or settling a bar tab.

It is strongly recommended that any non-gambling-related cash transactions take place away from the immediate area of the games to avoid any misunderstandings.

22.10 Amount or Value of Wager

The prohibitions against gambling at BCPL events are in effect regardless of the amount or value of the wager. It is specifically not a defense that the wager was only a small or insignificant amount such as one dollar (\$1.00). Any wager of a thing of value is a violation of the gambling prohibition.

22.11 Strictly Prohibited For League/Tournament Games Per IFPA Rule

Gambling on games that are part of league or tournament play, by participants in those games or those otherwise involved in such games (including, but not limited to, scorekeepers and officials), is a direct violation of the IFPA rules (section III, rule 7, "Wagering or Gambling"). This rule will be enforced at all competitive BCPL events, whether IFPA-endorsed or not, with absolutely zero tolerance for violations. In addition, all violations of the IFPA rule during IFPA-endorsed events will be reported to the IFPA and may also be reported to other tournament directors as deemed necessary to protect the integrity and image of competitive pinball.

In addition to any IFPA-imposed penalties, any players involved in gambling or wagering on games which are part of IFPA-endorsed events will receive an immediate season or tournament forfeit, without refund of any league dues or tournament entry fees, at minimum.

Players suspended from IFPA benefits and/or the World Pinball Player Rankings for gambling or wagering will also be banned from all BCPL events for at least a matching duration, and possibly longer depending on the circumstances and the judgment of the Commissioner (see rule 2.1).

22.12 Forfeiture of Wagers

Any wagers made in violation of these rules are subject to forfeiture to the BCPL treasury, unless subject to requirements by law enforcement/judicial authorities, the venue, or any other authority with precedence over BCPL. All such forfeitures are applied first to the league's operating expenses, with any excess to be donated to a charity of the Commissioner's choice.

22.13 Hosting of Non-League Gambling Events

Nothing in this section shall be interpreted to prohibit anyone who regularly plays in BCPL events (and is thus subject to BCPL rules) from organizing an event with a primary or secondary purpose of gambling or wagering, whether or not pinball-related. However, there must be a clear delineation between such an event and all events held under the auspices of BCPL. To this effect, any non-BCPL events involving gambling:

- a) must be completely separate from any BCPL events, if any, organized by the same person or group;
- b) cannot be held out to be endorsed, sanctioned, or approved by BCPL; specifically, it is prohibited to use the "Bayou City Pinball League" name or "BCPL" initialism, any logos used by BCPL, or any names, initialisms, or logos confusingly similar to those used by BCPL in association with such an event; and
- c) must comply with all applicable laws (city, county, state, and Federal).

Attendees of pinball events organized primarily for the purpose of gambling or wagering should also refrain from wearing apparel or displaying other personal items with the BCPL logo or name, whether official or unofficial.

At no time may any event with a component of gambling or wagering be held under the auspices of BCPL, or within temporal and physical proximity of a BCPL event, even if such gambling or wagering would otherwise be permitted by applicable laws.

22.14 State Lottery and Charitable Bingo

None of the prohibitions in this section shall apply to participation in the Texas Lottery (or other state/local lotteries if and where allowed by law) or charitable bingo, as long as compliance with all applicable laws (such as minimum age and licensing) is maintained. In general it is expected that lottery and bingo sales will not be held on the same premises as a BCPL event.

22.15 Raffle Ticket Sales At Events

As a further exception, upon approval of the Commissioner, the sale of raffle tickets may be permitted at one or more BCPL events. Any such raffle will be audited for compliance with all applicable laws, including but not limited to Texas Occupations Code, Chapter 2002 (otherwise known as the Charitable Raffle Enabling Act or CREA). A raffle found not to be in compliance with any applicable law will be disapproved (or approval revoked), and upon such disapproval (or revocation of approval) for lack of legal compliance, sales of tickets for that raffle are prohibited at BCPL events and subject to the same penalties as any other form of gambling prohibited in this section.

The application for approval must include any required documentation on the age of the benefit organization, its eligibility to hold raffles under Texas Occupations Code §2002.002, and the number of raffles that have been held for the benefit of that organization in that calendar year (including the one which is the subject of the application).

The Commissioner is not required to approve sales of tickets for a raffle based solely on legal compliance, and may disapprove a sale on other grounds.

Please note that so-called “fifty-fifty” raffles (i.e. a raffle where 50% of the cash proceeds are given to the charity and the other 50% of the cash proceeds are awarded to a randomly drawn ticket holder) are prohibited by Texas law outside of certain specific professional sporting events, and that BCPL or any other competitive pinball organization currently does not qualify to run such raffles per Texas Occupations Code §2004.003. The Commissioner will reject all such requests to sell tickets for a “fifty-fifty” raffle while such raffles are prohibited by law for organizations such as BCPL.

23 Emergency Management

23.1 General

Many types of emergencies can arise which can affect the safety of a pinball league night or tournament. This section is intended to explain the procedures to follow in the event of the most likely emergencies to affect league or tournament play.

Since every situation is unique, this section should be considered guidelines as opposed to strict rules. League officials should be prepared to be flexible in how they handle a given situation, doing what is needed to maintain player safety, a welcoming environment, and competitive equity.

23.2 Inclement Weather

In general, an event should be canceled or postponed if a flash flood, tornado, severe thunderstorm, tropical storm, hurricane, or winter storm warning has been issued by the National Weather Service (NWS), covering either the area the venue is in, or likely to affect travel for at least half (50%) of the expected attendees.

In most cases, events should not be canceled or postponed merely for an NWS-issued watch, though every weather situation is different. If there is a reasonable doubt that it will be safe to continue with a tournament or league meeting or that attendance will be adversely affected by a weather situation, a postponement or cancellation should be strongly considered, regardless of NWS-issued watches or warnings.

A frequent source of confusion among those tasked to make weather-related decisions is the difference between a watch and a warning. A warning indicates that conditions are occurring or imminent, or in the case of storms, expected to occur within 36 hours. A watch merely indicates conditions are favorable, or that storm conditions are possible within 36 hours, but not necessarily expected.

23.3 Medical/Public Health Issues

A disease epidemic or pandemic is perhaps one of the most disruptive emergencies a pinball event can face, as we have learned from the spring of 2020 onward and continuing into 2021 during the COVID-19 outbreak. Rather than a continuous series of postponements, league officials should strongly consider an outright cancellation with a refund of any league dues or tournament entry fees already accepted if there is a reasonable doubt a reschedule within six (6) weeks or forty-two (42) calendar days of the original event will be possible.

Hygiene and cleanliness are important in preventing or slowing the spread of disease. Everyone playing in a tournament or league meeting touches the same surfaces on pinball machines. For this reason it is important for players who show signs of a contagious disease to stay home for the safety of others, whether or not there is a contagious disease spreading on an epidemic/pandemic scale.

23.4 Electricity/Power Issues

Another major disruption can occur when the venue has issues with the electricity/power supply, whether a complete outage or a momentary interruption or brownout causing pinball machines to reset/reboot. Typically any power outage will be a catastrophic malfunction per rule 18.3.9. Newer machines will keep the last player scores even if power is lost, at least for shorter outages, and thus could in theory be handled as a major malfunction per rule 18.3.3 if enough information about the state of the game at the time of the outage is known.

Depending on the timing, a power outage may affect some players more adversely than others. As always, a reasonable effort should be made to maintain competitive equity.

If the outage is enough to plunge the entire venue into darkness for longer than a couple of minutes, however, addressing the disruption to the competition is likely to be the least of the TD's worries. All public venues should have adequate battery-powered emergency lighting that kicks in during these situations, but it can't hurt to have a flashlight or two on hand just in case. (Don't forget to check the batteries!)

The interruption of a league meeting is covered under rule 3.8. Appropriate actions regarding the interruption of a tournament will vary by the tournament type and length; in general, the more of a tournament has been played, the more the TD should lean towards trying to finish the remainder of the tournament even if on a later date and/or alternative venue, or failing this, to at least establish the most equitable competitive result possible based on the portion of the tournament that has been already played.

23.5 Fire

Any type of electrical device has the possibility of catching on fire, and pinball machines are no exception. As provided in rule 18.3.9, a pinball machine catching on fire is considered a catastrophic malfunction.

If part of a pinball machine has caught on fire, the first thing to do is turn it off if possible. The power switch is usually either on the bottom front of the machine, often on the right-hand side (most games manufactured after about 1970 up to 2015, and at least some later games from manufacturers other than Stern), or on the bottom right corner of the backbox (newer Stern machines starting with KISS in 2015, possibly others). Note that a few operators may remove the power switches from their games or move them away from the standard location (e.g. inside the cabinet) and that many older machines (as in electromechanical games prior to about 1970) do not have a power switch unless one has been retrofitted.

Except for small and clearly isolated fires, calling the fire department (911) and an orderly evacuation should be prioritized over heroically trying to fight the fire with a fire extinguisher or other means. "When in doubt, get out."

24 Penalties / Equitable Remedies

This list of penalties is not intended to be exhaustive, but covers the vast majority of cases. It is entirely possible that appropriate penalties, whether punitive or to restore equity to those harmed, fall outside of those listed here.

24.1 Warning

A player may be informally or formally warned if no penalty is required either by rule or by Commissioner's directive.

24.2 Game Forfeit

A player may be forfeited from the current game, receiving a machine score of zero (0). Any activity in the forfeited player's position is considered void. The remaining ball(s) in a forfeited player's game, if any, should be plunged and not played. Rules for specific tournament types may have alternate game forfeit penalties stated therein.

24.3 Meeting Forfeit

A player may be forfeited for the current league meeting. The player receives a score of zero (0) for the entire meeting, losing any accumulated points for that meeting, and is disqualified from all remaining games, if any, to be played that meeting.

For the remaining players, scores prior to the forfeit stand as originally entered; remaining games, if any, are continued with only the remaining players or as stated in other applicable rules.

24.4 Tournament Forfeit

For single- or multiple-day tournaments, a player may be forfeited from the tournament. The player loses all accumulated standings and prize eligibility for the tournament without refund of entry fee (if any).

24.5 Season Forfeit

A player may be forfeited for an entire league season. The player loses all accumulated standings points and all league dues paid for the season without refund, and is disqualified from competing for the remainder of the season including playoffs. Any games remaining in the current meeting are handled the same as a meeting forfeit, listed above.

A season forfeit does not necessarily imply a ban or suspension from future events.

24.6 Standings / Eligibility Adjustment

A TD may adjust a player's eligibility as necessary to restore equity, including adjustments to a player's tournament or league ranking. In certain cases, a player's prizes due, whether cash or otherwise, may be reduced or forfeited entirely.

24.7 Ban / Suspension

A player may also be banned or suspended from some or all BCPL events for a set period of time (such as three months or one year) or indefinitely. Such bans or suspensions include all events organized completely or partially under the auspices of BCPL, including non-competitive/social events, and events organized by other groups/leagues considered BCPL events for player eligibility purposes.

24.8 Notification to Other League/Tournament Officials

If deemed necessary by the Commissioner to protect the integrity of the image of competitive pinball, other league and tournament officials may be notified of an offending player's conduct and the penalties imposed.

24.9 Notification to IFPA Officials

Certain violations may, by their nature, need to be reported to IFPA officials per the IFPA rules. This is required to keep the league in good standing with the IFPA so season results can count towards the World Pinball Player Rankings (WPPR).

24.10 Report to Authorities

Conduct which constitutes a criminal act may be reported to the appropriate law enforcement or government authorities by a league official. Compliance with any legal requirements to report certain violations of the law is mandatory for any league official(s) observing or aware of such conduct.

24.11 Probation / Delayed Imposition of Penalty

A penalty or portion of a penalty may be delayed for a probationary period, at the conclusion of which if the offender commits no other rule infractions, and fulfills all other conditions of probation imposed (if any), the penalty will be withdrawn. Any additional infraction during the probationary period or any failure to fulfill other conditions of probation subjects the player to the original penalty plus any additional penalties for the new infraction (if applicable).

The portion of a ban/suspension thus delayed for probation may not necessarily start at the first day (i.e. the first 30 days of a year suspension may start immediately, with only the remainder delayed). The probation period need not necessarily be the same as the length of any such ban/suspension being delayed.

24.12 Fines

Payment of a fine may be required as a condition of future play in a BCPL league or tournaments, or as a condition of probation under rule 24.11. The maximum amount of fines depends on whether or not the conduct in question is also a violation of law.

24.12.1 Not Involving a Violation of Law

For conduct not involving a violation of law per section 21.1.3:

- The total of fines assessed to one player over the course of a league season shall not exceed ten (10) times the league dues for that season;
- the total of fines assessed to one player stemming from conduct in one tournament shall not exceed the greater of ten (10) times the tournament entry fee or fifty dollars (\$50); and
- for a course of conduct either extending across multiple league seasons and/or tournaments or exclusively outside the temporal and physical vicinity of league meetings and tournaments, such fines shall not exceed a reasonable total given the severity of the offense, which normally shall be taken to be ten (10) times the sum total of the entry fees of all league seasons and tournaments which have taken place during that time, or one thousand dollars (\$1,000) for each calendar year or portion thereof if the time cannot be determined.

24.12.2 Involving a Violation of Law

At the option of the League Official assessing the fine, conduct involving a violation of the law, whether city, county, state, or Federal, is punishable by a fine payable to the league an amount up to and including the maximum fine per violation that can be assessed by government authorities for the same offense under that law, superseding any limits under rule 24.12.1 in cases where the limits under that rule are lower.

24.12.3 Use of Proceeds

Fines are applied to the BCPL's operating expenses, with any excess paid to a charity or charities of the Commissioner's choice.

24.12.4 Interest

Fines not paid accrue interest after a grace period of thirty (30) days. The interest rate is six percent (6%) per year, or approximately 0.01644% per day, compounded monthly.

24.12.5 Defaults

If a fine has not been paid in full and acceptable arrangements have not been made to pay the balance once thirty (30) days have passed since the fine was assessed, the player who has been fined is considered in default and subject to an immediate suspension from all BCPL activities. **Any**

other bans or suspensions are tolled while a suspension for non-payment of a fine is active and resume only after the default is cured. Exception: suspensions for non-payments of fines run concurrently with suspensions for non-payment of restitution.

24.12.6 Payment

All fines assessed to a player must be paid by that player from the player's own legally earned funds. **Payments from funds earned via unlawful activities is prohibited.** Third-party payments for fines are prohibited, with the exception that a parent or legal guardian of a minor under twenty-one (21) years of age, or an enrolled post-secondary student under twenty-four (24) years of age, may make payments on behalf of that player. Crowdfunding for fine payments (e.g. GoFundMe) is specifically prohibited and considered an egregious violation of the prohibition against third-party fine payments.

24.13 Restitution / Restoration

For offenses involving damages or theft, restitution or restoration of the loss or damage may be required as a condition of future play in BCPL events. All restitution or restoration assessments are to be applied towards said loss or damage. In the event where restitution or restoration is required by both legal authorities and BCPL, such requirement by legal authorities shall be concurrent and not cumulative to that assessed by BCPL.

24.13.1 Defaults

If restitution has not been paid in full and acceptable arrangements have not been made to pay the balance once thirty (30) days have passed since the restitution was assessed, the player who owes restitution is considered in default and subject to an immediate suspension from all BCPL activities. **Any other bans or suspensions are tolled while a suspension for non-payment of restitution is active and resume only after the default is cured.** Exception: suspensions for non-payments of fines run concurrently with suspensions for non-payment of restitution.

24.13.2 Payment

All restitution must be paid by the player from funds legally earned by that player. **Payments from funds earned via unlawful activities is prohibited.** Third-party payments for restitution amounts are prohibited, with the exception that a parent or legal guardian of a minor under twenty-one (21) years of age, or an enrolled post-secondary student under twenty-four (24) years of age, may make payments on the behalf of that player. Crowdfunding for fine payments (e.g. GoFundMe) is specifically prohibited and considered an egregious violation of the prohibition against third-party restitution payments.

24.14 Cumulative and Orthogonal

All penalties imposed by BCPL, except as otherwise noted, are cumulative and orthogonal to any sanctions or penalties, including but not limited to those which may be imposed by the venue/location owners and operators, the IFPA, legal authorities, and/or any other parties which may be in a position to regulate or restrict the activities of tournament/league players.

25 Conflicts, Contingencies, Severability, and Disputes

25.1 Conflict With Applicable Laws

Any Federal, state, city, and/or county laws shall take precedence over any conflicting rule in this rulebook. In the event of such conflict, any such conflicting rule or portion of a rule shall be void in deference to the applicable laws.

25.2 Severability

If any rule is void by conflict with applicable laws (whether Federal, state, or local), IFPA rules, or venue rules, the remainder of the rules shall continue in full force.

25.3 Conflict With Venue Rules/Staff Directions

The venue's policies and rules, including posted signage and verbal direction of venue staff, take precedence over any league official/TD's directions, any rule in this rulebook, and any other applicable rule or instruction with the exception of Federal, state, and local laws.

25.4 Contingency for IFPA Cessation of Operations and/or Endorsement

In the event the IFPA temporarily or permanently ceases operations or endorsement of BCPL events, or such endorsement by the IFPA of current or future BCPL events becomes impossible:

- a) for league seasons which have not yet begun to collect dues for the current season, the \$1 (one dollar) IFPA fee shall be deducted from the normal dues amount;
- b) for league seasons which have begun to collect dues with the IFPA fee included, the amount normally allocated to IFPA fees shall be reallocated to the prize fund and the dues amount shall remain the same; and
- c) for tournaments which have yet to take place, the amount normally allocated to IFPA fees, if any, shall be reallocated to the prize fund.

IFPA rules shall continue to govern as applicable outside of the IFPA fee requirement.

25.5 Venue for Disputes

By entering, attending, or participating in a BCPL event, all players consent to the jurisdiction of the courts of law of Harris County, Texas, for the resolution of disputes with BCPL and/or its representatives involving state law, and the United States Court for the Southern District of Texas for the resolution of disputes with BCPL and/or its representatives involving Federal law. No disputes involving BCPL are to be arbitrated outside of a court of law without the express written consent of the Commissioner.