

Free Play Pinball League

League Handbook

Rules, By-Laws, and Other Stuff

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FPPL MISSION STATEMENT:

Connecting people across Free Play Locations through the great game of pinball.

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## **0.0 The Short Version**

There is no cost to pay for the season. Free Play foots the bill for any IFPA dues. All you have to do is show up for league at any one of the available dates and locations at least 3 of the 6 weekly sessions and play four games of head-to-head pinball in 3- and 4-player groups to earn points. Games are assigned via the Match-Play events website. (Plunge extra balls / bonus balls to save time!)

New for Season 6 is the modification of the league format to fit within the IFPA Super-League specifications.

Each site / location runs as a stand alone league for IFPA purposes (referred to as sub-leagues).

Player's best 4 out of 6 weeks are utilized for standings within each sub-league, with roughly the top 50% (actually just less than the top 50%) qualifying for each sub-leagues finals. Each sub-league with finals results are submitted as a league to IFPA.

Players may only play in one league location per week.

In addition the weekly results for each player / location shall roll-up to the standings for the overall standings for the Free Play Pinball Super League. Super League Divisions (A & B) shall

be based upon player's best three out first four weeks; players must participate in three out of the first four weeks to be eligible for Super League Finals. Overall standings is based upon best four out of six weeks. Since divisions are set after week four, players do not move up or down into a different division after week four. Scores / Results for playing in a sub-league finals has no impact on standings / placement within Super League. It is possible for a player to qualify and win a sub-league, yet still not qualify to play in Super - League finals.

Approximately the top 50% of A and B divisions shall play in the finals for the Super League. The Super League finals are treated as an invitational tournament in submission for (much lower) IFPA WPPR points. Only A finalists are included in the submission.

Cool prizes, trophies, plaques, glory will be given to the top 4 finishes in Super League A and B divisions, and top 3 in each sub-league shall receive something...

In the event a decision is made for an 8 week league season, divisions are after week 5, and best 6 out of 8 overall for standings (main and sub).

Free Play Pinball League – Rules v2.0 (July 2022)

## 1.0 Introduction

The Free Play Pinball League (FPPL) rules provide a format for running a friendly league competition for pinball players of all skill levels. These rules are designed for leagues of any number of players, playing on four or more machines at a single location. The nature of the league system allows players of all skill levels to play while being fun and competitive for everyone.

The schedule consists of 6 weekly sessions, and a playoff final for each location, and a final for the overall Super League.

During each session there are several dates and locations scheduled for players each week. Each player may only compete at one location in a given week. Players may select any location and may mix and match where they play from week to week. A full list of these locations with their days and times will be available before the start of league.

A player's adjusted league score for each sub-league and for overall super-league placement shall be the total of their four highest session scores (in a 6 week league). Divisions with the Super-League shall be based upon the best 3 out of 4 weeks; roughly half the eligible players placed in A or B division. Players must play in 3 out of the first 4 weeks for super league eligibility. Since the super-league encourages players to play in different locations, sub-leagues do not have the 'must play 3 out of first 4 weeks'. Since both the sub-league and super-league utilizes the best 4 out of 6 weeks, this allows any player to miss two sessions without impacting

their score, while players who attend all sessions may drop their weakest results. Any missed week receives a score of zero.

These rules allow maximum flexibility to fit some competitive pinball around everyone's schedule.

In the event an 8 week league season is utilized, divisions set after week 5, players must play 3 out of first 5 weeks for Super League Finals qualifications, and super and sub-leagues standings will be based upon the top 6 out of 8 weeks.

Special thanks to the Pittsburgh Pinball League, the Free State Pinball Association, the IFPA and the Professional and Amateur Pinball Association, and the New England Pinball League as these rules are modified and in some cases, blatantly copied from their originals.

## **1.1 League Officials/Site Admins**

League officials make decisions on rule interpretation. If possible, rulings of malfunctions or interference should be deferred to an official that is not directly involved in the game. League officials will assist in the collection of player information. They are responsible for starting league nights on time and entering scores into the scorekeeping site within a reasonable time. At least one league official must be present at each league meeting. League officials are eligible to play in the league. See Section 8 for more information about league officials and their duties.

## **1.2 Discretion of League Officials**

These rules are a guide. At times, situations will arise that aren't specifically covered by these rules. In these cases, league officials will make decisions in the spirit of the rules. These decisions will be documented for later reference and applied consistently should the situation arise again in the same season.

## **1.3 League Locations**

League officials must approve a location for play before it can be used as a league site and must be approved before the start of league for the season. Locations must be equipped with at least four and ideally six or more playable pinball machines and be able to accommodate at least 16 people.

New locations and days will be approved by league officials prior. New location additions will be dependent upon sufficient volunteer staffing to manage.

### **1.4 Rule Docs vs FB League page**

From time to time modifications to the league can be made. For purposes of league structure, rules, and format they shall be made on the league page within the IFPA calendar and the Free Play Pinball League Facebook group. In instances where these formats differ from this document, the IFPA calendar and FB group shall take priority.

## **2.0 Attendance**

League officials will set a schedule before league play begins. League players are encouraged to attend every week, but 100% attendance is not required. In order to qualify for super-league finals, a player must play at least 3 of the first 4 sessions. For each sub-league, players must play in at least 50% of the sessions at that location.

### **2.1 Locations**

The league is held at multiple locations each week. Players may compete once per week at any of the locations for league play. Players do not have to sign up in advance to play at a public location. League sites may skip holidays and other dates where conflicts occur, or for inclement weather. The league will still meet at its other locations during such weeks, and the week will still count in the overall standings. A location that skips a date will provide a makeup session at a later date. Make-up dates can be on a different day, or can double-up on a following week. Players can NOT play at more than one location per week (i.e. a player can't decide to play in a second location as a sub-league participant only)

### **2.2 Start Time**

A specific start time for league at each location will be announced in advance. Any games in progress by league players at league start time shall be promptly halted. Players are to join their assigned group and begin league play immediately.

### **2.3 Tardiness**

Players who arrive after play has begun may still enter play for the week, providing there are three-player groups with games left to be played. The tardy player will be assigned to the group containing the fewest number of players that has the most games remaining. The tardy player will receive a last-place finish for all missed games.

A tardy player may not enter into a game already in progress (the first ball has been plunged).

### **2.4 Early Leaving**

Players who leave before play has finished will receive a last-place finish for all missed games.

## **2.5 Forfeits**

If a player does not show up to any location for league night in a given week, that player will be given a score of zero for the week.

## **2.6 Inclement Conditions**

League officials may cancel a league night, due to inclement weather or other conditions, particularly if travel may be unsafe for players. League officials are responsible to notify all players if it is deemed that a league night cannot be held as scheduled. A makeup date will be scheduled for all players affected.

Extra time may be allotted for tardiness in the event of inclement conditions at league officials' discretion.

## **2.7 New League Players**

New League players may join up to the 3rd week of play, however adding 'guests' and 'visitors' on a one week basis is not permitted. Note if a player joins after week 2, they will not be eligible for the super-league finals as they will not be able to play in 3 out of the first 4 weeks.

# **3.0 Machine Play Rules**

## **3.1 Machine play promptness**

If a league player does not begin their turn in a reasonable amount of time (two minutes), other players may plunge the ball for them, and the player may not play the ball. If a machine has an auto-plunge, and it activates, no other player may attempt to save the ball. Players should remain with their group. If a player must leave they should inform another player in their group. Smoke / bathroom breaks, trips to the bar, should be reserved between games, and for a minimum break time. Taking too long of a break, or walking away without telling anyone can be viewed as being disrespectful to other players and league officials who are waiting on you to finish to go home, and don't need to spend time trying to find you.



## **3.2 Practice Games**

Once league play starts, a player should not play other games. If a player plays a practice game on a game which their group is assigned, that player shall receive a last place finish on that game. Remember, the spirit of our league is a combination of social and competitiveness. Having to yell at other players who are in the middle of playing another game during a league game gets really annoying, and results in unneeded stress and can lead to excessive drinking by league officials.

## **3.3 Non-League Players**

League players do not take precedence over other pinball players. A non-league player may accidentally play your ball: this is considered a distraction, not interference or a malfunction. If this happens, regain control of the ball as quickly and politely as possible. Pay attention to your game and this won't happen. If a non-league player is playing an assigned game, wait for them to finish their existing game. If they attempt to start a new game, you can politely indicate you were waiting to play that game.

## **3.4 Rulings**

Rulings shall be made by league officials, which include site administrators and any person(s) designated as officials by the site administrator. Any designated official or site administrator is excluded from ruling on any play situation that directly affects his or her actual or potential standing as a player. Such persons may also be recused where their decision affects a close friend or family member, at the discretion of other league officials. If a ruling can't be made from rules here within, admins can refer to PAPA/IFPA official rules for clarification. In very rare circumstances, an alternative individual might not be available for a ruling (in cases where multiple site admins / designated persons are involved in the issue), in these instances an agreement shall be made by all players impacted. The acting FPPL officials shall always act in the best interest, and in the spirit of pinball.

## **3.5 Extra Balls / Bonus Balls**

Extra balls & bonus balls are not allowed in league play unless declared otherwise by a league official before league play begins.

An earned extra ball will be plunged, not played. When a player plunges an extra ball, they may touch the machine to set up a skill shot before launching the ball. Once the ball is set into motion, the player may no longer touch the machine. If the ball is returned to a launcher lane that requires a manual plunge (e.g. by a ball saver, non-valid playfield), the player may re-plunge the ball.

If you plunge 3 times and the playfield doesn't validate due to a switch not being hit, you may give a single flipper hit (no aiming / trapping), just to hit a switch to validate the playfield and complete the extra ball.

If the machine awards a timed bonus ball, you must plunge to allow the timer to start, and then let the bonus ball time out with no further action until the time expires.

Ball saves are allowed. In some cases, a machine may state "extra ball" or "shoot again" for a ball save; these ball saves (such as F-14 Tomcat's Flight Insurance) are allowed. The simplest way to tell if a ball has ended is whether or not an end-of-ball bonus has been awarded.

Players should be aware of whether they have earned an extra ball and not walk away from a machine until it has been plunged.

A player may elect to play an extra ball in lieu of playing a later ball (e.g. a player receives an extra ball on ball 2, they may elect to play their extra ball as ball 3, and then plunge their third / successive balls).

## **3.6 Replays and Specials**

No award is given for credits earned by replays or specials during league play. If a machine awards extra balls for replays or specials, they are plunged.

## **3.7 Machine Malfunctions**

The league uses the PAPA/IFPA rules on malfunctions, which are listed below.

### **The Nature of Pinball**

The unique charm of pinball lies, in large part, in the physical nature of the game. Unfortunately, this means that unusual events and outright malfunctions cannot be prevented, nor can they be perfectly compensated for. League officials will make all attempts to strike a balance between compensating for malfunctions and accepting the physical nature of the game. In certain cases, malfunctions will be dealt with more strictly during final rounds than during qualifying rounds, at the discretion of league officials.

### **Minor Malfunctions**

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 over others. A minor malfunction is considered part of normal

play. League officials shall determine what constitutes a significant advantage; in the event that such an advantage is obtained, refer to “Beneficial Malfunctions”.

A minor malfunction that occurs repeatedly, to the extent that it is markedly affecting play of the machine, may be considered a major malfunction (or catastrophic malfunction) at the sole discretion of league officials.

## **Major Malfunctions**

A major malfunction is a gameplay problem with a machine that results in the premature loss of ball in play in a fashion that is not a normal feature of the machine’s gameplay. These may be unusual one-time events, or they may indicate a recurring problem.

Examples of major malfunctions include:

- The bonus count begins while the ball is still in play. This can happen if, for example, the machine loses track of how many balls are in the drain trough.
- A flipper or other major playfield feature ceases to function properly.
- Any malfunction that results in the loss of one or more balls during multiball play, without losing all balls so as to end the player’s turn, will only be considered a minor malfunction (exception shall be a multi-ball that is started, but no extra balls are put into play).

Loss of Tilt warnings, without loss of ball, shall not be considered a major malfunction. Loss of any lit feature, running mode, or other gameplay specifics, shall not be considered a major malfunction.

Note that unrepeated physical failures, such as kickbacks or balls jumping off ramps, balls flying over flippers, or balls moonwalking into the outlane following a successful shot do not qualify as major malfunctions. This is the physical nature of pinball.

When a major malfunction occurs, it is the player’s responsibility to notify an official, calmly and promptly. If the official(s) agree 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, after the current game has been completed. The official(s) may choose to allow the player to play ball 3 or 5 of the new game, if that player has been denied certain features that are freely awarded by the machine. Examples of this include ‘Double Bonus’ balls on many EM machines, as well as pity Mist Multiball on Dracula should the player have not yet played one. 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.

If a major malfunction occurs early in the play of the first ball by the first player, league officials may rule that the current game is voided, and restart. If the machine has continued failures, it will be ruled unplayable, and another machine will need to be chosen.

## **Known Malfunctions**

Any malfunction or unusual behavior that is determined to be relatively minor but unusual enough to merit comment may, at the discretion of league officials, be posted for players to be aware of before playing the affected machine. Players who have played the machine before this notice is provided will not be allowed to replay the machine nor to replace it with play of another machine. The occurrence of any posted malfunction will be treated as a minor malfunction unless it worsens or interacts with another feature to yield a major malfunction. Players should notify officials of any game malfunctions during a session.

## **Catastrophic Malfunctions**

A catastrophic malfunction is any event, not caused by a player, which immediately ends play for all players on the machine.

Examples of catastrophic malfunctions include:

- The game system crashes and/or resets due to a software error or component failure.
- Power is lost or interrupted.
- A new game starts.
- The game becomes unplayable.
- When a catastrophic malfunction occurs, if the scores are able to be recorded, players will be provided the appropriate number of additional ball(s) of play on a new game once the machine has been repaired. If the scores are not retrievable, players will be forced to start their game over. No attempt will be made to estimate scores, or reestablish state, at any time.

If a machine affected by catastrophic malfunction cannot be repaired in order to continue play, it is considered disabled; please see “Disabled Machines”.

## **Beneficial Malfunctions**

Any malfunction which provides at least one player with a significant advantage over any other player competing on that machine is known as a beneficial malfunction. League officials shall determine what constitutes a significant advantage.

Any beneficial malfunction which results in a player being able to continue play of a ball that normally should have ended is normally allowed once per game. Examples of this would include an unexpected software ball save, a ball that bounces back into play without player action, or a ball that comes to rest on an unlit kickback in the outlane. Any such behavior shall not be allowed if it repeats, meaning that league officials may require players to allow the repeatedly-saved ball to drain, or play on the machine may be terminated in accordance with catastrophic malfunction rules, at which point the machine will be considered disabled.

Any beneficial malfunction which provides one or more players with a significant scoring or strategic advantage in a way that is not part of normal gameplay will void the score of the affected player(s), unless all immediately-affected players and league officials can agree on a suitable adjustment of the score or other elimination of the advantage. If the beneficial malfunction has been specifically avoided by the player, it is unlikely that a penalty is necessary. If any player score(s) are voided, the affected player(s) may then replay the game after the other players have finished, and the new score(s) are used for the affected player(s).

Examples of beneficial malfunctions would include a jackpot switch that registers when a different target is hit, a valuable switch that scores repeatedly without the ball contacting it, a failed Tilt sensor, or a ball stuck during multiball. See also "Stuck Balls".

Any situation which indicates the presence of a beneficial malfunction should be brought to the attention of a league official.

If the issue cannot be easily addressed by a tech, then the machine shall be considered disabled, and a new game will need to be played in its place.

## **Stuck Balls**

During the course of play, it is possible for one or more balls to become stuck on a playfield feature, usually after becoming airborne. If this happens during single ball play, the player must wait for automatic ball searches to occur. The expiration of any timed feature during this period is not considered a malfunction.

If the stuck ball has not been freed after four such searches, or if the machine is not performing searches for some reason, the player must have a league official brought to the machine. The player must remain alert and at the machine, as he or she is responsible for the ball if it becomes freed at any point.

A league official may initially choose to try to free the stuck ball through judicious nudging, tapping, etc. The player must remain ready to resume play at the machine during this attempt. If

actions by the official result in a Tilt, this will be treated as a major malfunction (not the fault of the player). If the official frees the ball but the player does not successfully continue play, this is normal play (the fault of the player). Loss of Tilt warnings due to league official nudging is considered normal play.

If the league official is unable to free the stuck ball, the machine will be opened, and the stuck ball freed and placed on an upraised flipper or in the shooter lane at the discretion of the official. In the event this is not possible, the official may select another location or feature where the ball can be placed safely while the machine is being closed in order to resume normal play. If more than one ball is stuck, all freed balls will be placed on the flipper(s) of the player's choice before play resumes, or in the plunger lane if the flippers are inactive while the machine is open.

If the ball is inadvertently freed while the machine is open and drains without the player regaining complete control (stopped on a flipper), this will be treated as a major malfunction. If the machine cannot be opened successfully, or if opening or closing the machine terminates the game(s) in progress for any reason, this will be treated as a catastrophic malfunction. If the ball is freed and the machine closed without the player's loss of ball, play continues as normal. If the game is in multiball play and one or more balls are lost as a result of freeing stuck balls, possibly ending multiball but not ending the ball in play, this will be considered no worse than a minor malfunction. If any feature or mode that is lit or active times out while one or more balls are stuck, this will not be considered a malfunction.

Any player who chooses to shake or bump the machine in order to free a stuck ball does so at his or her own risk. No allowance will be made for a player who tilts while attempting to free a stuck ball, whether or not league officials are present.

If a ball becomes stuck during a multiball mode, the player should attempt to trap the other ball(s) in play and request assistance. A stuck ball during multiball often represents a significant beneficial malfunction, and intentionally taking advantage may result in a penalty. Please note specifically that a ball ending up in the plunger lane during multiball on a machine where there is no autoplunger (or where the autoplunger for some reason refuses to fire) counts as a stuck ball, and the player must plunge the ball back into play.

Any player who misuses a game feature in order to intentionally trap a ball during a multiball mode, such as holding in the plunger on Tommy in order to defeat the autoplunger, may be given a warning and/or have his or her affected game disqualified by league officials.

In situations where a ball is trapped in a way that it can be released through player action other than shaking or bumping – for example, a ball at rest underneath a flipper which the player controls – this is not deemed to be a stuck ball. Balls trapped in this fashion during multiball modes are not generally considered to be a rules violation, although the ruling will depend on the exact machine and situation.

Any ball that comes to rest in an outlane, where any portion of the ball is below the outlane post, is not deemed a stuck ball. In these instances, players will have the option of attempting to free the ball themselves or to ask a league official to place the ball in the drain for them without triggering any additional switches. Please note that when this happens in multiball, in no way will a player be allowed to take advantage of this situation by continuing to play any other balls currently available. The situation of this ball that has come to rest needs to be dealt with immediately by either the player or league official.

A ball which has come to rest on top of a center post, an inlane-outlane post/guide or a lamp insert/playfield divot directly above an outlane will not be considered a stuck ball. Players may choose to free balls resting in these positions through nudging of the machine, or request that an official end the ball in play by manually placing it in the drain for center post incidents, and the outlane for inlane-outlane incidents. If an automatically-triggered kickback exists that will send the ball back into play upon draining it in the appropriate outlane, that feature will be manually triggered, and the ball will be treated as a stuck ball from that point and placed on a flipper or other suitable location. Player-controlled kickback features, such as mini-flippers, posts, or manually-controlled kickbacks that send the ball back into play, do not count toward establishing stuck ball status in this case, and the player will not be permitted to utilize these features or touch the game until the ball has reached the ball trough.

One highly debatable stuck ball situation has to do with setting up Dirty Pool on Attack from Mars. Players will often avoid hitting the ball stuck behind the visor and sacrifice the ability to advance a saucer through Dirty Pool, and instead continue to play multiball. For this situation on Attack from Mars, this is not considered a stuck ball and players will continue to play on.

## **Double balls**

In the event of a machine kicks out an extra ball, giving two balls in the shooter lane, or in play, the player shall trap up, and attempt to capture / remove the extra ball. If the loss of one of the balls results in the end of ball / bonus, the player shall be awarded a compensation ball (given the player made attempts to capture / trap the balls).

## **Disabled Machines**

In the event of a machine breakdown, a new machine shall be assigned. If a machine keeps having either catastrophic, or major malfunctions, it will be considered broken down for the event. It will be repaired by the location when they can attend to it.

## **4.0 Bad Stuff / Player errors**

A player error is any player action, purposeful or accidental, which affects the normal play or outcome of a game in progress.

### **4.1 Playing an Extra Ball**

Don't do this! If a player nudges, flips, or otherwise plays an extra ball, they receive a score of zero for the game. However, a player may use the flippers to set up a skill shot. Once the ball has been plunged a player may not touch the machine.

### **4.2 Playing an Opponent's Ball**

Don't do this! If you play someone else's ball, trap the ball on a flipper as soon as you realize the mistake. The penalty for playing an opponent's ball is a zero score for the game. It is your responsibility to know when it's your turn and when it isn't.

The victim may choose one of two options: continue playing the ball (if control can be recovered), or drain the ball and play an additional ball, through a new game. The player must decide immediately. If the player allows the ball to drain without deciding, then it is presumed that he wishes to continue the game and play an additional ball.

### **4.3 Interference**

Definitely don't do this!! Interference includes (but isn't limited to) tilting an opponent's ball or nudging the machine during another player's ball. It also includes intentional distraction of a player during his play.

Talking to or coaching of any player at the machine during a game, in any round, is not allowed. Informing a player that there are too many or too few games entered into the machine will not be penalized as coaching.

If a player interferes with another player, causing a drain and/or loss of turn, this is treated as a major malfunction.

Intentional interference is a serious violation of league play rules and could result in expulsion from the league.

Accidental interference is regrettable but can happen. Any player or non-player who accidentally interferes with the play of any league game will be warned. If the interference was sufficient to cause the loss of ball, this will be treated as a major malfunction. If the interference



terminated play for all players (for example, tripping over a power cord and pulling it from the wall), this will be treated as a catastrophic malfunction.

League officials will be the sole determiners of what constitutes interference and whether or not it is accidental or deliberate.

## **4.4 Slam Tilts / Overly Aggressive Tilting**

Please don't do this! A slam tilt is caused by an aggressive and excessive shove of the machine, or by an attempted bang back or death save, and is considered illegal. The violator will receive a zero score for that game. For other players whose games are incomplete, this is considered a catastrophic malfunction.

Don't overly and aggressively tilt machines out of anger. Pinball machines can be expensive. Players abusing games can be banned from the venue.

## **4.5 Not Starting the Proper Number of Players**

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, and balls have already been played, then those scores shall be voided, and the game restarted to reflect the correct number of players.

## **4.6 Death Saves and Bang Backs**

Techniques known as "Death saves" and "Bang backs" are sometimes employed by certain advanced players. Because of the effectiveness of these techniques varies from machine to machine, and because of the risk of injury to either player or machine, these techniques are banned from play. In the event that a drained ball bounces back into play without deliberate player action, such as in the case of a "Lazarus", this is considered the mechanical nature of pinball and the ball may be played. If this situation occurs repeatedly, and there is question as to whether the Lazarus ball was naturally occurring or induced by the player, league officials may end the game in progress and award a score of zero.

## **4.7 Cheating**

Pinball can often be frustrating, especially during competition. Violation of any rules with the clear intent of preventing another player from fairly playing the machine or of unfairly increasing one's own score can only be described as cheating and is not tolerated. The penalty for

cheating will be determined by league officials based on the severity of the offense and could result in expulsion but is not limited to it.

## **4.8 Waiting Your Turn**

League players DO NOT take precedence over other customers. If a customer is playing a game we do not have the right to kick them off. If you are waiting for a game, and the customer starts a new game, it is appropriate to let them know you are waiting to play. Simply wait (within reason).

## **4.9 Serious Violations of League Rules**

### Player Conduct

The purpose of this section is to help players better understand certain rules and the rulings made by officials during league play, as well as help officials penalize poor player conduct and/or breaking of rules. Player conduct has to be sportsmanlike and if it isn't, it will be acknowledged and penalized.

Our league is dedicated to providing a harassment-free competition experience for everyone, regardless of gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, or religion (or lack thereof).

All players are expected to conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner. Loud outbursts, especially those including large violent movements, are not inclusive to all players. People react to the intensity of competition in different ways, but our standard of conduct is that these reactions need to be considerate of the other participants. Basically, we want a positive and welcoming atmosphere in our league, even (and especially) when we are playing badly or just the victim of bad luck!

Any player who behaves in an inappropriate or disrespectful manner towards any player, site admin, or other league official may be warned, disqualified, and/or asked to leave.

Site admins are responsible for issuing warnings but as they are often playing themselves, they may not notice behavior which violates our code of conduct. The role of a player in enforcing this code of conduct is to bring the site admin's attention to any suspected infractions. Behavior which is judged to be intended to punish a player for reporting a suspected code of conduct violation to a site admin is ruled unsportsmanlike and will be subject to a warning.

Should someone display such egregious behavior that a warning is insufficient punishment (example- a player brings a weapon to a league site and threatens another player with it) the site admin may instead issue a warning + disqualification or expulsion right away.

Should a player not adhere to these guidelines, they may be warned, disqualified, and banned from participating in future events. This warning system applies across the league. Warnings are not specific to a site.

1st offense – verbal warning

2nd offense – verbal warning + disqualified from the current and the next league session

3rd offense – expulsion from the league, including immediate termination of the current season + a lifetime ban from all league play. No monetary refunds are made. After three seasons of league play have passed since the red card offense, the player can appeal in writing to a committee made up of the league president, the league vice president, and three randomly chosen site admins. This committee will vote on whether the player should be allowed to return to the league.

Some examples of offenses

- A player uses offensive language at an official or another player.
- A player has a stuck ball, and instead of calling an official over, they find a key to the game, remove the glass, and subsequently free the ball from its stuck position themselves.
- A player who is waiting their turn to play is interfering with an active player by talking to them against their will.
- A player abuses the machine by kicking it.
- A player loses a game or has a bad ball, throws articles of their clothing, and slams the door on their way out of the venue.

Harassment

Harassment includes offensive verbal comments related to gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, religion, sexual images in public spaces, deliberate intimidation, stalking, following, harassing photography or recording, inappropriate physical contact, and unwelcome sexual attention.

There is no warning policy for harassment. The penalty is an immediate lifetime ban. Should the expelled player feel that the complaint was invalid, the player may appeal immediately in writing to a committee made up of the league president, the league vice president, and three randomly chosen site admins / senior players(IFPA rank 1000 or lower). This committee will investigate and vote on whether the player should be allowed to return to the league.

If a player is harassed and the site admin does not issue a red card to the offender, the player may appeal immediately in writing to a committee made up of the league president, the league vice president, and three randomly chosen site admins / senior players. This committee will conduct an investigation and vote on whether a red card should be issued.

#### Abuse of Machines

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 warning and possible disqualification of game or ejection from the league event, at the discretion of the site admin.

#### Interference, Collusion, and Cheating

Any player who knowingly interferes with tournament play or otherwise disrupts the tournament setting will be warned and/or ejected from the tournament, at the discretion of the site admin.

Any form of cheating, including game restarts, tampering with games, tampering with recorded results, intimidation, collusion, or anything else not covered here, will be addressed by league officials as appropriate, including disqualification and/or ejection from the league.

(credit to the San Francisco Pinball Department and the ReplayFX code of conduct for some of this language)

## 5.0 Scoring

It is each player's responsibility to be sure that their machine scores are recorded correctly on the score sheet or within MatchPlay as each game is finished. Any possible scoring errors should be brought to the attention of league officials immediately, and all players in the group must agree before any requested change is accepted. Please make sure that the name of the game is being captured on your score sheet as well. When using Match Play events for scoring, the SCORES must also be entered.

### 5.1 Player Groups

All players who are in attendance at league start time will be randomly assigned to 3- and 4-player groups. A 5-player group will not be used unless there are exactly five players.

Ideally, all groups will have 4 players. When the number of players is not a multiple of 4, one through three 3-player groups will be assigned. For example, if there are 15 players, the group

sizes will be 4, 4, 4, and 3. If there are 17 players, the group sizes will be 4, 4, 3, 3, and 3. When assigning players to groups, 4-player groups will be assigned first.

## **5.2 Game Selection and Play Order**

Games shall be assigned via the MatchPlay events software. In the event a game becomes unplayable, a new game shall be assigned via the MatchPlay events software. In the event MatchPlay is not available, admins can number machines, and use a number generator for game selection. .

MatchPlay events (or group scoresheet if MatchPlay is not available) will show the play order for each game.

Players need to fill out the score sheets including names, games, and scores for each game, and turned into the site admin. Players submitting results within MatchPlay must also submit scores, not just order of finish.

Order of play for 5-player groups: 1-2-3-4-5, 2-3-4-5-1, 3-4-5-1-2, 4-5-1-2-3

Order of play for 4-player groups: 1-2-3-4, 2-3-4-1, 3-4-1-2, 4-1-2-3

Order of play for 3-player groups: 1-2-3, 2-3-1, 3-1-2, 1-2-3 but lowest score picks game. If tied, lowest player number of tied players goes first.

## **5.3 Group Scoring**

In each game, a player scores points for their finish against their opponents. The winner of a game gets 10 points, and last place gets 2 points. Specific points available depend on the size of the group:

3-player group:

1st = 10 points

2nd = 5 points

3rd = 2 points

4-player group

1st = 10 points

2nd = 6 points

3rd = 4 points

4th = 2 points

5-player group (rare)

1st = 10 points

2nd = 7 points

3rd = 5 points

4th = 3 points

5th = 2 points

The maximum number of points a player can earn in a session is 40.

## **5.4 Ties**

In the rare case where two or more players have tied for machine score (typically on EMs and NBA Fastbreak) a one ball match will be played on the same machine to break the tie. If after one ball there is still a tie another ball will be played.

## **5.5 League Standings and Dropped Scores**

Each player's total weekly points are added to their season total every week. All players will have their lowest two scores from the season dropped from their final standings, this is the adjusted score. The adjusted score is what determines your overall league standing.

League standings will be updated and posted each week.

## **6.0 Finals Qualifications / Finals**

Each sub-league shall have their own finals event consisting of roughly the top half of eligible players. Players must play in half of the weeks to be considered eligible (as well as for submission for sub-league standings to IFPA). Sub-League standings shall be based upon the best 4 out of 6 weeks.

Each player must play at least 3 of the first 4 sessions to be eligible for Super League Finals. The best 4 out of 6 weekly sessions shall be utilized for placement within the Super-League (after divisions). .

## **6.1 Finals Divisions**

Divisions shall be established at the Super-League level only, and will be based on the best 3 out of first 4 weeks. The divisions for Super League shall be roughly the top 50% for A division, and the next 50% for B division. Players who did not play in the first 3 out of first 4 weeks will be in the ineligible division. While these players will be ineligible for participation in the Super-League finals, they still will be eligible for each site / sub-league finals.

Sub-Leagues do not utilize divisions.

For Super-League and Sub-League finals. Roughly the top half of the division will shall be eligible for Super-League finals, and roughly the top half of each sub-league shall be eligible for sub-league finals.

A separate C division may be incorporated in a future date based upon need / size of league.

See more details in section 6.4 below.

## **6.2 Finals Pre-registration**

Pre-registration will be used to help determine the intentions of qualified players to see if they are going to play in Super-League finals. Players who do not pre-register / confirm by the announced deadline will not be eligible to play at finals.

If someone who qualifies for finals chooses not to attend, their spot will be offered to the next highest point earning player in the same division. If a confirmed player doesn't attend finals, their position will be considered a forfeit.

In sub league and in super league, if a player does not participate in the finals event(s), the next highest finisher will be eligible to participate in finals.

## **6.3 Finals Attendance**

Pre-registered qualified players are expected to arrive by the announced check-in time. Players who commit to playing at finals but do not attend prevent other players from the opportunity to attend finals. Players who commit to finals but do not attend will place at the bottom of their respective divisions below players who played, players who declined attendance and players who did not qualify.

Players must check-in no later than the time specified in the announcement. If you do not check in by that time, you will receive a zero for all games not played, NO EXCEPTIONS!

Finals will have a firm start time.

## **6.4 Finals Format**

Groups of 4 players will be formed based on seeding determined by the final league standings.

Finals will utilize banking systems for games. With each round consisting of 3 games. Scoring will be PAPA scoring (4/2/1/0), with the top 2 advancing to the next round. In case of a tie, there will be a one game tie breaker.

The highest seeded player shall have the choice / option of selecting the bank (if they chose not to, it would fall to the next seed). For the first game, player order shall fall to the next highest seed(s) for player order (if the highest seed chose not to select back, they would have first option on order).

After game one, the order on following games shall be determined by reverse order of finish (last place on prior game, shall have first selection of order).

The top 4 players in each division will receive some form of special recognition.

Finals will utilize the following IFPA chart for format. Using the 1 round of bye rounds format!



4-PLAYER COMMON PLAYOFF STRUCTURES												
										EV*		
Format Breakdown										(Games/round)		
N	2br	1br	FR	PQ	QF	SF	F	EVR	1	3	4	5
4							4	1.00	2	6	8	10
8						8	4	2.00	4	12	16	20
8	2	2				4	4	1.75	4	11	14	18
12			4			8	8	2.50	5	15	20	25
14			2			12	8	2.75	6	17	22	28
16						16	8	3.00	6	18	24	30
20	2	6			12	12	8	3.13	6	19	25	31
24			8			16	16	3.50	7	21	28	35
32	8	8	16	16	16	8	4	3.75	8	23	30	38
40	4	12	24	24	16	8	4	4.13	8	25	33	41
These formats assume top 2 of 4 moves on.												
N	Number of players											
2br	Number of players with 2 bye rounds											
1br	Number of players with 1 bye round											
FR	Number of players in First Round, if any (5 round playoff)											
PQ	Number of players in Pre-Quarter Finals, if any											
QF	Number of players in Quarter Finals											
SF	Number of players in Semi Finals											
F	Number of players in Finals											
EVR	Effective Rounds -- i.e. expected No rounds played by winner											
EV*	Effective Value - with 2x multiplier for 4-player games											
EV+	Effective Value - with 1.5x multiplier for 3-player games											

## 6.5 Ties in Finals Qualification

If a tie in total adjusted league points would determine either eligibility for or seeding in finals, these ties will be broken based on each player's best weeks. The tie is first broken by the player's highest single week score. If the tie is still unresolved, the next tiebreaker will be the next highest single week score, and so on. If a tie still exists for finals eligibility, a single randomly-chosen game will be played to break the tie.

If there is a tie that affects only seeding in a division, the tie is first broken by the player's highest single week score. If the tie is still unresolved, the next tiebreaker will be the next highest single week score, and so on. If a tie still exists, a dice roll with the higher numbers will be the higher seeds.

## 6.6 Finals Scoring and Machine Selection

Type Four-player groups

Three-player groups IFPA

Selection of a bank based upon the top seed. Individuals may not chose the same bank twice, but can still be chosen by another player. Points shall be 4/2/1/0 or 4/2/1 for a 3 player group.

## **6.7 Tiebreakers**

If two or more players are tied in points after a playoff round has been played, then a one game playoff is played to break the tie. The machine will be randomly picked by a league official. The play order will be determined by original seeding. There will not be tiebreakers for placement for players who are eliminated, however the number of points earned in the round will determine placement; a player who was eliminated earning two points, will be placed higher than a different player who was eliminated earning one point.

## **6.8 Tardy or Missing from Finals**

Tardy players (who already informed admins of their lateness), will have all balls in their games plunged until they arrive.

If you are missing from finals but accepted attendance during pre-registration, you will place below the attending players, the declined non-attending players and the non-qualified players.

## **6.9 Practice**

There is no practice prior to your division start time on the day of finals. After your division round one has completed, you may practice on games not in use for finals.

# **7.0 Dues and Other Stuff**

## **7.1 League Dues**

There aren't league dues. Free Play handles all costs associated with IFPA.

## **7.2 League Standings / Points**

Final sub-league standing and points will be calculated after Finals, and submitted to IFPA. Players who qualify for sub-league finals, but do not participate will have a final standing below those who do participate in finals.

Super-League finals are a stand alone 'invitational' format, for IFPA points these events will be much lower than historical points awarded for leagues. Each sub-league shall have their points / standings submitted to IFPA based upon the finish after finals. The final sub-league standings shall be based upon the finish after the sub-league finals. A player that is eligible, but does not

participate in the sub-league finals will be at a lower final placement than a lower qualified player who did participate in finals.

## **8.0 League Officials**

League officials consist of the elected positions of president and site representatives.

League comments, issues and suggestions should be submitted to the FB group for all officials to view – it is important to keep all officials involved and on the same page to what the league is doing. Remember, what is discussed among league officials should stay private until the decision is made to reach out to the public.

### **8.1 Elections**

Elected terms will be staggered so there is an election each season. See chart below for the schedule of elections.

The FPPL elected positions will have a term of 6 league seasons with no term limits. Any current league participant can be considered for any position either by an accepted nomination by themselves or another participant.

Candidates will be solicited starting the 1st week of the terms final season. Elections will be held in the 7th/5th week of the 6th season. An election poll will be posted on Sunday at the start of week 8/6 and conclude on the following Saturday. The official elect's term will commence after the League finals.

Should any official be unable/unwilling to complete their term, an interim election will be held to fulfill the remaining time for the position's term. This does not supersede the positions anticipated election which will occur as scheduled.

### **8.2 President**

The league president will ensure that all administrative tasks are completed. These tasks include, but are not limited to, collection and distribution of dues, the ordering of trophies and swag, league schedule, elections, website, rules and bylaws, communication with IFPA, state representatives and site admin.

The president will coordinate all conversations and meeting regarding league business.

The president reserves the authority to make decisions in the best interest of the league without league consensus when attempts to collect opinions and or votes are left unanswered beyond the time limit provided without the request for an extension.

### **8.3 Vice President**

The president will appoint a vice president to assist with administrative duties. The vice president will not participate in decision making unless there is tie among the voting officers. The vice president will then be called upon to cast an unbiased tie breaking vote.

### **8.4 Site Representatives**

Each participating site will have one elected representative. The site representative will be responsible for making certain the voices of the locations are relayed to the other league officials, regardless of their own opinion.

Site Representatives are responsible to disseminate information to site admin in their site and, when applicable, to all regular players at their site.

The site representative is responsible for coordinating finals attendance for the players in their site.

From time to time the President may request additional tasks be done by the Site reps.

Site reps should look for media opportunities in their region

### **8.5 Site Administrators**

These are volunteer positions. No league-wide elections are held for site admin. Every location site must have one site admin and at least one co-admin OR alternate admin. A co-admin would have divided duties on an ongoing basis while an alternate admin would only oversee the league in the absence of the site admin.

Site admin are responsible for organizing weekly league sessions and ensuring NEPL rules are abided equally and fairly by all participants. They must enter their location's scores online in the league site before the next session week begins.

Site admin will disseminate information to their location and relay the voice of their participants to other league officials.

Site admin are allowed to also hold an elected position.

## **9.0 Decisions**

League decisions should have the input of league participants. Because of this, all items to be put for a vote will have a time limit of at least one week to ensure all league locations have an opportunity to have their voice heard. League officials should use that time to reach out to their local players to determine how they would like to vote.

### **9.1 Consulting Committee**

There may be times when the league President will recruit one or more league members to offer opinions on a topic that affects league. Any league member participating in a consulting committee has no voting authority.

### **9.2 Voting Authority**

The president and site representatives will have voting authority for decisions affecting league business. They will use their vote to voice the decision of their players.

The vice president will only have voting authority in the event of a tie vote.

There may be occasion to extend voting authority to a select group of players or the entire league. These situations will be decided by the president or league officials as a whole.

## **10.0 League Calendar**

There may be holidays, vacations, other events on the calendar on a session night. It is up to your location to decide if you want to play that week. You can choose to use one of the two make-up weeks or play a double-header.