



AMERICAN CORNHOLE ORGANIZATION

ACO OFFICIAL RULES

FOR THE SPORT OF CORNHOLE

ACO WE ARE CORNHOLE





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CHAPTER 1

CORNHOLE PLAYING EQUIPMENT

1.1 ACO APPROVED EQUIPMENT

Not limited to ACO branded equipment

- ACO Approved boards may be used for the coordination of ACO Regional tournaments during ACO Season 16
- ACO Approved bags may be used for both ACO Regional and Major tournaments during ACO Season 16 and at the ACO World Championships of Cornhole 16
- To be classified as ACO Approved, equipment must comply with the criteria below.

1.2 ACO APPROVED BOARDS

- Hardwood plywood playing surface measuring 47.5" to 48" x 23.5" to 24".
- The playing surface has a minimum thickness of 1/2" with cross-section backing, or 3/4" with or without cross-section backing.
- Each hole is 6" diameter, centered 9" from the top of the board and centered from each side edge.
- The front of the board is 3" to 4" from the ground to the top of the playing surface.
- The back of the board is 12" from the ground to the top of the playing surface.
- The playing surface should be finished – sanded to a smooth texture. There should be little to no blemishes in the wood surface that may disrupt or distort play.
- The playing surface can be painted with a high gloss latex paint or varnish. The surface should allow bags to slide when thrown, but not be so slippery that the bags slide back down the platform.

1.3 ACO APPROVED BAGS

- Bags that have been approved by the ACO for use at ACO Tour Events (ACO Regionals, Majors, Conference Championships, State Championships)
- Players may bring their own ACO Approved Bags to ACO Tour Events
- A complete list of ACO Pre-Approved Bags can be found on americancornhole.com/bring-your-own-weapon.
- Approved bags are not required to be listed on AmericanCornhole.com and may be approved by the Certified Official on the day of the event if they meet approval specs

1.4 ACO APPROVED BAG SPECS

- Each bag is filled with plastic resin/beads which will not breakdown
- Each bag weighs between 15.75 ounces (447g) and 16.25 ounces (461g)
- When flat, each bag not to exceed a thickness of 1.5 inches (3.8cm)
- When flat, each bag to have a minimum thickness of 1.125 inch (3.18cm)
- When flat, each bag to be a minimum of 5.75 inches (14.60cm) across at its narrowest point (side to side)
- When flat, each bag not to exceed 8.25 inches (21cm) across at its widest point (corner to corner)
- Each bag must have clearly printed manufacturer logo/name and series name
- Bags must be one primary color
- Bags may have rounded corners but cannot be rounded more than 0.5" from the corner on a 6" x 6" bag



CHAPTER 1

CORNHOLE PLAYING EQUIPMENT

1.5 PLAYER RESPONSIBILITIES FOR BAGS

- Bags must maintain all ACO Approved specs above regardless of wear and tear
- Bags must have clearly printed manufacturer logo and series name
- Bags must not be altered from their original state- altered/new seams, refilled/alterd filling, restamped logos, etc
- Bags must not have any foreign substance applied- sprays, talc powder, etc.
- Bags must not leave any residue on the playing surface
- Bags must appear clean and free of excessive wear
- Bags must be one primary color

1.6 ADDITIONAL PLAYER GUIDELINES FOR BAGS:

- Bags may be subject to inspection at any time by an ACO Official
- Players may inspect and toss their opponent's bags down-and-back once prior to the start of a game
- Players may request an ACO Official to inspect their opponent's bags prior to the start of a game
- Once a game begins, bags are deemed legal, and the results of the game will stand
- When choosing bag colors prior to the start of

a game, the higher seeded or coin toss winner chooses their color first, then the opponent must choose another, distinguishable color

- During a game, each player must use all four (4) of the same series bag from the same manufacturer
- Players found to be in violation of any bag policies due to bag inspection may be subject to disciplinary actions:
 - 1st violation at an ACO Tour Event – Forfeiture of the offending bags for the remainder of tournament. Player must choose another set of their bags or choose ACO provided house bags for the remainder of the tournament
 - 2nd violation at an ACO Tour Event – Forfeiture of game. Player must use ACO provided house bags for the remainder of the tournament
 - 3rd violation at an ACO Tour Event – Disqualification from tournament. Possible further Membership suspension based on review
- Violations at 2 separate an ACO Tour Events during the season - Disqualification from tournament. Possible further Membership suspension based on review
- The coordinating ACO Official has final say on all disputes. At any time, an ACO Official may require one or both players/teams to use ACO house bags
- For games to be filmed for broadcast, livestreaming, etc., if a player/team's bags are deemed too old, dirty, or worn to pass visual inspection, players may be required to use ACO house bags



CHAPTER 2

CORNHOLE COURT LAYOUT

2.1 CORNHOLE COURT LAYOUT

CORNHOLE COURT:

A regulation size cornhole court is 8 feet wide and 40 feet long with a recommended vertical clearance of twelve (12) feet. If a tournament court has a clearance of less than 12 feet, it must be noted in the tournament details prior to the event.

THIS COURT CONSISTS OF TWO (2) PLAYER'S LANES:

Lane 1: Contains the two designated pitcher's boxes on the left side of the board.

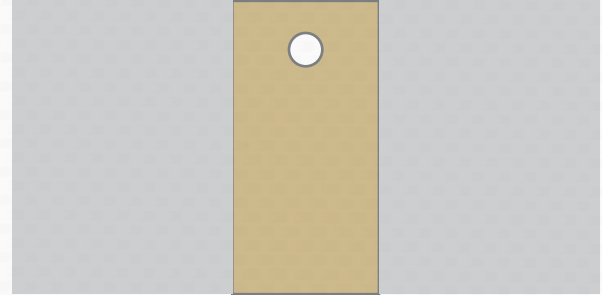
Lane 2: Contains the two designated pitcher's boxes on the right side of the board.

Cornhole Boards: Boards are positioned 27' from the front edge to front edge of the board.

Cornhole Pitchers Boxes: A designated pitcher's box is a 4' x 3' area at each end of the court and on both sides of each board; four (4) boxes in all.

Cornhole Foul Lines: The front edge of the cornhole board is the foul line.

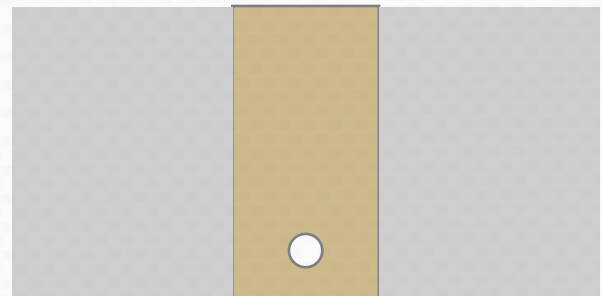
Score Tower: Each court will contain a score tower used to help keep track of the score.



2.2 CORNHOLE COURT PREPARATION AND MAINTENANCE

Every effort shall be made to keep the cornhole playing surface in perfect playing condition. Players are responsible for making sure the court is in good playing condition prior to starting the match.

- No foreign substance (such as Pledge®, talc powder, baby powder, silicone sprays) may be applied to the playing surface or bags by an individual player before or during cornhole play.
- A dry clean cloth may be used to wipe down the boards prior to the start of the game.





CHAPTER 3

CORNHOLE SCORING

3.1 LENGTH OF GAMES

TRADITIONAL 21 The game shall be played to the pre-determined number of twenty-one (21) points. The first player/team to reach, or exceed, that amount at the conclusion of a frame is the winner.

3.2 BAG TERMINOLOGY

WOODY Refers to any cornhole bag that has been pitched and remains on the cornhole board playing surface at the conclusion of the frame.

CORNHOLE Refers to any cornhole bag that has been pitched and passes through the cornhole board hole at any time within the frame.

3.3 FOUL BAGS

Refers to any cornhole bag that are not considered a woody or a cornhole. A foul bag is any bag that meets any of the following criteria:

- Any bag pitched without at least one foot completely inside the pitcher's box at the time of release
 - » Must be witnessed and enforced by a Certified Official
 - » Penalty: Dead bag and CO Strike
- Any bag that was thrown when the player foot fouls
 - » Must be witnessed and enforced by a Certified Official
 - » Penalty: Dead bag and CO Strike
- Any bag not pitched within the 15 second time limit
 - » Must be witnessed and enforced by a Certified Official
 - » Penalty: Dead bag and CO Strike
- A bag pitched from a different pitcher's box than their designated pitcher's box
 - » May be enforced by self, or opponent, or Certified Official
 - » Penalty: Dead bag
- Any bag that contacted the court or the ground before coming to rest on the playing surface
 - » May be enforced by self, or opponent, or Certified Official
 - » Penalty: Dead bag
- Any bag that comes to rest touching the ground and the board.
 - » May be enforced by self, or opponent, or Certified Official
 - Penalty: Dead bag

- Any bag which struck a previously defined object such as a tree limb, wire, indoor court ceiling, etc.
 - » May be enforced by self, or opponent, or Certified Official
 - » Penalty: Dead bag

3.4 METHODS OF SCORING

CANCELLATION SCORING The approved method of scoring for the sport of cornhole is cancellation scoring. In cancellation scoring, the points of one player cancel out the points of their opponent. Using this method, only one player/team can score in each frame.

WOODY Each woody is worth one (1) point

CORNHOLE Each cornhole is worth three (3) points

Example:

Red achieves one (1) woody and two (2) cornholes during the frame (7 total pts)

Blue achieves two (2) woodies and zero (0) cornholes during the frame (2 total pts)

7 points – 2 points = Red scores 5 points for the frame

3.5 RECORDING THE SCORE

- No cornhole bags shall be moved before the scoring is determined. If this decision is in doubt, a Certified Official will be called to determine the scoring for the frame in question.
- Players are always encouraged to pay close attention to the score. Players are required to update their score on the score tower at the conclusion of each frame. Players may call upon the Certified Official between frames if there is any discrepancy about the correct score.
- When a third party is being used to manage the score tower, it is the responsibility of the player/ team who scores in each frame to call out the score to the score keeper. It is the responsibility of the players/teams to ensure the score is represented correctly on the score tower at the conclusion of each frame before moving to the next frame.



CHAPTER 4

PLAY OF THE CORNHOLE GAME

4.1 OVERVIEW OF SINGLES AND DOUBLES PLAY

SINGLES PLAY

- Player A competes against Player B.
- Both players stay in their designated lane for the whole game.
- Players start the game at the headboard and will alternate pitching bags until each player has pitched all (4) of his/her bags.
- Players then walk to the end of their lane to the other court, take score, and resume pitching back to the other cornhole board.

DOUBLES PLAY

- Team A competes against Team B – each team is comprised of two (2) people.
- Each team will stay in their designated lane for the whole game.
- Players at one board will alternate pitching bags until each player has pitched all (4) of their bags.
- Players at the other board will take score and resume pitching back to the other cornhole board.

4.2 PITCHING ROTATION, LANE ASSIGNMENTS, AND BAG COLOR

The player with the first pitch, player lane choice, and bag color will normally be decided by the format of the tournament.

SEEDED TOURNAMENTS

- The player/team with the higher seed has their choice of bag color.
- The player/team with the higher seed pitches first.
- In singles play, the player with the higher seed chooses lane assignments.

In doubles play, the higher seeded team chooses one of the following options:

1. Choose lane assignments
 2. Choose their opponent to pitch against (head-to-head)
- If option #1 is selected, the higher seed chooses their lane and takes their positions in the pitcher's boxes, then the lower seeded team chooses their own pitcher's boxes to determine head-to-head match-ups.
 - If option #2 is selected, the lower seed chooses their lane and takes their positions in the pitcher's boxes, then the higher seeded team will choose their own pitcher's boxes to determine head-to-head match-ups.

NOTE: If playing best 2 out of 3 matches, the first pitch and lane assignment options go to the higher seed in first game and to the lower seed in second game. If a third game is needed, first pitch and lane assignment options return to the higher seed.

RANDOMLY SEED TOURNAMENTS

- The player/team winning the coin-toss chooses their bag color.
- The player/team winning the coin-toss pitches first.

In singles play, the player winning the coin toss chooses their lane assignment.

In doubles play, a coin-toss is used to determine which player/team selects one of the following options:

1. Choose the lane assignments
 2. Choose their opponent to pitch against (head-to-head)
- If option #1 is selected, the coin toss winner chooses their lane and takes their positions in the Pitcher's boxes, then the opposing team chooses their own Pitcher's boxes to determine head-to-head match-ups.
 - If option #2 is selected, the coin toss loser chooses their lane and takes their positions in the Pitcher's boxes, then the coin toss winner will choose their own



Pitcher's boxes to determine head-to-head match-ups.

- If playing best 2 out of 3 matches, the first pitch and lane assignment options go to the coin toss winner in the first game and to the coin toss loser in the second game. If a third game is necessary, another coin toss will decide who gets the first pitch and lane assignment options

4.3 PITCHING CORNHOLE BAGS

PITCHING

- Players alternate pitching bags (one player at a time) until each player has pitched all (4) of their bags.
- A player must pitch all (4) cornhole bags from their designated pitcher's box.
- Players must pitch the bag with an underhanded release.
- One foot must be completely within the pitcher's box at the time of releasing the bag.
- A player may not touch the ground on or beyond the foul line before their bag has contacted the board at the opposite end of the cornhole court. If a player crosses the foul line prematurely, it will be considered a foot foul.

4.4 FOOT FOUL

A foot foul is called when a player's foot touches the ground on or beyond the foul line before their bag has contacted the board at the opposite end of the cornhole court.

Procedure and Penalties for foot fouls:

- If a foot foul is witnessed by the opponent, they must call a time-out and notify a Certified Official. The player will not be charged for the time-out.
- A Certified Official will report to the court to observe the game.
- The Certified Official will alert both players as why they have been called to the court, as a "warning."

• If the Certified Official witnesses additional offences, penalties will be as follows:

- 1st Strike: The player will receive a "1st Strike" and their bag will be declared a dead bag and removed from the playing surface. The non-offending player may choose to replace any affected bags as close to their original position as possible or leave them as they are.
- 2nd Strike: The player will receive a "2nd Strike" and their bag will be declared a dead bag and removed from the playing surface. The non-offending player may choose to replace any affected bags as close to their original position as possible or leave them as they are.
- 3rd Strike: The player forfeits their current match on the third offense.

NOTE: A Certified Official may also voluntarily officiate the game without a request from players

4.5 ACCIDENTAL RELEASE

- Any cornhole bag that leaves a player's hand once the final step (if taken) and final forward swing of the delivery process has started, shall count as a pitched bag.
- A cornhole bag that is accidentally dropped by a player before the final step (if taken) and final forward swing has started, shall not be considered a foul bag and may be picked up and pitched.

4.6 PITCHING THE NEXT FRAME

- The player/team who scored in the preceding frame will pitch first in the next frame.
- If neither player/team scores, the player/team who pitched first in the preceding frame will retain first pitch in the next frame.

4.7 PITCHING OUT OF TURN

- The player/team who scored in the preceding frame will pitch first in the next frame.



- If neither player/team scores, the player/team who pitched first in the preceding frame will retain first pitch in the next frame.

4.8 TOUCHING BAGS BEFORE FRAME IS COMPLETE

If any bags in scoring positions (woodies or cornholes) are touched by a player, whether intentionally or unintentionally, before all bags during the frame are pitched, the frame is over.

The offending team (team who touches the bags) forfeits all remaining bags and tallies the score for the bags they have already pitched during the frame.

The non-offending team tallies 12 points as if they had thrown 4 cornholes during the frame.

IMPORTANT NOTE: 12 pts are NOT automatically added the overall score (scoreboard). The 12 pts are only used within this specific frame before cancellation.

EXAMPLE:

- Red has thrown 3 bags equaling 5 points to this point in the frame
- Blue has thrown 3 bags equaling 7 points to this point in the frame
- Blue accidentally reaches down and grabs the bags
- The frame is over
- Blue's remaining bag is declared dead and their previous points are tallied
- Red tallies 12 points for the frame, as if they had thrown cornholes
- 12 Red points - 7 Blue points
- Red scores 5 points for that frame

4.9 TIME LIMITS – PITCHING AND SCORING

PITCHING A player must pitch each cornhole bag within fifteen (15) seconds of their opponent's bag coming to rest.

Procedure and Penalties for time violations:

- If a time penalty is witnessed by the opponent, they must call a time-out and notify a Certified Official. The player will not be charged for the time-out.
- A Certified Official will report to the court to observe the game.
- The Certified Official will alert both players as why they have been called to the court, as a "warning."
- If the Certified Official witnesses additional offences, penalties will be as follows:
 - 1st Strike: The player will receive a "1st Strike."
 - 2nd Strike: The player will receive a "2nd Strike"
 - 3rd Strike: The player forfeits their current match on the third offense.

NOTE: A Certified Official may also voluntarily officiate the game without a request from players

In singles play, once the final bag comes to a rest, each player has 30 seconds to walk to the other end, pick up their bags, and ready themselves to pitch.

** Exceptions may be made by the Certified Official considering any physical disabilities or difficulties*

SCORING The frame will be scored 5 seconds after the last bag is pitched and contacts the opposite board.

- If either player believes that bags may still be moving, they are to immediately alert their partner or opponent not to touch the bags, and to begin counting aloud, using the 1-second cadence "One ACO, Two ACO, Three ACO, Four ACO, Five ACO."
- Any bag that moves in position after 5 seconds will be scored based on its previous position.
- If timing cannot be agreed on, the Certified Official will score or negate the frame.





CHAPTER 5

OTHER GENERAL RULES

5.1 MOVING CORNHOLE BOARDS AND BAGS

A player can only straighten cornhole boards in between frames and with the approval of their opponent. A Certified Official may be called to determine re-placement if a discrepancy is in question.

A player may only cross the foul line and approach the opposite board during a frame under three (3) circumstances:

1. A timeout has been called
2. To Rake bags piled inside the cornhole board hole
3. To Sweep bags (that are considered foul bags) from the playing surface

5.2 APPROACHING THE OPPOSITE BOARDS

A player may only approach the opposite board during a frame under three (3) circumstances:

1. A timeout has been called.
2. To rake bags piled inside the cornhole board hole.
3. To sweep bags that are considered foul bags from the playing surface.

5.3 TIMEOUTS

- Each player or team is allowed two 1 minute time outs per game.
- Timeouts can be up to one minute long.
- A player may only call a timeout when it is their turn.
- Both players may walk to the other boards to examine bag position during the timeout.
- Players may not touch the cornhole bags or boards during a timeout.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Official time outs may be granted in the case of a busted cornhole bag, equipment malfunctions, or other circumstances at the discretion of the Certified Official. A player will not be charged for time out.

5.4 RAKING CORNHOLE BAGS

If bags become piled inside the hole and may interfere or obstruct with the next pitch or if there is question as to whether a cornhole bag would have naturally fallen through the hole, a player may request to rake the cornhole bags that have fallen inside the hole. To request a rake, the player must audibly ask.

- One or both players may walk to the other board and rake the bags from under the board. One player rakes and the other player watches.
- A spectator may be called to rake the bags if both players agree.
- A certified official may be called to rake the bags if there is a discrepancy.
- Anytime 4 cornhole bags have entered the hole, or a pile of bags is visible in the hole, a player may request a rake and will not be charged a timeout.

IMPORTANT NOTE: During raking, all efforts should be made to leave bags on the playing surface undisrupted, in their natural state, and to leave bags that may hang on the rim of the hole from falling inside the hole unnaturally. If a bag is resting on a piled bag, and unavoidably falls into the hole because of raking, then it shall be counted as a cornhole.

5.5 SWEEPING CORNHOLE BAGS

If a foul bag lands on the playing surface or comes to rest touching the ground and the board, it must be removed immediately.

If a player pitches a foul bag which affects any bags in play, their opponent has the option of returning all cornhole bags to their original position on the playing surface or leaving all bags as they are.



CHAPTER 6

PLAYER CONDUCT

6.1 DISTRACTING BEHAVIOR

While in competition, cornhole players should not make disturbing noises or movements that would distract their opponent or other nearby players. Players who feel that there is an issue with player conduct should alert a Certified Official immediately.

Examples of inappropriate behavior includes:

- Use of profanity
- Use of abusive language
- Use of obscene gestures
- Flipping or juggling bags
- Reaching down to pick up bags from the board
- Making noise during an opponent's throw
- Or other types of disturbing noise or movements

6.2 PROCEDURE AND PENALTIES FOR DISTRACTING BEHAVIOR

- If distracting player conduct is witnessed by the opponent, they must call a time-out and notify a Certified Official. The player will not be charged for the time-out.
- A Certified Official will report to the court to observe the game.
- The Certified Official will alert both players as why they have been called to the court, as a "warning."

If the Certified Official witnesses additional offences, penalties will be as follows:

- 1st Strike: The player will receive a "1st Strike"
- 2nd Strike: The player will receive a "2nd Strike"
- 3rd Strike: The player forfeits their current match on the third offense
- Any further offense may call for disqualification from the Tournament/Events and Memberships suspension.

NOTE: A Certified Official may also voluntarily officiate the game without a request from players

6.3 SPORTSMANSHIP

Cornhole players (and spectators) may not indulge in any of the following actions:

- Heckling
- Using profanity or abusive language
- Making obscene gestures
- Making unwarranted physical contact with other players
- Or any other type of unsportsmanlike conduct

Players that exhibit unsportsmanlike conduct toward other players, spectators, or officials will be subject to expulsion from the tournament and from the event site.

6.4 GIVING/RECEIVING PLAYER ADVICE

It is legal for a teammate or spectator to provide advice on bag position and/or next pitch recommendation.



CHAPTER 7

LIVESTREAM RULES

7.1 AMERICAN CORNHOLE ORGANIZATION VIDEO RELEASE

By becoming an American Cornhole Organization member or purchasing a ticket or entry to any American Cornhole Organization event; You are giving physical permission to the American Cornhole Organization and its affiliates the rights of your image, and video or still, and of the likeness in sound of your voice as recorded on audio or video tape. Your image may be edited, copied, exhibited, published, or distributed for ANY USE and You waive the right to inspect or approve the finished product. You also waive any right to royalties or other compensation arising or related to the use of your image or recording.

7.2 BAGS

- Players on livestream may not use bags of the same, or similar, color to the bags of their opponent.
- In a seeded tournament, the player or team with the lower seed will have to switch bags if they are too similar in color to the bags of their opponent(s).

- In an unseeded tournament, the player or team that lost the coin toss will have to switch bags if they are too similar in color to the bags of their opponent(s).
- Bags with other national organization logos or markings will not be permitted on Livestream videos or in the finals of ACO Majors

7.3 DRESS

Players appearing on the livestream in the Finals of an ACO event must wear ACO branded clothing, or apparel approved by the ACO. Failure to comply with this rule could result in forfeiture of the match.

Players may not wear any of the following on livestream:

- Cut-off sleeves
- Logos or designs representative of other national cornhole organizations





CHAPTER 8 SIMPLE BACKYARD RULES

Boards are placed **27 feet** from front edge to front edge.

Games are played to **21 or more points**. (no bust)

Woody: Refers to any cornhole bag that has been pitched and remains on the cornhole board playing surface at the conclusion of the frame. **Each woody is 1pt.**

Cornhole: Refers to any cornhole bag that has been pitched and passes through the cornhole board hole at anytime within the frame. **Each cornhole is 3pts.**

A bag that comes to rest touching the ground AND the board does not count as a point.

Cancellation Scoring: The approved method of scoring for the sport of cornhole is "cancellation" scoring. In cancellation scoring, the points of one player cancel out the points of their opponent. Using this method, only one player/team can score in each frame.

Both players **play one board at a time** and **stay in their designated lane** for the whole game (right or left).

Players start the game at one board and **alternate pitching bags** until each player has pitched all (4) of their bags.

Players then **walk to the end of their lane** to the other board, take score, and resume pitching back to the other cornhole board.

Players must deliver the bag with an **underhanded release**.

Feet must stay **behind the line of the front of the board** at the time of releasing the bag.

The player/team who scored in the preceding frame **pitches first** in the next frame. If neither player/team scores, the player/team who pitched first in the preceding frame shall retain first pitch in the next frame.

If bags become piled inside the hole and may interfere or obstruct with the next pitch or if there is question whether a cornhole bag would have naturally fallen through the hole, a player may request to **rake** the cornhole bags that have fallen inside the hole.



AMERICAN CORNHOLE ORGANIZATION



ACO OFFICIAL RULES FOR THE SPORT OF CORNHOLE

GAME ON!



ACO OFFICIAL RULES