

## **USPA Outdoor, International and Arena Rules Changes for 2019**

Dear Members,

With the support of the Rules Committee and other USPA committees, the USPA Board of Governors has approved a number of changes to the USPA Outdoor Rules for 2019. These changes are designed to open up the game, make it safer, and bring the Outdoor Rules more in line with the USPA's International Rules and the HPA, FIP and AAP Rules. The most significant Outdoor Rules changes are either set forth or summarized below, with corresponding International Rule changes noted in italics:

### **Outdoor Rule 1.e (game timeliness):**

The Umpire(s) may impose an appropriate penalty and award a yellow flag to the unprepared player(s) if a team is not mounted, on the field and prepared to begin the game, including (if possible) in the manner described by Rule 1.d, at the designated starting game time set by the Host Tournament Committee. If a team is not mounted, on the field and prepared to begin the game, including (if possible) in the manner described by Rule 1.d, within 15 minutes after the designated starting game time set by the Host Tournament Committee, the Umpire(s) shall declare a forfeit.

### **Outdoor Rule 1.f (American Rule):**

An Affiliate Player Member with Canadian citizenship and a USPA handicap shall each be considered a Registered Player Member, but for the purposes of the American Rule only, which requires that each team in a USPA Event shall, excluding the sponsor, have a minimum of one Registered Player Member, regardless of handicap level.

### **Outdoor Rule 4.a – Interpretation (helmet rule enforcement):**

The provision of Rule 4.a requiring "member[s] of a team organization" to wear a helmet when mounting a horse "before, during or after a USPA Event anywhere within the safety zone, end zone or playing field" will be strictly enforced in all USPA Events, including USPA Events played under the USPA International Rules. The first violation will result in a penalty and a yellow flag being given to the team or teams violating the provision. Any subsequent violation will result in a penalty being imposed on the team violating the provision and a yellow flag being given to the player who employs the team organization member responsible for that violation. If that player cannot be immediately identified, a yellow flag will be given to that team's Captain.

### **Outdoor Rule 14.b/c (duration of final period):**

In the final regulation period, play will continue until the second horn or bell, or until a goal is scored unless that goal ties the score in which case play will continue until the

second horn or bell, or until another goal is scored. If the play is stopped by the Umpires after the 7-minute horn or bell for any reason, the penalty, throw-in or free hit, as the case may be, shall be executed. If the play is stopped by the Umpire's whistle after the 7-minute horn or bell for any reason, 5 seconds shall be allowed for execution of any penalty, free hit or throw-in, as the case may be. Should the score be tied at the end of the final regulation period, the game shall be resumed in overtime periods with intervals between periods as provided in Rule 16, until one side obtains a goal which shall determine the game. 5 seconds shall be allowed for execution of any penalty, free hit or throw-in, as the case may be.

**Outdoor Rule 22.e and International Rule 9.c (ball out of bounds off umpire or when unclear):**

If the ball goes out of play over the side boards or side line after glancing off an Umpire or his horse, or if the Umpire is unable to determine what caused the ball to go out of play, play shall resume by a throw-in toward the side boards or side line parallel to the point where the ball went out of play.

**Outdoor Rule 22.e – Interpretation (out of bounds free hit from the 60-yard line procedures):**

The player taking the free hit from the 60-yard line is deemed to be hitting to a teammate if the ball travels at least 30 yards. The player taking the free hit from the 60-yard line may not play the ball again until it has been played by another player on either team. If the ball does not travel at least 30 yards: (i) no member of the hitting team may make a play on the ball or a defending player who is attempting to make a play on the ball, and (ii) a defending player may play the ball from any direction or angle providing he or she does so without creating danger or a risk of danger to himself, herself, other players or horses. A violation of these procedures by either team will result in an appropriate penalty.

**Outdoor Rule 25.c and International Rule 17.e (delay of game/one tap – 5 seconds rule):**

A player in possession of the ball, marked by approximately 2 horse lengths or less by an opposing player, must keep moving if he or she is neither being blocked nor ridden off and therefore has the freedom to continue along the Right of Way. Should the player in possession of the ball either stop or reduce his or her speed to a walk, he or she may tap the ball only once and thereafter he or she (or any member of his or her team) must, within 5 seconds, either hit away or run with the ball. An infraction of this rule will result in a penalty against the team in possession of the ball.

**Outdoor Rule 26.i and International Rule 18.i (improper blocking):**

During the execution of a knock-in, Penalty 5.a or 5.b, or a free hit resulting from a ball hit out of bounds, an offensive player may not block a defensive player from marking the offensive player's teammate who has a play on the ball (i.e., set a pick on a

defending player). When an offensive player improperly blocks a defensive player, the Umpires shall call a foul and award an appropriate penalty. Improper Blocking may or may not constitute Dangerous Riding, and result in a yellow or red flag under Rule 33, depending on the degree of danger as determined in the discretion of the Umpire.

**Outdoor Rule 26.i – Interpretation and Examples (improper blocking):**

INTERPRETATION:

For the purposes of this provision only, “the execution of a knock-in, Penalty 5.a or 5.b, or a free hit resulting from a ball hit out of bounds” shall be deemed to occur from the time the Umpire calls “Play” until the time an offensive player either hits away or runs with the ball. During that time period, improper blocking may occur and be penalized anywhere on the field where an offensive player is blocking a defensive player from marking the offensive player’s teammate who has a play on the ball. Improper blocking can occur even if there is no contact between the blocker and the defensive player attempting to mark the blocker’s teammate who has a play on the ball.

EXAMPLES:

Red #3 is knocking in. Red #1 is riding alongside Blue #2 at the 30-yard line as she moves downfield for a pass from Red #3. Red #3, followed by Red #4, hits the ball slightly short and to the outside of Red #1, who continues to ride with Blue #2 and between Blue #2 and the ball. Red #3 uses Red #1 as a shield preventing Blue #2 from making a defensive play while Red #3 taps the ball then leaves it for Red #4. Improper blocking; no deliberate conduct by Red #1 is necessary.

Red #3 is knocking in. Red #1 is riding alongside Blue #2 at the 60-yard line as she moves downfield for a pass from Red #3. Red #1 and Blue #2 are engaged in riding each other off and Red #1 is between Blue #2 and the ball as Red #3 taps the ball in from the backline. This is not improper blocking because Red #1 and Blue #2 are too far away from Red #3 for Blue #2 to have a play on the ball.

Red #3 is knocking in with Red #4 following. Blue #3 waits at the 30-yard line. Red #3 taps the ball just short of Blue #3, then goes to Blue #3 while leaving the ball for Red #4. Because Red #3 has not yet hit away or run with ball, but instead has prevented Blue #2 from marking Red #4, who has a play on the ball, this is improper blocking.

**Outdoor Rule 36.d – Example (Penalty 4 procedure):**

EXAMPLE: On a Penalty 4, Blue #3 mis-hits the ball in what the Umpires judge is a legitimate attempt to score in one hit. The ball crosses the 15-yard line and Blue #3 follows it toward the goal at a gallop. Reaching the ball, Blue #3 hits a hard offside shot

to drive the ball through the pack of players clustered in the goal-mouth. Foul on Blue #3 and possible yellow flag – lack of consideration for safety.

***International Rules preface – (unaddressed issues governed by Outdoor Rules and TCs):***

These USPA International Rules may be used in USPA Events with an upper handicap limit of 8 goals and above providing that all games in the event are officiated by two certified professional Umpires unless otherwise approved by USPA Umpires, LLC. In all events played under these rules, including USPA Events, issues that are not specifically addressed by these rules are governed by the USPA Outdoor Rules, Examples and Interpretations, if any, that specifically address those issues (see, for example, USPA Outdoor Rules 1-13), and the USPA Tournament Conditions, Constitution and By-Laws.

**Tournament Condition X (HTC option for duration of final period under International Rules):**

(Note: Beginning January 1, 2019, Host Tournament Committees for Events played under the USPA International Rules will have the option of using the Tournament Condition below, which is substantially the same as new USPA Outdoor Rule 14.b/c, instead of USPA International Rule 2, as long as they give adequate notice to participating teams.)

**2. DURATION OF PERIODS**

a. Each period of a game shall be a maximum of 7 1/2 minutes in length. At the end of 7 minutes of elapsed time, a single horn or bell will sound to indicate that up to 30 seconds remain in the period (overtime portion of the period). At the end of 7 1/2 minutes of elapsed time, a horn or bell will sound twice to terminate the period.

(1) Except for the final period of regulation play, each period will terminate following the 7-minute horn or bell, when the ball goes out of play, a goal is scored, or the Umpire(s) whistle sounds. When played on a boarded field, play will not stop when the ball hits the boards and remains on the playing field. If a foul is called after the 7-minute horn or bell sounds, the Umpire's whistle ends the period and the foul shall be awarded at the beginning of the next period.

(2) In the final regulation period, play will continue until the second horn or bell, or until a goal is scored unless that goal ties the score in which case play will continue until the second horn or bell, or until another goal is scored. If the play is stopped by the Umpires after the 7-minute horn or bell for any reason, the penalty, throw-in or free hit, as the case may be, shall be executed. If the play is stopped by the Umpire's whistle after the 7-minute horn or bell for any reason, 5 seconds shall be allowed for execution of any penalty, free hit or throw-in, as the case may be.

b. Should the score be tied at the end of the final regulation period, the game shall be resumed in overtime periods with 3-minute intervals between periods, until one side obtains a goal which shall determine the game. 5 seconds shall be allowed for execution of any penalty, free hit or throw-in, as the case may be.

**Also, with the support of the Rules Committee, the Arena Rules Subcommittee, and the Arena Committee, the USPA Board of Governors has approved changes to the Arena Rules and Arena Optional Tournament Conditions for 2019. The most significant changes are set forth below:**

**Arena Rule 3.b (clarification of handicap limitations):**

All references to handicaps in Tournament Condition VII (Instant Replay), the Optional Tournament Conditions for Arena Rule 9.a (concerning the availability of a Defended Penalty 3), and Arena Rule 14.a(4) (concerning the definition of “high hook”) are to USPA Arena Handicaps, not USPA Women’s Arena Handicaps.

**Arena OTC 9.b Interpretations (procedures when a shanked Penalty 2 or 3 hits the designated defender):**

(Note: The proposed Interpretation and Examples below address the situation in which a shanked Penalty 2 or 3 does not reach the end wall because it hits the designated member of the fouling team. As you may know, Optional Tournament Condition for Arena Rule 9.b(2)(a) states that: “On Penalties 2 and 3, no member of the fouling team may hit the ball until it rebounds off the end wall.”)

Rule 9.b(2)(a)....INTERPRETATION: If the penalty shot on a Penalty 2 or 3 hits the designated member of the fouling team or his or her horse directly off the hitter’s mallet, and the designated member is properly positioned (i.e., placed along the end wall no closer to the goal than 10 yards from its edge or the corner of the arena, if the corner is less than 10 yards from the edge of the goal), the rebounding ball will be treated as if it has rebounded off the wall as long as the designated member of the fouling team does not hit or hit at the ball or direct the course of the ball in violation of Rule 14.d when it hits him or her. If the penalty shot hits a designated member of the fouling team who is not properly positioned or hits a properly positioned designated member of the fouling team who hits or hits at the ball or directs the course of the ball in violation of Rule 14.d when it hits him or her, another free hit shall be granted the team fouled as called for in the original penalty.

EXAMPLES: Blue is awarded a Penalty 3, and Blue No. 1 sets up to take the penalty shot. Red No. 3 is Red’s designated defender. Red No. 3 is properly positioned because she is placed along the end wall to the right no closer to the goal than 10 yards from its edge. Blue No. 1 shanks the penalty shot wide to the right and the ball hits Red No. 3’s arm on the fly, rebounding back toward the 15 yard line. The ball never hits the end wall. Because Red No. 3 did not attempt to hit or hit at the ball or direct the course of the ball in violation of Rule 14.d when it hit her, the rebounding ball is treated as if it has rebounded off the wall. If the rebound is within 25 yards of the end wall, only the fouling team may play the ball, but it must do so immediately, and no member of the fouled team shall affect that play.

Blue is awarded a Penalty 3, and Blue No. 1 sets up to take the penalty shot. Red No. 3 is Red's designated defender. Red No. 3 is not properly positioned because she is closer to the goal than 10 yards from its edge. Blue No. 1 shanks the penalty shot wide to the right and the ball hits Red No. 3 or her horse on the fly, rebounding back toward the 15 yard line. The Umpires should stop play and grant the team fouled a re-hit because Red No. 3 was not properly positioned.

Blue is awarded a Penalty 3, and Blue No. 1 sets up to take the penalty shot. Red No. 3 is Red's designated defender. Red No. 3 is properly positioned because she is placed along the end wall to the right no closer to the goal than 10 yards from its edge. Blue No. 1 shanks the penalty shot wide to the right and the ball lofts toward Red No. 3, who hits it forward out of the air before it hits the end wall. The Umpires should stop play and grant the team fouled a re-hit because Red No. 3 hit the ball before it rebounded from the end wall in violation of Arena Tournament Condition for Rule 9.b(2)(a).

Blue is awarded a Penalty 3, and Blue No. 1 sets up to take the penalty shot. Red No. 3 is Red's designated defender. Red No. 3 is properly positioned because she is placed along the end wall to the right no closer to the goal than 10 yards from its edge. Blue No. 1 shanks the penalty shot wide to the right and the ball lofts toward Red No. 3, who unsuccessfully hits at it out of the air before it hits the end wall. The Umpires should stop play and grant the team fouled a re-hit. (See Interpretation above.)

Blue is awarded a Penalty 3, and Blue No. 1 sets up to take the penalty shot. Red No. 3 is Red's designated defender. Red No. 3 is properly positioned because she is placed along the end wall to the right no closer to the goal than 10 yards from its edge. Blue No. 1 shanks the penalty shot wide to the right and the ball lofts toward Red No. 3, who knocks it out of the air with a "header" using her helmet. The Umpires should stop play and grant the team fouled a re-hit because Red No. 3 directed the course of the ball in violation of Rule 14.d.

Blue is awarded a Penalty 3, and Blue No. 1 sets up to take the penalty shot. Red No. 3 is Red's designated defender. Red No. 3 is properly positioned because she is placed along the end wall to the right no closer to the goal than 10 yards from its edge. Blue No. 1 shanks the penalty shot wide to the right and the ball hits Red No. 3's horse on the fly, rebounding directly into the goal. The goal counts for Blue; bad luck for Red.

**We hope you agree that these rule changes are a step in the right direction and we welcome your feedback, whether positive or negative.**

**Chris Green, Chairman  
USPA Rules & Rules Interpretation Committee**