**DODGEBALL**

**Dodgeball** is a game in which players on two teams try to throw large balls at each other while avoiding being hit themselves. In the United States, the game is typically played among children 6-12 in elementary school. However, internationally, the sport has also emerged as a popular middle school, high school and college sport. It is also popular in informal settings and is often played on a playground, in a gym, or in organized recreational leagues.

There are many variations of the game, but generally the main objective of each team is to eliminate all members of the opposing team by hitting them with thrown balls, catching a ball thrown by a member of the opposing team, or forcing them to move outside the court boundaries when a ball is thrown at them.

**Equipment**

The number of dodgeballs used in the game often varies, but three to ten is common. Exceptions are usually made if a court is particularly small or if many people participate. More balls generally adds to the amount of action in a game, but can result in stalemate with many blocks. Six is the minimum number of balls to conduct a game with enforced rules. An odd number is generally favorable as one team will necessarily have a majority of balls in possession and should take the offensive role.

The standard worldwide measurement and material for a dodgeball is a seven inch foam ball; however, most dodgeballs are roughly the size of a volleyball and composed of foam with a thin plastic shell. Some dodgeballs are made of rubber and some more specialized ones have a padded canvas surface. Some leagues allow the use of multiple sizes of dodgeballs in a single match, while others use one standard size for all balls. The size of balls typically used in Canada are 7” to 8.25” in diameter, and are made of a soft foam with an exterior coating. Individual tournaments or leagues may choose to use larger, rubber balls, as well.

**Court**

An example of a dodgeball court used in the National Dodgeball League

A typical dodgeball game is usually played on a basketball court, volleyball court, fenced area or even an Australian Rules Football oval or soccer pitch. There is no fixed dodgeball court design. The game is picked on the best available surface that is usually one of the above mentioned. Unless it is a variation of dodgeball, the court must have a center line.

**Rules of game**

Dodgeball players preparing for the opening rush

At the beginning of a dodgeball game, the balls are lined up on the central dividing line (in some versions of the game, the balls are thrown in the air for the players to catch or divided evenly to both the teams pre-match). The players then rush towards the center line simultaneously and try to grab one of the dodgeballs and throw or roll it backwards to their teammates (they cannot pick up a ball and throw it instantly however this rule is based on the way people play. This is known as the opening rush. Once the game has commenced, players throw balls at members of the opposing team in an attempt to eliminate the players.

When a player has been hit by a dodgeball "on the full" (i.e., without hitting the roof, the floor, any of the walls, or an outside object and rebounding off) and no one catches it before it becomes dead, that player has been eliminated and must move to his team's designated bench area (players are still out if the ball rebounds off another dodgeball and/or player and hits them on the full). The same rule applies if any number of people try to catch the ball but drop it. Depending on the rules and variation, "headshots" (balls thrown in dodgeball that hit an opposing player in the head) may either result in the thrower being out, or the person being hit being out.

If a player catches a ball thrown by the opposing team on the full, then the player who threw the ball is eliminated, and the team that caught the ball can reinstate the player that has been out the longest (or depending on the rules, the player(s) whom the thrower eliminated, or even the whole team). Some variations change the reinstatement limit. As long as the ball has been caught in any way and is held for two seconds, the thrower is out (i.e., even if the ball is caught between the legs, the thrower is still out). If a dodgeball hits an opposing player but gets caught by one of the hit player's teammates, the thrower is out, a player gets reinstated, and the player who got hit
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stays in. A variation if the dodgeball game is played on a basketball court is that if a player throws the ball and it goes into the opposing basket and/or it hits the basketball backboard on the full, the whole team gets resurrected. The ball is still counted to have hit the backboard or scored a basket on the full if it rebounded off another dodgeball or it was deflected into the backboard by an opposing player. If the ball hits the backboard supports and/or the ring but fails to hit the backboard or go into the hoop, there is no effect. Players cannot be caught out if the ball hits the backboard, backboard supports, and/or the ring.

Players can pick up dead balls and throw them back at the other team. Players are allowed to leave the confines of the court to gather balls that have rolled out of bounds, but cannot throw the ball until they are back inside the court. A ball thrown from outside the court cannot eliminate an opponent who is hit. It only succeeds in getting the thrower automatically eliminated. If that ball however is caught on the full, the opposition can reinstate the player that has been out the longest from their team. A player who moves completely out of bounds when a ball is thrown at them and does not catch that ball is also eliminated. If a player moves into the opponent's zone or picks up a ball from inside the opponent's zone without it fully rolling inside their zone, that player is out. Players can also get eliminated if their throw hits an opponent on the head (Directly on purpose), displays bad sportsmanship, or cheats. Kicking the balls is prohibited.

Depending on the rules of a particular game, a ball in the possession of a player can be used to block incoming balls thrown by the opposing team. If the ball is knocked out of his hand by another thrower, however, the player that had been holding the ball is then considered 'out'. Many games end this way when there are only 2 players left. If there are two players left, and one throws a ball at the other who then catches it, the player who threw the ball is out and the game is over. Once all players except one on one team is eliminated, the game is over.

Another alternate rule is 'No Lines' or open court. This rule is used at a point in the game when there are few players left and it was too easy to dodge the ball with all the extra room. When 'No Lines' is declared, all boundary lines no longer count and the players can go anywhere to get a better shot at their opponent.