



NBWF Festival 5 Dec 2026 - Tournament Rules

- Teams may have up to six (6) players, including a goalkeeper, on the pitch at any time.
 - In the Mixed division, each team must have at least three (3) women on the field at all times.
 - No underage players are allowed without the specific approval of the league organisers. Players must be above the age of the division they play in.
 - Only men can play in men's divisions, and only women can play in women's divisions.
 - A player may take a maximum of 4 touches before passing the ball.
 - 3 points for a win and 1 point for a draw
 - A horn will start and finish all games at the same time. Please be ready.
 - No shoes with studs allowed. Shin pads covered by socks must be worn.
 - Jewellery and personal medical devices must be taped, covered or removed.
 - NBWF Festival organisers have arranged personal injury insurance cover for all players for the duration of the Festival.
 - All participants in the NBWF Festival agree to the conditions set out in the NBWF Release Waiver. [NBWF Festival Waiver](#)
 - All participants are expected to abide by the Tournament Rules and the acknowledged spirit of Walking Football. Disciplinary Action as set out below will be applied.
 - In special circumstances, age-based exemptions may be given for players to participate. Please contact the organisers if you'd like to request an exemption.
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Rules of Play

- All rules are to be read in conjunction with WFA Laws of the Game UK (<https://thewfa.co.uk/laws-of-the-game/>) and the FA (England) <https://www.EnglandFootball.com/play/ways-to-play/walking-football/Rules-and-Refereeing>
 - These rules of play are designed specifically for the Northern Beaches Walking Football Tournament and will override similar/same rules in the Laws of the Game document. If in doubt, please consult with the Tournament Director.
 - If it looks like a player is NOT walking, they probably are not walking — this decision is always at the referee's discretion (both feet off the ground at the same time is 'not walking').
 - When the ball is out of play, running to retrieve the ball is acceptable.
 - The referee will stop play immediately if any player falls over. The game is restarted with an indirect free kick to the team last in possession; alternatively, a goal kick may be given to the closest goalkeeper.
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Start and Restart of play

- A game is commenced by a kick-off from the centre of the pitch. The kick may be played in any direction. Defending players must be 3 metres from the ball, and both teams must be in their defensive half of the field.
 - If the ball crosses the sideline, play is restarted by a kick-in. The ball must be stationary and placed on the sideline. Defending players must be at least 3 metres from the ball.
 - Goal kicks may be rolled or kicked by the goalkeeper. If the goalkeeper is kicking a goal kick, the ball must be placed on the ground first - no drop kicks permitted. **Players from the opposing team shall not stand any closer than 3 metres to the area.**
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Walking/Not Walking

- No running, jogging, running backwards or jumping is permitted at any time when the ball is in play, for players both on and off the ball. If it looks like you are not walking, you probably aren't! The decision is at the referee's discretion and is made if both feet are off the ground.
- Lunging is not allowed in the vicinity of another player.
- An indirect free kick will be given if a player is not walking. If a player is penalised 3 times for not walking, in a single game, that player will be issued a caution on the third infringement and will result in a 3-minute sin-bin; the player cannot be replaced for this period.

Number of Players

- Each team may register any number of players, with up to six (6) players per team on the field at any one time.
 - A team may take the field with a minimum of four players.
 - Mixed teams must have at least three (3) women and one (1) man on the field at all times.
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Duration of Game

- Games will be 20 minutes long, with no halftime. All games will be started and stopped by a horn.
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Height Restriction

- The ball is not permitted to rise wholly above the crossbar height. An indirect free kick is awarded against the team that last touched the ball before it went high.
 - If the ball is deflected high by the goalkeeper and stays on the field of play, it is returned to the goalkeeper for a goal kick.
 - If the goalkeeper deflects the ball high and it goes out over any part of the goal line (including entering the goal), a corner is awarded.
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Heading

- No deliberate heading of the ball is allowed. An indirect free kick is awarded against the player who deliberately heads the ball.
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No Contact

- Walking Football is a no-contact sport.
- No tackling from behind or the side is allowed.
- Front-on tackling is permitted; however, if there is any contact during the tackle, an indirect free kick will be given against the player instigating the tackle, challenge or the contact.

- Any preventable contact will result in an indirect free kick against the offender.
 - Reckless force in tackling/challenging will be punished with a yellow card and a 3-minute sin bin.
 - Excessive force in tackling/challenging, Serious foul play or violent conduct will be a red card, send-off and not replaced
 - No slide tackles will be permitted. These will be considered red card offences; the offending player will be sent off and not replaced.
 - Players (other than the goalkeeper) cannot play the ball whilst on the ground.
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Goal Scoring Area

- Goals can only be scored from your attacking half of the field.
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Substitutions

- There is no limit to the number of substitutions allowed during a game, but substitutions must be made during a stoppage in play.
 - A player who has been replaced may return to the pitch as a substitute for any player.
 - If the referee deems that a team is wasting time by asking for subs or taking too long, they may stop further substitutions (other than for injuries).
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Back-pass

- The goalkeeper is allowed to pick up the ball following a back pass from a teammate.
 - Goalkeepers cannot receive the ball back directly from a teammate to whom they have just passed the ball, unless it has made contact with another player. If this occurs, an indirect free kick is awarded 3 metres outside the penalty area.
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Goal keepers

- The goalkeeper will not be allowed to dropkick the ball out of their hands. If this occurs, an indirect free kick is awarded 3 metres outside the penalty area.

- The ball may be released by an underarm throw or placed on the ground and kicked.
 - Goal kicks may be kicked or thrown underarm to restart play.
 - The goalkeeper cannot allow the ball to stop in the penalty area without touching it or have the ball in their possession for more than 6 seconds. Infringement will result in an indirect free kick, 3 metres outside the penalty area.
 - Any player may change places with the goalkeeper, provided that the referee is informed and the change is made during a stoppage in play.
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The Penalty Area

- The penalty area is an arc marked by lines or flat cones.
 - During a game, the outfield players of either team are NOT allowed inside the penalty area.
 - If a defender deliberately enters the penalty area and gains an advantage, a penalty kick is awarded.
 - If a defending player enters the penalty area to deny an obvious goal-scoring opportunity (DOGSO), the player will be sent off (red card), and the attacking team will be awarded a penalty goal.
 - If an attacking player deliberately enters or gains an advantage by entering the penalty area, a goal kick is awarded to the defending team to restart the game.
 - If a player's momentum takes them into the penalty area, following a shot which goes into the goal, the goal will be awarded so long as the ball goes into the goal before the player enters the penalty area.
 - Goalkeepers are NOT allowed out of the penalty area. If the goalkeeper gains an advantage by exiting the area, a penalty kick is awarded.
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Penalty Kick

- A penalty kick will be taken from two metres outside the penalty area at the centre spot as designated by the penalty mark or a flat cone.
 - All players except the goalkeeper must remain behind the ball at the taking of the penalty
 - The penalty taker can only walk up to ONE metre from the ball in executing the penalty kick.
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Offside

- There is NO offside.
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Free Kicks

- All free kicks, except for a penalty, will be INDIRECT and shall be taken at the place as indicated by the referee.
 - Players from the opposing team shall not stand any closer than 3 metres to the ball.
 - Free kicks shot at goal and accidentally deflected in will restart as a goal kick with no goal being scored.
 - All free kicks awarded within 3 metres of the penalty area will be taken 3 metres away from the penalty area.
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Corner Kicks

- A goal cannot be scored directly against the opposition from a corner kick.
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Offences & Penalties

- Four (4) team Not Walking offences will result in a penalty being awarded to the opposing Team.
 - For other DOGSO events, the referee has discretion to send off/red card the player and award the opposition a penalty goal.
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Sin Bin

- Persistent offenders of any infringement may be cautioned/yellow carded and sin-binned for 2 minutes at the referee's discretion.
 - A substitute will NOT be allowed for players sin-binned or shown a red card.
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The Referee

- The referee's decision is final. The Team Captain may politely ask the referee a question to clarify the reason for their decision. However, persistent questioning or comment will be deemed as dissent and will result in a caution/yellow card.
- Players are not to call out their interpretation of a foul during the game. This may confuse other players and undermine the referee. A caution/yellow card may be issued to offending players.
- For any player sent off/red card, further participation in the tournament is at the discretion of the tournament director.
- Please accept that the Referee is always correct, even if you disagree. Show respect towards all match officials at all times.
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FINALS

The top two teams in each competitive division will play in the final (unless their division has 4 or fewer teams or otherwise deemed by the tournament director).

Position on the table will be determined by the points for each team after the rounds.

In the event of teams being on **equal points**, the finalists will be determined by the following:

- a) goal difference, if still equal;
- b) most goals scored for, if still equal;
- c) head-to-head result (team that won to go through), if it was a draw, then
- d) tournament directors' discretion.

In the event of a drawn match in the final, a winner will be determined by a penalty shoot-out.

Penalty Shoot-out Procedure

1. The referee tosses a coin; the team winning the toss will have a choice of goal.
2. The referee tosses a coin again; the team that wins the toss decides whether to take the first or second kick.
3. Only players who are on the playing area or are temporarily off the playing area (injured, adjusting equipment, in the sin bin, etc.) at the end of the match are eligible to take kicks.

4. If, before or during the kicks from the penalty mark, one team has a greater number of players than its opponents, it must reduce to the same number as the opponents, and the referee must be informed of the identity of each player excluded.
5. The penalty shoot-out will be out of **3** kicks per team.
6. The referee keeps a record of the kicks being taken.
7. A kick cannot be taken until the referee signals. If a player infringes, the penalty kick will be retaken.
8. The goalkeeper must have one foot on or behind the goal line when the kick is taken.
9. If the goalkeeper saves the penalty after making any infringement, the kick will be retaken.
10. If a goalkeeper continues to infringe, the referee may require the goalkeeper to be replaced by another eligible player.
11. The kicks are taken alternately.
12. If, before both teams have taken their 3 penalty kicks, one has scored more goals than the other could score, even if it were to complete its designated number of kicks, no more kicks are taken.
13. If, after both teams have taken the 3 penalty kicks, both have scored the same number of goals, kicks continue to be taken until one team has scored one goal more than the other from the same number of kicks. If all players have taken kicks (including the goalkeepers) and the scores are still level a new rotation of kicks will start and continue until one team has scored one goal more than the other from the same number of kicks.
14. Any eligible player may change places with the goalkeeper.
15. Only the eligible players and match officials are permitted to remain on the playing area when kicks from the penalty mark are taken.
16. All players, except the player taking the kick and the two goalkeepers, must remain in the opposite half to that where the kicks are being taken.