



Summary of Key Revisions for 2020 to the USPA Outdoor Rules

Outdoor Rule	Revision for 2020
Overview – All Rules	The 2020 USPA Outdoor Rules replace the 2019 USPA Outdoor Rules and 2019 USPA International Rules with a single set of rules. Where there were significant differences between the 2019 USPA Outdoor Rules and 2019 USPA International Rules, the 2020 USPA Outdoor Rules are structured to allow Host Tournament Committees in events with an upper handicap level of 8 goals and above to choose options or enforce Alternative Rules that allow some or all of those significant differences to be maintained. This will enable such events to be played under “international” rules (i.e., rules similar to those enforced by the AAP and the HPA). At events with an upper handicap limit of less than 8 goals, the 2020 USPA Outdoor Rules govern, and they are very similar to the 2019 USPA Outdoor Rules. However, there are important changes to the Outdoor Rules at all levels. Those changes are summarized in the remainder of this table.
Rule 2a(2)	New for 2020 – In preliminary play in events of 20 goals and above, a player competing in the event may substitute for an injured player on another team for the remainder of the game in which the injury occurs if the injured player is rated 7 goals or higher. (This type of injury substitution was previously available only for an injured player rated 8 goals or higher.)
Rule 2d	New for 2020 – Two minus-rated players may now compete on the same team in USPA Events up to 6 goals. (The limit was previously 4 goals.) New for 2020 – In USPA Events up to 3 goals, the handicap of the highest rated player on the team may not exceed the upper handicap limit of the Event by more than one goal. (For example, while a 3-goal player may play in a 2-goal USPA Event, a 4-goal player or a 5-goal player may not.)
Rule 4a and its Interpretations	New for 2020 – As of June 1, 2020, players and Umpires in USPA Events and Club Events must wear a helmet certified to meet the NOCSAE ND050 Standard Performance Specification for Newly Manufactured Polo Helmets.
Rule 4c	New for 2020 – Players must wear boots or boots and half-chaps that cover their calves.
Rule 4d	New for 2020 – In any USPA Event, players must wear white pants or breeches.
Rule 5e	New language added for 2020 – If, in the opinion of the Umpire(s), a mount is deemed physically unfit from exhaustion, distress, lameness, excessive sweating and/or laboring breathing, the Umpire(s) may remove the mount for the remainder of the period or the entire game.



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Rule 7	The 2020 Rule contains a list of the considerations each Host Tournament Committee should address before an Event begins. That list and those considerations (Rule options and Alternative Rules) are printed in blue in the Outdoor Rules.
Rule 8b	New for 2020 – The Umpire’s authority now extends from 15 minutes before the time each game is scheduled to start until 15 minutes following the final whistle. (Previously, the Umpire’s authority began when each game was scheduled to start.)
Rule 14	New language added for 2020 – When the sounding twice of the second horn or bell is either untimely or not heard by the players or Umpires, the period ends at 7 minutes and 30 seconds expired on the official clock, unless it is the final regulation period and it ends earlier pursuant to subsection (2) below. A goal scored after time has expired on the official clock does not count, even if it is before the second horn or bell sounds and before the Umpires blow their whistles. Should there be an electronic malfunction of the official clock or a situation where the official clock does not start and/or stop in accordance with the play on the field the Umpires shall have final authority to correct the official time and shall direct the Timekeeper and/or Scorer to make any necessary adjustments to the official clock.
New Alternative Rule 14	This Alternative Rule, which (like Rule 14) governs the duration of periods, is adapted from 2019 USPA International Rule 2, and may be used instead of Rule 14 in Events with an upper handicap limit of 8 goals and above.
Rule 16	New for 2020 – 3 minutes between periods, with a 5-minute halftime in games of more than 4 periods. However, in games with an upper handicap limit below 8 goals, the Umpire(s) may allow more time.
Rule 17	For ease of reference, the Round Robin format explanation found in the USPA Tournament Conditions is now also set forth fully in Rule 17.
Handicap Matrix	For ease of reference, the Outdoor Handicap Matrix now appears after Rule 19 and before Rule 20 (as well as in the Umpire Guide).
Rule 20d	New for 2020 – If the Umpire(s) inadvertently permit all players on both teams to line up the wrong way, the teams must play on until a goal is scored or the period ends and any goal scored that is consistent with the “wrong-way line-up” counts for the team that scored it.
Rule 20 – Interpretation	New for 2020, adapted from the 2019 USPA International Rules – To preserve the condition of the field, the Umpire may throw the ball in any place on the center line, but always more than 20 yards from the boards or sideline.



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Rule 21b(2)	<p>New language added for 2020, adapted from the 2019 USPA International Rules, explicitly allows Umpires to “call the advantage”:</p> <p>The Umpire may also elect not to stop play by calling a foul, or to briefly delay the stoppage of play for a foul, if the Umpire deems it to be in the best interest of the game or if interrupting the game and awarding a penalty would result in a disadvantage to the team fouled.</p>
Rule 21d	<p>New language added for 2020, adapted from the 2019 USPA International Rules, standardizes the default player injury recovery period at 10 minutes:</p> <p>If a player is injured, the Umpire shall stop the game, and the player shall have 10 minutes within which to recover, provided, however, that the Umpire(s), in their discretion, may grant additional time, and that no player who has been rendered unconscious shall be allowed to resume play in any game that day. If, and when, during this interval the injured player is able to resume play or an eligible player is substituted, the Umpire shall continue the game. The game shall be continued not more than 10 minutes after it was stopped because of the injury unless the injured player’s treatment on the field requires additional time to remove the player from the field or the Umpire has granted additional time. There shall be no subsequent time-outs for a recurrence of the same injury.</p>
New Alternative Rule 21f-g	<p>This Alternative Rule, which (like Rule 21f-g) governs the procedures for a fallen or injured mount or broken tack or equipment, is adapted from 2019 USPA International Rule 24, and may be used instead of Rule 21f-g in Events with an upper handicap limit of 8 goals and above.</p>



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Rule 22a	<p>New language for 2020 gives teams 10 seconds for a knock-in; 20 seconds for a penalty shot; and standardizes penalties for offensive and defensive mis-executions:</p> <p>The team knocking in must do so within 10 seconds after the Umpire calls “Play.” If the player passes by the ball on his first approach or fails to hit or hit at it in the allotted time, the whistle shall sound and the opposing team shall be awarded a Penalty 4.</p> <p>If play is stopped because a member of the defending team is closer than 30 yards to the end line after the Umpire calls “Play” and the ball is hit or hit at, the Umpire shall award the team knocking in a Penalty 5.b.</p> <p>The player hitting a foul shot may approach the ball only once and he or she must hit or hit at the ball within 20 seconds after the Umpire calls “Play.” If the player passes the ball or fails to hit or hit at it in the allotted time, the whistle shall sound and the opposing team shall be awarded a Penalty 5.a from the spot where the penalty was being taken unless that spot is within the 60-yard line in front of the goal that team is defending, in which case the opposing team shall be awarded a Penalty 4.</p>
Rule 22e(1)	<p>New language added for 2020 gives teams 25 seconds to return for a center throw-in following a goal:</p> <p>The teams must return to the center line for the throw-in within 25 seconds after the goal was scored. If one team fails to do so without an adequate reason, to be determined by the Umpire in his or her discretion, the Umpire shall throw the ball in.</p>
Rule 22e(2)	<p>New for 2020 – When the Umpire drops the ball for an out-of-bounds free hit, it must be dropped on level ground.</p>
Rule 22g	<p>New for 2020 – A suspended game shall be resumed at the earliest possible time, to be decided by the Host Tournament Committee. (Previously, resumption was at the earliest convenient time.)</p>
Rule 24j	<p>New for 2020, adapted from the 2019 USPA International Rules – When a player hits the ball past an opposing player traveling at the same speed in the same direction, the opposing player may play the ball on the offside (fore shot or back shot) provided he does not impede or endanger the original player or that player’s mount; the original player can only play the ball again on the nearside.</p>



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Rule 26	New language added for 2020 allows Umpires to deem specified conduct previously considered Dangerous Riding calling for an automatic yellow flag not to be Dangerous Riding if it is in their judgment neither deliberate nor unduly dangerous.
New Alternative Rule 26h	<p>This Alternative Rule is adapted from 2019 USPA International Rule 18g, and may be used instead of Rule 26h in Events with an upper handicap limit of 8 goals and above:</p> <p>Riding off a player from the same side on which he or she is hitting or preparing to hit the ball is allowed unless the player initiating the ride-off creates danger as described in Rule 26a.</p>
Rule 26A	The Improper Blocking provision of 2019 USPA Rule 26 is now Rule 26A.
Rule 33b(1)(c)	New for 2020 – The Umpires, in their discretion, may award a third yellow flag without having it result in a red flag.
Rule 33b(1)(d)	<p>New language for 2020 clarifies the penalty procedures when a player leaves the penalty box prematurely:</p> <p>If a player leaves the penalty box for any reason before his or her two minute suspension is concluded, an appropriate penalty will be assessed against that player’s team and that player will be returned to the penalty box to sit out the remainder of his or her original two-minute suspension and the following two minutes of play with no substitute. A yellow flag may also be awarded to that player if the Umpire(s) in their discretion determine that he or she deliberately left the penalty box prematurely.</p>
Rule 33b(2)(a)	New for 2020 – A player’s fourth offense shall, without exception, be a red flag.



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Rule 33b(2)(b)	<p>New language added for 2020 explains the penalty options available to Umpires for unsportsmanlike conduct by a player after a game ends:</p> <p>If a player demonstrates unsportsmanlike conduct after the game ends, the Umpire(s), in their sole discretion, may award that player either two yellow flags or a red flag, depending on the severity of the unsportsmanlike conduct. If the player is awarded two yellow flags for unsportsmanlike conduct after the game ends, he or she must sit out for the first two minutes of play in his or her next game of equal or higher handicap for the same team with no substitute allowed for those two minutes of play in that game. If the player is awarded a red flag for unsportsmanlike conduct after the game ends, he or she shall be suspended for the entirety of his or her next game of equal or higher handicap for the same team with no substitute allowed for the first two minutes of play in that game.</p>
Rule 33(b)(3)	<p>New language added for 2020 explains the cumulative effect of yellow flags:</p> <p>A player who is in the penalty box at the end of a game shall begin his or her next game of equal or higher handicap for the same team in the penalty box for the unexpired time of his or her original two-minute suspension. A player who receives three yellow flags during a game without receiving a red flag shall begin his or her next game of equal or higher handicap for the same team with the status of a player who has already received a yellow flag. For the avoidance of confusion, substitutes do not acquire the yellow flag status of the player for whom they are substituting. However, the suspension of any player from all or part of any game as the result of that player being awarded one or more yellow flags or a red flag may not be avoided by the substitution of another player for that player. Notwithstanding that this rule limits suspensions from all or part of any next game to the suspended player's "next game of equal or higher handicap for the same team," if any suspension from all or part of any player's next game under this rule is imposed on a player whose team in the game in which the suspension is imposed is not at the time officially entered or participating in an as-yet uncompleted event or series of events, the suspension from all or part of that player's next game shall be served during the player's next game of equal or higher handicap for <u>any</u> team.</p>
Rule 36a	<p>New for 2020 – Dribbling on a Penalty 2 taken from the spot is no longer permitted.</p>



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Rule 36e(1)-(2)	<p>New language added for 2020 clarifies the penalty for mis-execution of a Penalty 5a by the team fouled;</p> <p>If the team fouled fails to carry out a Penalty 5.a correctly, the opposing team shall be awarded a Penalty 5.a from the spot where the penalty was being taken unless that spot is within the 60-yard line in front of the goal that team is defending, in which case the opposing team shall be awarded a Penalty 4.</p>
Penalty Mis-execution Matrix	<p>For ease of reference, the Penalty Mis-Execution Matrix now appears before specific penalty descriptions in Rule 36 (as well as in the Umpire Guide).</p>
Rule 36 – Penalty 3	<p>New language added for 2020 clarifies the possible use of the Defended Penalty 3:</p> <p>At the election of the Host Tournament Committee, to be communicated to the teams before the Event begins, the Penalty 3 may be defended in 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.</p>