

The Rules

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Chapter 1. Introduction

European Pinball Championship 2007 (EPC 2007) is operated by members of the Swedish Pinball Society (Svenska Flippersällskapet). This document specifies the official operating rules and regulations of the competitive tournament play. The event coordinators for EPC 2007 are David Kjellberg, Mats Runsten, Johan Småros, Linnea Edlund, Mikke Norlin, and Purre Persson. Event coordinators organize volunteers, designate scorekeepers, handle malfunctions and rulings, and otherwise work to ensure the smooth operation of the tournament.

Chapter 2. Quick overview

EPC tournament rules are quite lengthy and detailed. They reflect the experience of many years of tournament and league play, under different systems. The underlying ideas are simple, however. We express gratitude to Kevin Martin and PAPA for allowing us to base our rules on the extensive rules document from www.papa.org.

These rules are written with the Main Tournament of EPC 2007 in mind. However, they apply to the other types of tournaments at EPC 2007 as well.

Chapter 3. The individual and team tournaments

The specific tournament systems for the individual and the country tournaments are presented separately.

Chapter 4. Malfunctions and rulings

The nature of pinball

The unique charm of pinball lies, in large part, in the physical nature of the game. Unfortunately, this means that unusual events and outright malfunctions cannot be prevented. Nor can they all be perfectly compensated for. The organisers attempt to strike a balance between compensating for malfunctions and accepting the physical nature of the game. In certain cases malfunctions will be dealt with more strictly during finals rounds than during qualifying rounds, at the discretion of tournament officials.

Minor malfunctions

A minor malfunction is any incident without external cause which deviates from the normal course of gameplay, without directly causing a player's loss of turn and without providing any player a significant advantage over others. A minor malfunction is considered part of normal play. Tournament officials shall determine what constitutes a significant advantage; in the event that such an advantage is obtained, refer to Beneficial malfunctions.

Major malfunctions

A major malfunction is a gameplay problem with a machine that results in the premature loss of ball in play in a fashion that is not a normal feature of the machine's gameplay. These may be unusual one-time events, or they may indicate a recurring problem that will need to be addressed by technicians. Examples of major malfunctions include:

- The bonus count begins while the ball is still in play. This can happen if, for example, the machine loses track of how many balls are in the drain trough.

- A lit kickback fails to return the ball to play, ending the player's turn. This does not apply to other ball saving devices such as timed ball savers, ball traps, gates or *virtual* kickbacks.

Any malfunction that results in the loss of one or more balls during multiball play, without losing all balls so as to end the player's turn, will only be considered a minor malfunction. Loss of tilt warnings without loss of ball shall not be considered a major malfunction.

When a major malfunction occurs, it is the player's responsibility to notify the scorekeeper, calmly and promptly. The scorekeeper will request advice from a tournament official. If the official(s) agree that the incident is a major malfunction, the player will be provided with one additional ball of play at the beginning of a new game, after the current game has been completed. No attempt will be made to re-establish the state of the machine at the time of the major malfunction. The player's total score on the additional ball of play will be added to his or her previous score, and the new game will be terminated.

In the event that two or more major malfunctions take place during the same game, the player(s)' game(s) will be terminated and replayed. The terminated score will be temporarily noted (except in the case where the original score was unfairly improved by the malfunction) and the higher score between the original and the replayed will be noted as his or her official score. In the event that a recurring major malfunction cannot suitably be repaired, the failure must be treated as a catastrophic malfunction.

Under certain specific conditions, a major malfunction may be declined by the player. This must be approved by the tournament official, and must not result in a situation which provides an unfair advantage to the player.

Known malfunctions

Any malfunction that is determined to be relatively minor but unusual enough to merit comment may, at the discretion of tournament officials, be posted for players to be aware of before playing the affected machine. Players who have played the machine before this notice is provided will not be allowed to replay the machine nor to replace it with play of another machine. The occurrence of any posted malfunction will be treated as a minor malfunction unless it worsens or interacts with another feature to yield a major malfunction.

Catastrophic malfunctions

A catastrophic malfunction is any event not purposely or inadvertently caused by a player, which immediately ends play for all players on the machine. Examples of catastrophic malfunctions include:

- The game system crashes and/or resets due to a software error or component failure.
- Power is lost or interrupted.
- A new game starts.
- A major malfunction repeatedly recurs in spite of best attempts to repair the machine.

Any event caused by a player, purposely or inadvertently, including Slam tilts, is covered under Player errors below. When a catastrophic malfunction occurs, the scores of the terminated games will be temporarily noted if possible, any player(s) whose game(s) was/were not already completed must replay their game(s) from scratch. The higher score for each player will be noted as that player's official score. In the event the machine cannot be repaired in order to continue play, see Disabled Machines.

Beneficial malfunctions

Any malfunction which provides at least one player with a significant advantage over any other player competing on that machine is known as a beneficial malfunction. Tournament officials shall determine what constitutes a significant advantage.

Any beneficial malfunction which results in a player being able to continue play of a ball that normally should have ended is normally allowed once per game. Examples of this would include an unexpected software ball save, a ball that bounces back into play without player action or a ball that comes to rest on an unlit kickback in the outlane. Any such behavior shall not be allowed if it repeats, meaning that tournament officials may require players to allow the repeatedly-saved ball to drain or play on the machine may be terminated in accordance with catastrophic malfunction rules, at which point repairs may be attempted.

Any beneficial malfunction which provides one or more players with a significant scoring or strategic advantage in a way that is not part of normal gameplay will void the score of the affected player(s), unless all immediately affected players and tournament officials can agree on a suitable adjustment of the score or other elimination of the advantage. If the beneficial malfunction has been specifically avoided by the player, it is unlikely that a penalty is necessary. If any player score(s) are voided, the affected player(s) may then replay the game after the other players have finished, and the new score(s) are noted for the affected player(s).

Examples of beneficial malfunctions would include a jackpot switch that registers when a different target is hit, a valuable switch that scores repeatedly without the ball contacting it, a failed tilt sensor or a ball stuck during multiball. See also "Stuck Balls".

Any situation which indicates the presence of a beneficial malfunction should be brought to the attention of the scorekeeper promptly, who will alert tournament officials. Any player who intentionally takes advantage of a significant beneficial malfunction may be given a warning and/or have his or her affected entry interrupted and disqualified by tournament officials.

Stuck balls

During the course of play, it is possible for one or more balls to become stuck on a playfield feature, usually after becoming airborne. If this happens during single ball play, the player must wait for automatic ball searches to occur. The expiration of any timed feature during this period is not considered a malfunction.

If the stuck ball has not been freed after four such searches or if the machine is not performing searches for some reason, the player must alert the scorekeeper and a tournament official will be brought to the machine. The player must remain alert and at the machine as he or she is responsible for the ball if it becomes freed at any point. Where possible, machines will be configured with "chase" features disabled, so that additional balls will not be released into play as a result of ball searches. However, in the event this occurs, the player is responsible for continuing play and a suitable malfunction will only be ruled if the machine is unable to function normally from this point forward.

A tournament official may initially choose to try to free the stuck ball through judicious nudging, tapping, etc. The player must remain ready to resume play at the machine during this attempt. If actions by the official result in a Tilt, this will be treated as a major malfunction (not the fault of the player). If the official frees the ball but the player does not successfully continue play, this is normal play (the fault of the player). Loss of Tilt warnings due to tournament official nudging is considered normal play.

If the tournament official is unable to free the stuck ball, the machine will be opened and the stuck ball freed and placed either in the plunger lane, if it is manually controlled, or on the upraised right flipper, with the flipper button held by the player. In the event this is not possible, the official may select another location or feature where the ball can be placed safely while the machine is being closed in order to resume normal play. If more than one ball is stuck, all freed balls will be placed on the right flipper before play resumes.

If the ball is inadvertently freed while the machine is open and drains without the player regaining complete control (stopped on a flipper), this will be treated as a major malfunction. If the machine cannot be opened successfully or if opening or closing the machine terminates the game(s) in progress for any reason, this will be treated as a catastrophic malfunction. If the ball is freed and the machine closed without the player's loss of ball, play continues as normal. If the game is in multiball

play and one or more balls are lost as a result of freeing stuck balls, possibly ending multiball but not ending the ball in play, this will be considered normal play.

Any player who chooses to shake or bump the machine in order to free a stuck ball does so at his or her own risk. No allowance will be made for a player who tilts while attempting to free a stuck ball, whether or not tournament officials are present.

If a ball becomes stuck during a multiball mode, the player should attempt to trap the other ball(s) in play and request assistance. A stuck ball during multiball often represents a significant beneficial malfunction and intentionally taking advantage may result in a penalty. Please note specifically that a ball ending up in the plunger lane during multiball on a machine where there is no autoplunger counts as a stuck ball. See "Beneficial malfunctions" for further details.

Disabled machines

Any tournament machine that breaks down during play will be attended to by technicians as promptly as possible. In the event that a breakdown is severe and cannot be repaired promptly, the machine may be taken out of service temporarily or permanently. A permanently disabled machine will be replaced with a designated substitute by tournament officials. In the playoffs the gameplay is not depending on a certain pintable. In this case the game interrupted will immediately be played from scratch on another pintable.

In the qualification there are two possible courses of action:

1. If a pintable is permanently disabled during Friday qualifications, it will be replaced by another pintable and all Friday participants will be offered to replay their credits that have been excluded.
2. If a pintable is permanently disabled during Saturday qualifications, the existing qualifying scores on that table will stand. The remaining qualifiers on the disabled table are offered to play their two remaining credits on an alternative pintable.

Player errors

A player error is any player action, purposeful or accidental, which affects the normal play or outcome of a game in progress.

Any player who tilts his or her ball in play will not receive any penalty other than the normal loss of ball. Note that some older machines may penalize the player with loss of game; this is equivalent to tilting all remaining balls in order. Abuse of machines is covered under "Player Conduct". Any player who tilts the ball of another player, either through interference or by tilting his or her ball so roughly that the next player's ball is affected before play continues, will receive a score of zero for that game, unless tournament officials grant an exception based on the behavior of the machine in question.

Any player who slam tilts a machine, thereby ending play for all players, will receive a score of zero for that game. The slam tilt is treated as a catastrophic failure for any other player(s) who have not completed their game(s) in progress; they will be allowed to replay a new game and choose the higher score. If a tournament official rules that the slam tilt sensor is not functioning properly, the slam tilt will be treated as a catastrophic failure for all players.

Any player who deliberately tilts or slam tilts a machine in order to derive some benefit to his or her own play or the play of others under these rules, may be ejected from the tournament.

Any player who deliberately interferes with the play of another player, through distraction, touching the machine or player or disrupting tournament procedures, will receive a score of zero for the game. Any repeated offense under this rule will result in ejection of the player from the tournament.

Accidental interference is regrettable but can happen. Any player or non-player who accidentally interferes with the play of any tournament game will be warned. If the interference was sufficient to

cause the loss of ball, this will be treated as a major malfunction. If the interference terminated play for all players (for example, tripping over a power cord and pulling it from the wall), this will be treated as a catastrophic malfunction.

A player who plays out of turn in a multiplayer game will receive a score of zero. The affected player may choose to take over the ball in play, if possible, or they may choose to have the incident treated as a major malfunction. In the event that the player takes over, he or she shall be deemed "in control" after declaring his or her intent, taking his or her position at the table, and making contact with the ball via the flippers. The affected player may not change his or her mind once he or she is "in control". Any player who plays out of turn deliberately in order to employ this rule will be ejected from the tournament.

Because the (main) tournament consists solely of singles play, coaching of any player during a game, in any round, is not allowed. If a player specifically requests advice on a game feature during play, his or her question may be addressed only by a tournament official and answered only in terms of whether or not the machine is functioning correctly. Players are not to seek assistance from other players or spectators. Outside of play, players are of course free to discuss features and strategies as much as they like.

Tournament officials will be the sole determiners of what constitutes interference and whether or not it is accidental or deliberate. Scorekeepers are strongly encouraged to watch for and, if possible, prevent incidents of interference.

Rulings

Rulings shall be made by tournament officials, which include event coordinators and any person(s) designated as officials by the coordinators. Designated officials may have restrictions on the breadth of rulings and may be overridden by tournament officials. Final authority for any ruling rests with the main referee (David Kjellberg).

Chapter 5. Machine settings

Software settings

In general, the software settings of each machine will be adjusted to best accommodate tournament play. The following settings will be employed on any machine that supports them:

- Tournament mode
- Free play
- 3 Balls
- Extra balls disabled
- Buy-in or continues disabled
- Game restart disabled
- 3 Tilt warnings (may be 0 on older machines)
- Flipper autolaunch disabled
- Timed autolaunch disabled
- Standard factory settings for ball savers, difficulty, timers, etc
- Specific difficulty settings as determined by tournament officials
- If possible, automatic reflexing features disabled
- Replays disabled (no score or extra ball awarded)
- Wherever possible, the extra ball and/or special feature will be set to award points

These settings may vary for the playoffs on Sunday.

Hardware settings

Machines used for tournament play will be prepared and kept in good working order to the greatest extent possible. Each machine will be properly leveled left-to-right and inclined front-to-back. Most games will be setup with difficult settings regarding outlane posts, tilt sensitivity, and playfield slope.

Any player with a complaint or question about the hardware setup of a machine should make his or her inquiry in between games, or in between balls, if urgent.

Machine-specific settings

In order to best suit tournament play, certain machines may be subject to specific settings or rules adjustments, at the discretion of tournament officials. These adjustments will be made before tournament play begins and will be documented if possible. The intent is to eliminate features which can be abused by skilled players or which arbitrarily extend play time to a degree that would hinder the smooth progress of the tournament.

Chapter 6. Player conduct

Facility

The Nymble facility is a commercial property and the standard house rules must be treated with respect. The tournament officials reserve the right to refuse play to anyone at any time as well as to remove anyone from the reserved spaces for the event at any time.

The tournament facility and playing areas must be kept clean. Food and drink are not allowed on or near any pinball. In the tournament area food and drinks are allowed only on or next to the provided tables. The facility has a large pub area where you can enjoy your drinks and food whilst not playing. Litter should be deposited in the provided litter bins. Please do not remove chairs from any area where they have been placed. Smoking is not allowed indoors.

Personal conduct

All players are expected to conduct themselves in a polite and sensitive manner. Outbursts, especially those including indecent language, are unacceptable. In extreme cases of these outbursts there are grounds for a warning and possible disqualification of game or ejection from the tournament, at the discretion of tournament officials. A wide variety of players and observers will be present, including media, and these types of outbursts do nothing to promote pinball as a game of fun.

Abuse of machines

Tilt sensors are employed to determine what constitutes unduly rough handling of each machine, within the parameters of normal play. Abusive handling such as punching, kicking, lifting, tipping, or rocking a machine or hitting the glass in any way, is grounds for a warning and possible disqualification of game or ejection from the tournament, at the discretion of tournament officials.

Interference

Any player who intentionally interferes with tournament play or otherwise disrupts the tournament setting will be warned and/or ejected from the tournament, at the discretion of tournament officials. This provision does not preclude other possible grounds for ejection, such as fraud, theft, threats, criminal activity, harassment, inappropriate behavior, public drunkenness, etc.

Delay

Any player who delays the progress of his or her game for more than 20 seconds, for any reason other than to await a ruling, will be given a warning. If the player chooses to let a game mode time out, the total delay must be less than 20 seconds. Delay is defined as time during which the ball is left in the plunger lane or intentional inactive play keeping the ball on a flipper. Stuck balls do not count as intentional delays. If delays are repeated or willful, tournament officials may terminate the game in progress and note a score of zero for that player.

Death Saves, Bangbacks, etc.

Techniques known as *Death Saves* and *Bangbacks* are sometimes practiced by certain advanced players. Because the effectiveness of these techniques varies from machine to machine and because of the risk of injury to both player and machine, these are banned from tournament play. In the event that a drained ball bounces back into play without deliberate or significant player action, the ball may be played. This may require a ruling from tournament officials if there appears to be abusive force employed by the player.

Chapter 7. Miscellaneous

Special score handling

- Any player who reaches the maximum possible score on a machine that has such, will receive that score as their total. For example, Guns'n'Roses stops scoring at 9,999,999,990 points.
- Any player whose machine "rolls over" to a zero score is responsible for immediately advising the scorekeeper, both when this is imminent as well as when it happens. The score keeper will then note the appropriately increased score. If the player fails to notify the scorekeeper, he or she may not receive the increased score.
- On the game NBA Fastbreak using basketball-style scoring, each championship ring collected by the player shall cause their noted score to be increased by 150 points.