

**History of The Laws of The Game
ISAB (last updated Sep 2020)**

ISAB 1947 – 2020 THE HISTORY OVERALL

1947 - 1970

Before Subbuteo became the most played, watched and talked about discipline as a Table Football on the planet, it was lacking a uniform set of laws. Years 1947 to 1970 was a period when many fundamental and timeless laws of Subbuteo originated.

1947

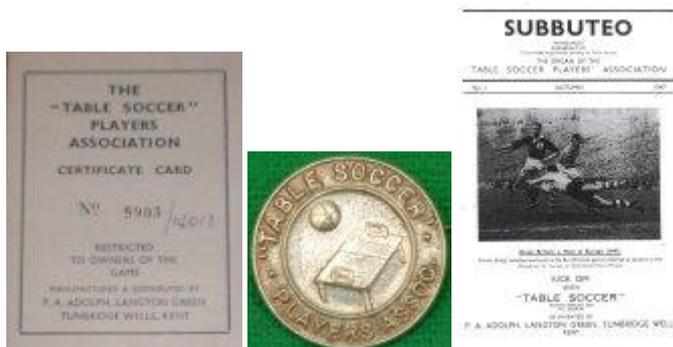
FIRST SUBBUTEO LAWS

Worldwide players had attempted to set up a uniform rule standard in the late 1940s, but it was only in 1949 that subbuteo, as a discipline introduced into English public schools in the early 1949s and 1950's, received its first firm set of rules.

The first laws of Subbuteo were written up in Tunbridge Wells as the establishment of Subbuteo's original common rules.

The creation of unified rules and formation of The SA (TSPA back then 1947-1964) in March 1947 did not prevent disputes, involving various members and clubs, which had introduced their own ideas for rule codification in 1960's. These ideas persisted into the 2010s and were abandoned when The International Subbuteo Association Board (The ISAB) was created.

2017



RULES CHARACTERISTICS

EQUIPMENT

Ground

No ground specifications provided (1949)

The playing surface shall be properly fixed to playing ground. It shall be a maximum 90 cm, minimum 60 cm above floor level. The ground shall be level.

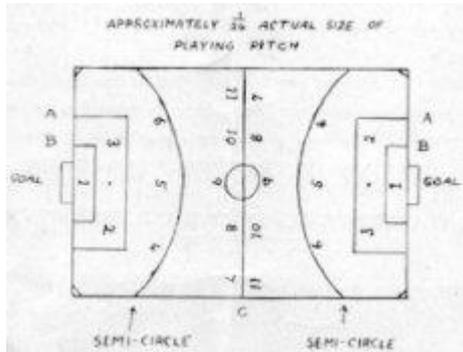
The playing surface and the playing ground shall extend outside the playing area for 5-10 cm from the touch- and goal-lines. The playing ground may not extend more than 10 cm behind the back of the goal. The playing ground shall be surrounded by a fence of 2-10 cm in height and a maximum of 10 mm in width. Centrally behind each goal there shall be a gap of 15-25 cm in the surround. There shall be at least 200 cm of free space around the ground for the players and the referee to perform. (2017)

Surface

The playing area was 48x32 ins, and so it remains to this day (except that it is now given in metric). The semi-circular shooting areas "start 9ins from the centre spot, with ends meeting the touch lines 15ins from halfway". (1949)

The surface material were: Army Blanket (1949), Green Baize Cloth (1949), Green baize playing-pitch cloth (1953), Cotton-Synthetic pitch (1976), Synthetic-rubber backed Astropitch (1980), Cotton-Synthetic pitch (1981), Cotton-Synthetic pitch (1990), Cotton-Synthetic pitch (1997), Cotton-Synthetic pitch (2012), Cotton-Synthetic pitch (2016), Synthetic-rubber backed Astropitch (2017), Cotton-Synthetic pitch (2021), Synthetic-rubber backed Astropitch (2021),

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Figure

The goalkeepers handle may not exceed 20 cm in length. (1949)

The playing figures shall be made of plastic.

Dimensions: The playing figures shall consist of a round base and a figure which shall be firmly fixed to the base by fulfilling the following standards: 4.1.1. The base shall be maximum 0.7 cm, minimum 0.5 cm in height and maximum 2.1 cm, minimum 1.6 cm in diameter.

4.1.2. The figure fixed to the base shall be maximum 1.3 cm, minimum 0.6 cm at its widest point and maximum 0.6 cm in thickness. The figure shall symbolize a human body.

4.1.3. The maximum height of the playing figure including its base shall be 3.9 cm, the minimum height shall be 2.7 cm. (2017)

The goalkeeper figures shall be made of plastic.

Its handle may not exceed 30 cm in length. The maximum height of the playing figure including its base shall be 3.9 cm, the minimum height shall be 2.7 cm. (2017)

Ball

The ball has the size of 25mm. (1947)

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The ball is: spherical, made of plastic, of a diameter of not more than 2.2 cm (0.86 ins) and not less than 2 cm (0.78 ins), not more than 1.7 g (0.059 oz) and not less than 1.5 g (0.052 oz) in weight at the start of the match (1984)

Goal

The posts shall upright and parallel, 5.5 +- 0.5 cm (6cm) in height and 12.5 +- 1 cm (12.5) apart. The crossbar shall be fixed to the top of the posts. The back bar(s) shall be positioned parallel to the crossbar. The posts and the bars shall not be thicker than 6 mm. (1949)

The posts shall be made of plastic. They should be upright and parallel, 4.5 +- 0.5 cm in height and 12.5 +- 1 cm apart. The crossbar shall be fixed to the top of the posts. The back bar(s) shall be positioned parallel to the crossbar. The posts and the bars shall not be thicker than 6 mm. The distance from the goal-line to the back bar shall be 6-9 cm. (2017)

Corner Flag

The posts shall be made of plastic. A flag post, not less than 1.5 cm (0.04 ft) high, with a non-pointed top and a flag must be placed at each corner. (2017)

Fence

The fence shall be made of plastic. The playing ground shall be surrounded by a fence of 2-10 cm in height and a maximum of 10 mm in width. (2017)

RULES CHARACTERISTICS

PLAYING RULES

1. DETERMINING THE OUTCOME OF A MATCH

Before a shot at goal can be made, both figure and ball must be within the semi-circle (1949)

"Before a shot at goal can be made the ball must be nearer to the opponent's goal line than the half-way line, and the shooting figure must be within the opponents half". (1950's)

The need for the shooting figure to be inside the opponents half is dropped. The rule regarding the ball remains the same, but a shooting line is suggested. "An excellent method of determining the distance for shooting is to draw in a line across the field 11 inches from the goal (with chalk or white ink) and making a rule that the ball must be more inside this 'shooting area' than out before a shot can be made at goal." (1960's)

The ball must now be "fully over the (shooting) line" rather than the previous "more in than out." before you can shoot. (1970's)

"If a winning result is required from a game but you have a drawn match, extra time or a tie breaker can be used to decide the eventual winner. After a break, two three-minute periods are played, Change halves at half time. If after this time, it is still a draw, a 'Shooting Tie Breaker' is needed. One of the goal areas is chosen and each team has five 'one-to-one' shots in succession from the positions shown in diagram 4. The goalkeeper is not confined to the goal line, but he must remain stationary before the flick is taken. After each team has taken five shots, the team with the highest score wins. If the game is still tied, continue with the 'Shooting Tie Breaker' until one team has scored more goals. Those extra shots should be taken alternated between each team. (1980's)

The "golden goal" rule for extra time is given as an option, and the penalty shoot-out is now taken from the penalty spot, rather than the five spots on the shooting line.(2000)

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2. FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

The rule that makes an appearance in the rules is the classic "hand ball" rule, where a figure lying prone commits hand ball if he is struck by the ball. (1970's)

In case of intentional or continuous violation of the rules the referee has the authority to give the offending player and/or the offending player's playing figures, a warning. If this continues or the offence(s) are intentional according to the referee, then, the referee has the authority to give the offending player a yellow card. The referee has the authority to give the offending playing figure a red card if according to him the contact with an opponent playing figure was so severe, careless and/or was intentional that could cause a real damage to the opponent player. The referee should judge the contact in first place in relation to range, ethics and/or nature of the contact with an opponent playing figure and especially to its base. Awarding a foul indirect or direct, or even a penalty, sometimes is not enough. In those cases, a red card is the appropriate step of punishment. In case of serious misconduct, the referee shall give the offending player a red card that implies the immediate disqualification from the match by losing with a minimum of 0-3. If the score of the interrupted match was higher, the actual score shall be kept. The disqualified player may suffer from additional disciplinary sanctions defined by the competition's refereeing authority or local and/or national Subbuteo Authority such as NA, Confederation Subbuteo Authority and/or FISA. (2017)

3. FREE KICKS

"If during play a figure hits another figure of the opposing side, without first touching the ball, a free kick (or penalty... if... appropriate) is awarded against the guilty figure's team." (1949)

Offence: An attacking figure hits a defending figure before touching the ball.

Award: If the foul occurs outside the shooting area, an indirect free

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kick is awarded to the opposing team. If the foul occurs inside the shooting area but outside the penalty area, a direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team. If the foul occurs inside the penalty area, a penalty kick is awarded to the opposing team. NB: If the figure does not touch the ball - there is no foul, but possession goes to the opposition. (1980's)

Offence: Figures moved in a way other than the 'flick-to-kick' method, including positional flicks, on-side flicks and blocking flicks. A figure kicks the ball more than three times in a row. A player touching the ball with the hand

Award: An 'indirect' free kick is awarded to the opposition in all cases. (1980's)

"With an 'indirect' free kick the ball must first touch another figure before a goal is scored. With a 'direct' free kick, a goal can be scored direct from the kick, provided that the ball is completely within the shooting area." (1980's)

"For a direct free kick within the shooting area, the defending team can place up to four figures to form a wall 9cm from the ball. This is in addition to the two flicks for marking."

"When taking a free kick, there should be no defending figures within 9cm of the ball. For free kicks, each team can flick two figures into a new position before the kick is taken. The attacking team flicks first." (1980's)

An attacking playing figure flicked at the ball may not touch any stationary opponent playing figure or opponent goalkeeper, regardless if hits the ball or not. The attacking playing figure may touch any other attacking playing figure, an attacking goalkeeper or the defender's body before coming to rest. However, the attacker's flick may not cause (either directly or indirectly) the displacement of any defending playing figures. (2017)

If the defending playing figure hits a moving or standing attacking playing figure: Free-flick awarded from the point of contact foul.

(i) For violating any stationary or moving opponent playing figure, a free-flick (indirect-direct-penalty) awarded from the point of contact foul. (ii) Yellow and red cards to figures shall only be awarded if a violated attacking playing figure has been prevented from playing a

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moving or standing ball or if the game play in the area near the ball was somehow affected as a result of the infringement. (iii) Free-flick from where the defender's playing figure has committed the offence. Free-flick from the penalty-spot, if the offence has been committed in the defender's penalty-area. (2017)

The goalkeeper may not touch any stationary or moving opponent playing figure that is positioned in the penalty box-area or touching the goal-area line. When the offence occurs, it is a Free-flick from the penalty-spot. (2017)

The goalkeeper may hinder the attacker in attempting to flick an attacking playing figure into or through the goal-area. Example of a goalkeeper hindering an attacking playing figure into or through the goal-area Goalkeeper in the air inside the box area, Goalkeeper touches the pitch inside the goal-area, Goalkeeper is past the goal-area line, Goalkeeper touches the goal-area line, Goalkeeper positioned between the ball and the attacking playing (2017)

If the defending playing figure hits the moving ball: Free-flick awarded from the point of contact. (i) (indirect-direct-penalty) awarded from the point of contact. (ii) Yellow and red cards to figures shall only be awarded if the ball or if the game play in the area near the ball was somehow affected as a result of the infringement. (iii) Free-flick from where the defender's playing figure has committed the offence. Free-flick from the penalty-spot, if the offence has been committed in the defender's penalty-area. (2017)

If the defending playing figure hits the moving or standing ball (no back anymore): Free-flick awarded from the point of contact. (i) (indirect-direct-penalty) awarded from the point of contact. (ii) Yellow and red cards to figures shall only be awarded if the ball or if the game play in the area near the ball was somehow affected as a result of the infringement. (iii) Free-flick from where the defender's playing figure has committed the offence. Free-flick from the penalty-spot, if the offence has been committed in the defender's penalty-area. (2020)

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Each player may proceed with any number of positional flicks with no particular order. (2017)

4. OFFSIDE

Although “offside” was included in 1940’s original rules, it was vastly different than what we know under the name today. Back then any attacker ahead of the ball was effectively offside. This meant that the tactical arrangements of the time tended to feature up to eight forwards. (1949)

Offence: Offside. An attacking figure is in an offside position if he is nearer to his opponent's goal line than the ball, unless: - there are at least two of his opponent's figures (including the goalkeeper) nearer their own goal line than he is. He is outside the shooting area, or there are at least two figures, including the goalkeeper, inside the shooting area, the ball has passed the last defender, the ball is received from a throw-in, corner kick or goal kick. Award: An indirect free kick is awarded to the defending team from the point of the offence. Note: When an attacking team is in possession and sees that he has a figure in an offside position, he can flick that figure into an onside position. Only two 'onside flicks' are allowed during each turn. The defending team is allowed one 'blocking flick' for each 'onside flick'. The 'blocking flicks' must be used to mark up the figure flicked on-side. (1980’s)

An attacking playing figure in offside position shall be declared offside when: a. the attacking playing figure in offside position has been touched by the ball or touches the ball or has been flicked clearly towards the ball with the intention to heat it or be placed in a advantageous position in relation to the ball. (2017)

Each player may proceed with any number of positional flicks with no particular order. (2017)

5. THE BALL

All balls must be: spherical, made of suitable plastic material, of a diameter of between 2cm (0.78ins) and 2.2cm (0.86ins), between

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1.5g (0.052oz) and 1.7g (0.059oz) in weight at the start of the match. All balls used in matches played in an official competition organised under the auspices of FISA or confederations must bear one of the following: FISA Quality PRO, FISA Quality, SIMS – SUBBUTEO INTERNATIONAL MATCH STANDARD. Each mark indicates that the ball has been officially tested and meets the specific technical requirements for that mark which are additional to the minimum specifications stipulated in Law 2 and must be approved by The ISAB. The institutes conducting the tests are subject to the approval of FISA. Where goal line technology (GLT) is used, balls with integrated technology must carry one of the above listed quality marks. (2017)

6. THE BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY

The ball is in play at all other times when it touches a match official and when it rebounds off a goalpost, crossbar or corner flag-post and remains on the field of play. The ball is out of play when: it has wholly passed over the goal line or touchline on the ground or in the air, play has been stopped by the referee, it touches a match official, remains on the field of play and: a team starts a promising attack or the ball goes directly into the goal or the team in possession of the ball changes. In all these cases, play is restarted with a dropped ball. (2017)

7. THE CORNER KICK

Place the ball and a figure on the corner spot. Each team may position by flicking three players; the attacking team flicks first. (1980's)

Each player may proceed with any number of positional flicks with no particular order. (2017)

8. THE DURATION OF THE MATCH

Twenty five minutes each way is the advised duration of play. (1949)

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The recommended length of games is now "twenty minutes each way" rather than the twenty-five minutes previously stated. (1969)

"The game normally consists of two equal halves of 10 minutes with a 2 minute break after the first half." (1980's)

Match time. A match shall consist of two periods of five to up to forty-five minutes each (15minutes each). The half-time interval shall be 3-15 minutes (5 minutes). The referee shall be the sole match timer, keeping track with his own watch. The players may use their individual time device. Each player's time device shall not interfere with or disturb the match by sound or position. The referee shall give no importance to a player's time device, and has the right to ask the player(s) to remove it if he thinks it could disturb the game. Added time. In case of substitution of a playing figure or goalkeeper, a delaying interruption of the match, time wasting by either player or in case of a deliberate infringement (free-flick, back or obstruction) by either player at the expiration of a period of the game (approximately the last 30 seconds), the referee shall add lost time at the end of the affected period. At the end of normal time, the referee shall announce how long extra time shall last. Thereby, it may occur that the extra time is extended based on occurrences during the extra time. The referee shall add time at the end of a period to allow a direct free-flick or penalty-flick to be taken. Extra Time & Penalties in Individual competition. If in knock-out competitions the score of a match is drawn at the end of full-time, two halves of 3-15 minutes (5) each extra time shall be played. The extra time shall start within 3-5 minutes after full-time with a flick-off. If, after extra time, the match is still drawn a penalty shoot-out shall take place immediately. (2017)

9. THE FIELD OF PLAY

"No one figure may hit the ball more than three times in succession. After a third successive kick another man of the same team must play the ball." (1949)

"Immediately preceding a 'goal kick' the figures of both sides may be moved back, or either way sideways, from where they stood at the time of the ball crossing the goal line, but not in the direction of the opposing goal, unless they are in their own defensive half when they

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are allowed movement as far as the centre line. Immediately preceding 'throw-ins', 'corner kicks' and 'free kicks' each team may flick one figure for marking purposes". (1949)

"Goalkeepers do not alter possession of the ball, and regarding this are neutral." (1950's)

"The player figure must be flicked cleanly, not knocked or scraped. Free kick should be given on breakage of this rule." (1960's)

"Figures may be placed in position at the taking of goal kicks and free kicks, they may be placed anywhere except as follows. Not more than three figures in the penalty area for defense. No player may be placed in the opposing 'shooting area'.

"At the taking of a corner each side (attacking side first) may flick three figures for positioning and marking purposes. At throw-ins one figure each side may be flicked." (1960's)

"figures may be placed in position for the taking of goal kicks and free kicks", "for free kicks two figures of each side may be flicked into position". (1970's)

the biggest change is the "Defensive Flicks" rule. This is where the side not in possession gains alternate flicks for defensive purposes. The old rules had a limited form of this (three alternate flicks when opponent crosses the halfway line), but this is the first time unlimited alternate flicks appears. (1970's)

"To try to break down an attack, the defending team may take one 'blocking flick' after each flick made by the attacking team. The attacking team does not have to wait for the defending team's flick. If the defending team does not take his flick, he forfeits the move. You must not touch either the ball or the attacking figures when taking a blocking flick. If you do hit them, the figures involved and the ball must be put back to their original positions and the defending team loses that 'blocking flick'. "The blocking flick should be used to obstruct the attacking team's move." (1980's)

*The attacker player may play a moving or stopped ball with his playing figures as many times in succession as the player wants until:
a. Possession of the ball has changed; or b. The ball has completely crossed the goal- or touchlines. (2017)*

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The spare-goalkeeper / legs goalkeeper may enter the game, regardless if its player is in possession of the ball or not. The spare-goalkeeper may be taken off the playing area any time to reinstall the goalkeeper. The spare-goalkeeper's player does not need to be in possession of the ball. If the spare goalkeeper/legs goalkeeper has lost possession of the ball, the spare-goalkeeper can remain in the game or the goalkeeper/hands goalkeeper may be reinstalled whenever the player wants. The legs goalkeeper that just lost the ball and does not want to stay in field, has to come as fast as possible back to its goal and/or goal area so the hands goalkeeper can be back in play. During this time the attacker can obviously score. (2017)

Each player may proceed with any number of positional flicks with no particular order. The playing figure flicked to take the free-flick cannot be removed from the playing area by the referee or any of the players to allow the positional flick to be taken by either player. (2017)

10. THE GOAL KICK

Can now be taken by "action goalkeeper if possessed." (1960's)

Figures should not be placed closer than 12mm (0.5 inch) from an opposing figure. (1980's)

When moving players for a goal kick, you are now not allowed to move them closer than 1cm to an opposing figure, rather than the previous 12mm. (2000)

Each player may proceed with any number of positional flicks with no particular order. (2017)

11. THE OTHER MATCH OFFICIALS

Other match officials (two assistant referees, official, two additional assistant referees, reserve assistant referee, video assistant referee (VAR) and at least one assistant VAR (AVAR)) may be appointed to matches. They will assist the referee in controlling the match in

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accordance with the Laws of the Game but the final decision will always be taken by the referee. (2017)

12. THE PENALTY KICK

"When a penalty is awarded it is taken from the penalty spot (duh) and the following conditions must apply:

- i. All figures apart from the goalkeeper and the figure taking the penalty must be placed outside the penalty area.*
- ii. The goalkeeper and its base must be touching the goal line in the centre of the goal mouth, and remain stationary before the kick is taken. (If this rule is infringed three times, a goal is awarded).*
- iii. The player taking the penalty must declare that he is ready to take the penalty."*

Each player may proceed with any number of positional flicks with no particular order. (2017)

13. THE PLAYERS and/or FIGURES

"You must not flick the goalkeeper at the ball by the handle." (1980's)

A playing figure lying down shall be put upright by the player observed and not by the referee at any time. To put a lying playing figure upright the junction of the lying playing figure's base with the playing surface shall be used as a fixed point when standing up the playing figure. (2017)

14. THE PLAYERS EQUIPMENT

"Any playing figure is considered injured, which during the course of play travels over either goal line within the posts without a goal at the time being scored. The figure must remain off the 'field' for five minutes." (1949)

"A figure is considered injured, if during the course of play it comes apart from the base, or suffers some other damage as to make it unplayable" (i.e. your knee crushes it) "it may be removed from the field and be repaired. On repair, it may be brought back into play but

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if suffering from a further injury must go off the field for the remainder of the game." (1960's)

The two team-figures must wear colours that distinguish them from each other. Each goalkeeper must wear colours that are distinguishable from the other figures. The arms goalkeeper and legs goalkeeper of the same team have to be identical in colours. If the two goalkeepers' shirts are the same colour and neither has another shirt, the referee allows the match to be played. (2017)

15. THE REFEREE

- *Each match is controlled by a referee who has full authority to enforce the Laws of the Game in connection with the match. Decisions will be made to the best of the referee's ability according to the Laws of the Game and the 'spirit of the game' and will be based on the opinion of the referee, who has the discretion to take appropriate action within the framework of the Laws of the Game. The decisions of the referee regarding facts connected with play, including whether or not a goal is scored and the result of the match, are final. The decisions of the referee, and all other match officials, must always be respected. Allows play to continue when an offence occurs and the non-offending team will benefit from the advantage, and penalises the offence if the anticipated advantage does not ensue at that time or within a few seconds (2017)*

16. THE START AND RESTART OF PLAY

A kick-off starts both halves of a match, both halves of extra time and restarts play after a goal has been scored. Free kicks (direct or indirect), penalty kicks, throw-ins, goal kicks and corner kicks are other restarts (see Laws 13–17). A dropped ball is the restart when the referee stops play and the Law does not require one of the above restarts. If an offence occurs when the ball is not in play, this does not change how play is restarted. (2017)

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17. THE THROW-IN (FLICK-IN)

It is taken by 'kicking' the ball in the usual manner, but the player must not follow over the touch line at the time of delivery: if it does, the opposing side takes the 'throw' as it was a 'foul throw'." (1949)

Each team is allowed to flick one figure into position, the attacking team flicking first. The throw-in is taken with a flick but the figure must not cross the line after taking the 'throw'. If he does the throw-in goes to his opponent. The figure which took the throw-in may not touch the ball again until it is first touched by another player. After the throw-in the figure must be placed on the line at the point where the throw-in was taken. (1980's)

The requirement that the throw in taker not cross the touch line, when taking the throw, has now been dropped. (1997)

In order to force a flick-in, the ball, the deflecting defending playing figure(s) and the forcing attacking playing figure or goalkeeper could be positioned anywhere at the pitch as the ball passes completely the touchline with its full size. After the taking of a flick-in the ball may go anywhere in the playing area. (2017)

Each player may proceed with any number of positional flicks with no particular order. (2017)