

# Official Monkeyball Tournament Playing Rules

(Updated 1/1/09)

## 1 - The Game

- 1.0 Monkeyball is a version of the ladder golf game commonly seen at campgrounds, tailgate parties and family gatherings. Although it is similar to these other games, Monkeyball is the only game that plays by the rules and regulations described in this document.
- 1.1 Monkeyball is played by throwing four weighted ropes at a ladder with three horizontal rungs/bars. Each bar is assigned a different point value. The object of the game is to score more points than your opponent.

## 2 – Definitions

- 2.0 **Monkeyball.** The official name of the game, and the term for the rope weighted by two golf balls or putt-putt balls. Each competitor plays with four Monkeyballs.
- 2.1 **Tree.** The Monkeyball ladder made up of the base, two vertical posts and three horizontal scoring bars. The base is considered part of the ground.
- 2.2 **Limb.** One of three horizontal scoring bars. The bottom bar is the 3-Limb (worth 3 points), the middle bar is the 2-Limb (2 points) and the top bar is the 1-Limb (1 point).
- 2.3 **Court.** The space including the two Trees and the 30 feet of space between the Trees including the Tossing Zones.
- 2.4 **Toss.** The act of throwing or pitching the Monkeyballs to the Tree.
- 2.5 **Tossing Zone.** The area at the sides of the Tree where Monkeyballers stand to toss the Monkeyballs. The tossing zone is three feet deep and extends from the Foul Line to beyond the back of the base.
- 2.6 **Foul Line.** An imaginary line approximately one foot in front of the Limbs, typically marked by the tip of the Tree base's front foot.
- 2.7 **Honors.** The earned right to throw first. Honors are earned by scoring on the previous turn.
- 2.8 **Round.** The set of four tosses by each player.

## 3 - Court and Equipment

- 3.0 **Trees.** Trees are placed 30 feet apart (from horizontal bar to horizontal bar). Limbs are 2 feet wide. The 3-Limb is one foot off the ground, with the other scoring Limbs also separated by one foot. Trees are constructed with 3/4 inch Schedule 40 PVC.
  - 3.0.1 Additional items may be attached to the Tree including beer holders, Web streaming video equipment and stickers. When attached, these items become part of the Tree and are not considered an obstruction. Play the Monkeyballs as they hang.
- 3.1 **Monkeyballs.** Monkeyballs are approximately 13 inches from the inside edge of one ball to the inside edge of the other ball. Opponents should use Monkeyballs of contrasting colors. The Monkeyballs on each rope do not need to be same color. Monkeyball rope is 5/16 inch braided nylon.
- 3.2 **Official Tournament Equipment.** Sanctioned tournaments must use equipment meeting the above specifications. Alternative equipment may also be approved. From

court-to-court, rope quality and length may vary. In each game, however, each opponent's quality and length should be the same. All World Championships will feature official Monkeyball equipment constructed by Joe & Andy Frushour at the Monkeyball headquarters.

## 4 - Order of Play

- 4.0 Any method for determining who tosses first is acceptable: previous game's winner, flipping a coin, throwing numbers, paper-rock-scissors, top line of the bracket, etc. After the first round, honors belong to the person who most recently scored.
  - 4.0.1 If a player throws out-of-turn, it is proper Monkeyball etiquette to continue playing out-of-turn for the Round and then resume honors in the next series of tosses. Upon completion of the Round, a smart-ass comment directed at the offending party is more than appropriate (and generally appreciated).
- 4.1 Warm-up tosses are allowed, but unnecessary (especially in tournament play when time is of the essence.)
- 4.2 Players alternate tossing until each has thrown all four Monkeyballs.
- 4.3 After the four Monkeyballs are tossed and then collected, the players turn 180 degrees and toss back to the original Tree.
  - 4.3.1 In Singles play, the players stay on the same side of the Tree for the entire game. If Player A stands to the left when tossing to the first Tree, he stands to the right of the Tree when tossing back to the original starting spot. Players A & B should never criss-cross between Rounds. In a multi-game match, the players should switch sides after each game.
  - 4.3.2 In Doubles play, partners stand opposite each other from each end of the Monkeyball Court. If Player A is on the left side of the Tree, her partner should stand on the right side of the opposite Tree.
- 4.4 If at anytime during a Round a Limb becomes unattached from the post, stop the game immediately and fix the Tree. Tosses at Trees with unattached Limbs count – do not re-toss.
- 4.5 If the Tree moves from its 30-foot distance due to the reaction from a tossed Monkeyball, do not move the Tree back to its original position until after the Round. This often occurs in games played on the beach, in excessively windy conditions, or when one of the players tosses with extreme velocity.
  - 4.5.1 If the Tree falls over, immediately set it back on to its base.

## 5 – Scoring

- 5.0 Monkeyball games are played to 15 points, win by 2. The winner does not have to score exactly 15 points.
  - 5.0.1 The official score for a player who exceeds 15 on the final throw is 15, unless more points are needed to win by 2. For instance, if Player A leads 14-10 and scores 5 points in the final round, the final score is 15-10, not 19-10. If Player B is trailing 13-14 and scores 5 points in the final round, the final score is 16-14, not 18-14.

- 5.1 Games can be shortened by the Tournament Manager (often to 11 points) in case of poor weather, time constraints or excessively long matches due to limited scoring opportunities.
- 5.2 At the end of each Round (four tosses per player), count the number of points on the Tree. The Monkeyballer scoring the most points is credited the difference of the two point totals. For instance, if Player A scores 8 points and Player B scores 5 points, Player A earns a 3-0 lead (8 – 5 = 3).
- 5.3 Monkeyballs must be hanging from a Limb at the end of the Round to count.
  - 5.3.1 Monkeyballs hanging from the rope of another Monkeyball, yet not wrapped around a Limb itself, do not count.
  - 5.3.2 Monkeyballs hanging from the upper ledge of the T-joint do not count. Monkeyballs must be supported on the horizontal section of the limb itself.
  - 5.3.3 Monkeyballs hanging on the t-joint by a thread, but is not actually supported on the horizontal section of the limb itself, do not count.
- 5.4 Count Monkeyballs that fall or climb from one Limb to another, but no points are scored when Monkeyballs fall from a Limb to the ground.
- 5.5 Monkeyballs that bounce on the ground and land on a Limb do not count for points, but Monkeyballs can bounce and knock others off the Tree. Monkeyballs cannot bounce off the base of the Tree onto a Limb for points.
  - 5.5.1 While swinging around the 3-Limb, Monkeyballs often skim the grass before wrapping successfully on the three-point limb. This is not considered a bounce; the toss is good. Also, if Monkeyballs are hanging on the 3-Limb, yet one ball is touching grass, count the full three points.
- 5.6 Monkeyballs do not count if wrapped around the post. If hanging on a bar near the post, the full ball must be outside of the vertical plane of the outside of the post to not count.
  - 5.6.1 When hanging from a Limb, one Monkeyball always drapes from the back side of the Limb and one from the front. When Monkeyballs wrap around a post, the back side Monkeyball ends up in the front of the Limb and the front side is on the back. Often the ropes are crossed. If this happens, no points shall be awarded.

## 6 – The Toss

- 6.0 Any form of toss/throw/pitch is acceptable, including but not limited to: holding onto one ball, holding onto both balls, and pinch-holding the middle of the rope.
- 6.1 Underhand tossing is encouraged; overhand and sidearm tossing are legal (and stupid).
- 6.2 If any part of the foot (or any other body part) goes beyond the foul line, it is a foot fault and the toss is considered no good. Generally, though, Monkeyballers are given a warning (sometimes in the form of mocking – “playing from the ladies tee?”) before taking away the points.
- 6.3 A toss is legal once it passes over the foul line.
  - 6.3.1 If a player catches his hand on his shorts during delivery, thus disrupting the toss, the toss is legal if the Monkeyball passes the foul line. If it lands behind the foul line, re-toss.
  - 6.3.2 Tosses that hit a stationary obstruction before reaching the Tree (i.e. leaves from a low hanging tree or a telephone wire) are legal – do not re-toss.
  - 6.3.3 Tosses that hit a random moving obstruction prior to reaching the Tree (i.e. a running dog, a walking toddler, a flying bird) are eligible for a re-toss if the initial toss had a chance to hit the Tree.

## 7 - Sportsmanship/Etiquette

- 7.0 It is proper etiquette to pick up your balls and your balls only at the end of your four tosses. If both players agree to help each other (explicitly or implicitly), then by all means help each other.
  - 7.0.1 This etiquette is based on the fact that the original Monkeyballers didn't like other people touching their balls – it was a luck thing.
  - 7.0.2 It is also proper etiquette to wait until all eight Monkeyballs are thrown before picking Monkeyballs off the ground. This includes partners in Doubles play.
- 7.1 Monkeyball is meant to be a fun, family game for all ages – good sportsmanship should be practiced at all times. In the later rounds of tournament play (or at the end of a long day of drinking) winning will certainly become a goal, but it should not come at the expense of the spirit of the game.
- 7.2 With the sportsmanship mumbo-jumbo out of the way, Monkeyball is a perfect game for loud whooping, trash-talking and side-betting. Let's not forget, beer is often the beverage of choice at Monkeyball events – so the behaviors previously described will likely occur.
- 7.3 If the sportsmanship (or lack thereof) reaches a level where fans and players are not having fun, tell the guilty party to stop being a jack-ass. It's just a game – have fun.

## 8 - World Rankings

- 8.0 World Rankings are based on Average Tournament Rating (40%) and Total Tournament Points (60%). In general, the ranking formula favors competitors that finish in top positions at tournaments, competitors that compete in large tournaments, and competitors that compete in multiple tournaments. The ranking formula may change over time as the number of tournaments and competitors increase. An explanation of the formula can be found at [playmonkeyball.com](http://playmonkeyball.com).

## 9 - Sanctioned Tournaments

- 9.0 Players in sanctioned tournaments are eligible to earn World Rankings points.
- 9.1 Sanctioned tournaments have at least 8 players and each player must play multiple matches. A double elimination tournament is the easiest way to satisfy this requirement, but it can also be accomplished through a combination of pool play qualifying followed by a knockout tournament.
  - 9.1.1 Double-elimination tournament brackets for 8-to-32 players can be found on [playmonkeyball.com](http://playmonkeyball.com).
  - 9.1.2 The type of tournament selected depends on the number of Courts available and the window of time for a tournament (5-6 games can typically be played in one hour).
- 9.2 Seeding is also acceptable in tournament play. A rule of thumb is to seed no more than the top 25% of competitors, and then place all others by random draw.
- 9.3 Many sanctioned tournaments also feature souvenir t-shirts and trophies/medals.
- 9.4 All sanctioned tournament should have a tournament manager. The tournament manager should nominate a rules committee of at least three players to adjudicate all rules questions. Committee members should excuse themselves from the decision making process on rulings involving themselves, a spouse or a boss.