

NHPA Rules & Bylaws Report by Dan Sanders

The following Proposed Rules Changes (PRCs) have been approved by the NHPA Rules Committee and approved by the NHPA Council, for voting by the Convention Delegates at the 2012 World Tournament in Knoxville, TN. As required by our NHPA Bylaws, these PRCs are published here so that our members and delegates can read and discuss these proposals prior to voting. Please study and review these possible changes to our Rules, discuss them with other members, and let your Charter Officers and appointed delegates know how you would like for them to vote. All accepted and approved PRCs can now be found here (see below), and are also published in either the March/April or May/June issues of Newline Magazine, as well as on some Charter Websites and/or in some Charter Newsletters. In addition to the PRCs, the NHPA Council has unanimously approved/enacted some changes to ***Requirement 4 – WORLD TOURNAMENT PLAY*** (see at end). The reasons for this action are included under "Reasons for Change". This Rule change (currently in effect) will also be voted on by delegates at the Knoxville Convention.

PRCs Passed by the NHPA Rules Committee and by the NHPA Council:

PRC1 – Rule 1, Section E.1

Current Wording: (also see RGS, page 8)

Section E – Elder Men (become eligible to pitch in the Elders Division upon purchase of an NHPA card dated for the calendar year that they become seventy (70) years old).

1. Elder Men may pitch from any place on either the extended or full-distance platforms, and shall observe the twenty-seven-foot (27') foul line. Elder Men must notify their Charter secretary, in advance, of the date that they intend to begin pitching from this shorter distance. Once a member declares himself a short-distance pitcher, he must remain a short distance pitcher for that entire calendar year. Alternately, if a member starts the year as a short distance pitcher, he may change to the Open Men's Division, but must remain in that Division for that entire calendar year. **Note:** See RULE 11, Section D.1 for additional information about re-qualifying.

Proposed Change Of Wording: (new wording is in *italic/bold* print)

Section E – Elder Men (become eligible to pitch in the Elders Division upon purchase of an NHPA card dated for the calendar year that they become seventy (70) years old).

1. Elder Men may pitch from any place on either the extended or full-distance platforms, and shall observe the twenty-seven-foot (27') foul line. Elder Men must notify their Charter secretary, in advance, of the date that they intend to begin pitching from this shorter distance. Once a member declares himself a short-distance pitcher, he must remain ***in that Division until the next year's membership card is purchased. At that time he may switch back to the Open Men's Division,*** but must remain in that Division ***until the next year's membership***

card is purchased, etc. Note: See RULE 11, Section D.1 for additional information about re-qualifying.

Reasons For Proposed Changes:

After once entering the Elders Division, there are some very good reasons why pitchers should not be allowed to switch Divisions *during* the card year. Here are some of them: This could be very problematic for TDs, for placing all pitchers in their correct Division, and having the correct NatStats ringer percentage for that pitching distance. Also, whether or not they have re-qualified at this new distance may be more difficult to determine. This would, in turn, create a probable nightmare for NatStats, based on incorrect information they might be receiving from TDs, and having to make later corrections. This would also require that Charter Secretaries issue new cards at mid-year (with the correct pitching distance marked), and then report the changes to NatStats. And so after the initial/first change of a qualified, long-distance pitcher to the Elders Division (which could happen at any time of the year) we are now attempting to require that any further changes (moving back to full-distance, then back to short-distance, etc.) take place only when new membership cards are purchased, and which become available in October.

PRC2 - REQUIREMENT 2 – ALL NHPA TOURNAMENTS/LEAGUES (also see RGS page 23)

Section E – Tournament Credit

Current Wording:

1. For singles and doubles events, all contestants must have completed at least half of their scheduled games to receive NatStats credit for that event, with a minimum of one hundred (100) shoes pitched.

Proposed Change of Wording: (new wording is in *italic/bold* print)

1. For singles and doubles events, ***a contestant*** must have completed at least half of their scheduled games (***including any scheduled "bye" games***) to receive NatStats credit for that event, ***or must have pitched*** a minimum of one hundred (100) shoes.

Reasons For Proposed Change:

1. It is possible to pitch more than half of the scheduled games in less than 100 shoes, which is now required in the current wording. This may happen where there are small Class sizes, and/or in a Class where the "top" pitcher may win more than half the scheduled games in less than 20 shoes per game. This sometimes happens in Junior Classes, for example.
2. There have been questions about whether scheduled "bye" games should be included for the "at least half" requirement, and so this proposal clarifies this question. These "bye" games should be included as when a pitcher is scheduled to pitch their bye game is beyond their

control. Also a Pacer opponent may not be available to pitch the bye game, or the court may not even be available (a 7-man Class on three courts, for example).

3. Another reason for this proposed change has to do with "all contestants" (currently) having to finish at least ½ of their games, compared with "a contestant" (proposed change of wording). This way, at least some of the contestants could receive tournament credit; where there was a rain-out, for example.

PRC4 – Rule 3, Section D – Position of Contestants During Delivery

Proposed Changes (Part A): (see/compare RGS page 11 for current wording) – It is proposed that Rule 3, Section D.1 (below), with indicated changes/additions (in *bold/italic print*) be moved to a new location, under Rule 3, Section C.2 (see RGS page 10).

1. The Pitcher – During the entire address and *delivery* of a shoe, the contestant must not start or step completely outside the pitching platform with either foot.

Exceptions:

(a) A contestant observing the thirty-seven-foot (37') foul line may start directly behind the pitching platform provided they step within it when they release the shoe.

(b) A physically challenged contestant *requiring the assistance of special equipment, such as a wheelchair*, must have at least some contact with the pitching platform and be completely behind the twenty-seven-foot (27') foul line when the shoe is released.

Reasons For Proposed Changes (Part A): The movement of this text information from Section D.1 to Section C.2 seems *logical* as this information deals with the **Delivery of Shoes**. There is also a need for clarification of **Exceptions (b)** as some pitchers on Medical Exemptions have taken this to mean that they were allowed to move out closer to the center of the court, for better alignment, which was not the original intent of this exception.

Proposed Changes (Part B): It is further proposed that the following text information replace the current text in Section D.2, as follows: **Note:** Proposed changes are either in bold or regular *italic* type.

When not pitching, *contestants* shall stand quietly and stationary on or behind the same court's opposite *full-distance or extended* pitching platform, *at a distance of* at least two feet (2') behind *any* contestant who is pitching from the same *court* or from the adjacent *pitching platform of another court*. *They shall remain quiet and reasonably still until both opponent's shoes have been delivered. More specifically:*

1. In Open Men's (full distance) Classes - The above information shall apply for the forty-foot (40'), full-distance pitching platforms.

2. In Mixed distance Classes - The short-distance pitcher who pitches first must return to the position described above; on or behind the forty-foot (40') pitching platform. When the full-

distance pitcher pitches first, he must remain on that pitching platform, as described above, while his opponent delivers his/her shoes.

3. In Short-distance Classes – After pitching first, contestants may remain on the extended pitching platforms, as described above, unless there is a full-distance pitcher on an adjacent court, in which case he/she shall return to the forty-foot (40') pitching platform, if that pitcher is pitching from an adjacent pitching platform.

Reasons for above Proposed Changes (Part B):

As currently worded in **Section D.2 - The Opponent**, there is no information provided here about where competitors in Short-distance Classes should stand/wait while their opponents are delivering their shoes. This needed information is provided here, for all three possible combinations of competing distances. Also, this additional information makes it possible for Judges to know/understand the specifics of this Rule, and to monitor/remind pitchers of, and enforce any violations.

Proposed Change (Part C): *For editing reasons, it is further proposed that the current text heading for Section D.3 – The Contestants, will be changed to Section E – Crossing Over, as presented below. The current text information will remain the same, other than the reference change to Section D, in two places. Proposed changes are in **bold/italic** print.*

Section E - Crossing Over

If both contestants use the same pitching platform to deliver their shoes, the contestant pitching first should cross over (in front of the pit) to the other pitching platform and then move back to the position described in **Section D**, above. As the first contestant is crossing over in front, the second contestant should be crossing over and onto the same pitching platform, from the rear. If the contestants use opposite pitching platforms, the contestant who pitches first should step directly back, to the position described in **Section D**, above.

PRC6 - RULE 3 – PLAY OF THE GAME AND VALUE OF THE SHOE

Current Wording: (also see RGS, page 10)

Section C – Delivery of Shoes (currently reads):

1. Delivery – The contestant pitching first shall deliver both shoes (one at a time) and then the other contestant shall deliver both shoes (one at a time). A contestant may deliver the shoes from either the left or right pitching platform, but in any one inning, both shoes must be delivered from the same platform. A contestant shall pitch the entire tournament with the same hand/arm, except in the case of a medical emergency (to be determined by the Tournament/League Officials).

Proposed Change of Wording: (new wording is in **italic/bold** print)

Section C – Delivery of Shoes

1. Delivery – The contestant pitching first shall deliver both shoes (*underhand, and* one at a time) and then the other contestant shall deliver both shoes (*underhand, and* one at a time). A contestant may deliver the shoes from either the left or right pitching platform, but in any one inning, both shoes must be delivered from the same platform. A contestant shall pitch the entire tournament with the same hand/arm, except in the case of a medical emergency (to be determined by the Tournament/League Officials).

Reason for Proposed Change:

This change will provide a clear directive to contestants and tournament directors to follow when the occasional question/request surfaces about pitching the shoe overhand. The way the rule is currently written, it leaves the door open to anyone who would wish to pitch the shoe overhand, and raises all sorts of flags about whether this can be done safely.

PRC7B – Rule 1, Section E – Elder Men

Current Wording: (also see RGS, page 8)

Section E – Elder Men (become eligible to pitch in the Elders Division upon purchase of an NHPA card dated for the calendar year that they become seventy (70) years old).

Proposed Change of Wording: (new wording is in *italic/bold* print)

Section E – Elder Men (become eligible to pitch in the Elders Division upon purchase of an NHPA card dated for the calendar year that they become *sixty-five (65)* years old).

Reasons for Proposed Change: (from author of RC Proposal)

As I visited with the past ME committee chairpersons in our charter, it became very evident that we have more of a problem here with folks quitting the sport rather than asking for the medical exemption (only 5 requests over 20 years), although no one has ever been turned down. In 2009 I know of at least two of our very strong members that did not pitch at all because they were not physically able to pitch full distance, but would have if they would have been able to pitch from the short distance without a medical exemption. I know of these two because they have been club members for many years and I am pretty close to them. I am sure that there are several more out in the charter that I am not aware of that fall into that 65 and 70 age group that have stopped pitching for the same reason. I feel that the NHPA can benefit from this change in a big way, by increased membership numbers. The sooner this can be done the greater the benefit to the NHPA and some of the suffering membership who fall in that age group.

PRC8B – Rule 1, Section A - Juniors

Current Wording: (also see RGS, page 7)

1. Junior Cadets (any pitcher nine (9) years old or younger for the entire calendar year).

Proposed Change of Wording: (new wording is in *italic/bold* print)

1. **Junior Cadets** (any pitcher *ten (10)* years old or younger for the entire calendar year).

Reasons for Proposed Change:

Thirty feet is too far for many 9 year olds. It is not good to get them interested and then move them back 10 feet, where they get discouraged.

PRC10 – Rule 1, Section A – Juniors

Current Wording: (also see RGS, page 7)

2. **Junior Boys** (any male pitcher eighteen (18) years old or younger for the entire calendar year).
3. **Junior Girls** (any female pitcher eighteen (18) years old or younger for the entire calendar year).

Proposed Change of Wording: (new wording is in *italic/bold* print)

2. Junior Boys (any male pitcher *seventeen (17)* years old or younger for the entire calendar year)

Note: This will become effective January 1, 2014 if approved at the 2012 Convention.

3. Junior Girls (any female pitcher *seventeen (17)* years old or younger for the entire calendar year)

Note: This will become effective January 1, 2014 if approved at the 2012 Convention.

Reasons for Proposed Change:

The generally accepted age for “adulthood” in our society is 18. At 18, a young man can vote for president, buy tobacco, register for the military, and in some states can buy alcohol. With the advancement of health and nutrition programs these juniors are growing larger and taller at an earlier age. I think it looks very silly to see an 18 year old boy that’s 6 feet tall standing up to the 27 foot foul line pitching against a 10 or 12 year old. Agreed not all 18 year old boys are 6 feet tall, but there is definitely a large potential spread in the dynamics of this division, and the age should be lowered to 17 years. Many of these same reasons also apply to young women. As for the *Note:* this is included as a part of the proposal, out of a concern about this reducing of the age of the Boy's/Girl's Junior Division. If a Junior was competing in this Division in Knoxville this year, and was 17, that Junior would be thinking (and would have been thinking this for several years) that, "Well, if I don't win it this year, I'll have one more chance next year". And then, at this Convention, the age is lowered by a year and he or she is *out*, for any chance of winning the Title next year! (this Convention, and decision, will occur *after* they've pitched) What a disappointment that would be! This is not a problem when the age is *raised*, of course. But with this deferred date, they'd still have that "one more chance", they thought they'd

have, and others who are younger will have some time to better prepare/adjust for this change.

PRC12 – Rule 7 – Section D – Pacer Rotation (also see RGS page 16)

Current Wording:

If a pacer is used, the pacer will always pitch last; for all innings (see GUIDELINE 5 for additional information about pacers).

Proposed Change of Wording: (new wording is in *italic/bold* print)

If a pacer is used, the scheduled player *may* pitch first every inning, *or let first pitch be determined by the same rule as for the rest of the event, based on who scores, etc. This must be determined before the game begins, or the pacer will always pitch last.* (see GUIDELINE 5 for additional information about pacers).

Reasons For Proposed Change:

To force the scheduled player to always pitch first (or pacer to always pitch last) is a distraction to some pitchers. This should be optional, and a choice of the scheduled pitcher, before the game begins.

Rule 11 - Section E - Mixed Classes (also see RGS, page 19)

Current Wording:

If there are not enough entrants to form a competitive Class within a given Tournament Division (see Rule 1), contestants should be placed into more competitive “mixed” Classes where the overall ringer percentage “spread” will be less. Mixed Classes are not allowed, however, in some Championship Classes/Divisions of State Tournaments and also at the World Tournament (see also REQUIREMENT 3 “Mixed Play”, and REQUIREMENT 4 “Divisions”).

Proposed Change Of Wording:

PRC14 - Rule 11 - Section E – Mixing and Handicapping

1. For All Charter Tournaments – When creating tournament Classes, the requests of entrants for Division placement should be strongly considered. Tournament Directors/Committees will also consider creating some *non-mixed/non-handicapped* Classes, by Division, when there are 4 or more entrants from the same Division who have a percentage spread of 10% or less. Where the percentage spread is greater than 10%, the following options can be considered, for creating more competitive Classes:

a) **Mixed Classes** – Players from several Divisions are placed into Classes of 4 or more, in an effort to keep the percentage spread to a minimum. *Note:* depending upon requests, it may be important to separate 30' and 40' Divisions.

b) **Handicapped Classes** – Players are placed into Classes and are assigned a handicap for each game played. For tournament play using cancellation scoring, a handicap of 80% is recommended. An alternate-pitch format must be used (see Rule 7.2).

Please note: It is possible for any given tournament to have some mixed Classes, some handicapped Classes, and some Division Classes that have no mixing or handicapping.

2. Special Tournaments – For *Juniors Only*, *Invitationals*, the *World Tournament*, and other special tournaments (also see Requirement 5), Mixed and/or Handicapped Classes may not be allowed, but this must be announced/posted in advance, on Charter tournament schedules, tournament flyers, and/or entry forms.

3. State Tournaments* – It is recommended that State Tournament Championship (or Class A) Division Classes not be mixed or handicapped if the number of entrants allows for reasonable competitive Division/Class play of 4 or more entrants. When mixing or handicapping may become necessary or desirable to create more competitive Championship Classes, the State Champion of each Division shall be the highest finishing player (based on ringer percentage) among all who had entered that Division. All lower Classes (than Championship/ Class A) may also be mixed or handicapped if competitive Division Classes cannot be created.

Please note: If the above PRC14 is accepted by the Knoxville delegates, other existing Rules (or parts of them which have been incorporated here) may become unnecessary or may require some changes. These would include **Section F – Handicapping**, on RGS Book, page 19, and **Requirement 3, Sec A.2 – Mixed Play** on RGS Book, page 24. These kinds of necessary changes/adjustments would then be made by the Rules Committee and NHPA Council.

***Provisional Proposal** – This sub-section 3 (see above), about mixing in **State Tournaments**, will remain as a part of PRC14, provided it receives the required number of delegate votes. If PRC14 *does not* receive the required number of delegate votes to pass, a separate delegate vote will determine whether or not this sub-section on **State Tournaments** will replace the current text information, which can be found in **Requirement 3, Sec A.2 – Mixed Play** (see RGS Book, page 24), and which currently states that the Open Men and Open Women Divisions cannot be mixed play.

Reasons For Proposed Changes:

1. For All Charter Tournaments: In perhaps too many of our Charters/States, the “mixing” of Tournament Classes seems to have become the “default” choice for many of our TDs. This important *Section 1* is simply *suggesting/asking (not requiring)* that TDs of local tournaments take a closer look at the possibilities for creating Division Classes, especially where the entrants

may have made this request, and also to consider using a “handicap system” (vs “mixing”) to create competitive Classes for Division play. Another important consideration/observation is that in many of our Charters, our 40-foot pitchers are becoming the “*silent minority*”. Many of them, for a variety of reasons, do not like “mixed tournaments” and are not entering these “local” events, but rather are pitching in just a few larger tournaments (the State and/or World) where there *are* competitive 40-foot Classes; or some may even be giving up horseshoes or waiting until they qualify (by age) for the Elders Division. And so some serious consideration should be made, I think, for separating our 30’ and 40’ pitchers, where possible. And this *is possible*, in many cases, by “handicapping” rather than “mixing” these Divisions. In any case, it is important to include this Section 1 in our Rules, so that Charter Officers and TDs are at least reminded that there are other alternatives (and perhaps better ones, for the good of our sport) than creating all “mixed” Classes.

3. State Tournaments: For many of our Charters, it has become very difficult to create competitive Division Classes of four or more contestants, especially in the Women’s Division of the State Tournament. Since these two Divisions (Men and Women) cannot be mixed with other Divisions (the current Requirement), two or three women (and often with a very wide percentage spread) may end up having to pitch each other for the State Championship Title. It would be much better to “mix” these pitchers with the Men, Elders, Juniors, etc. to create more competitive Classes, and then determine the Division winners (including State Champions), as described in this proposed change (sub-section 3. **State Tournaments**, see above).

Please Note: This change (see below) has already been enacted by our NHPA Council, with a unanimous “yes” vote of all Council members. This timely change will allow us to follow our currently-planned format for this WT. To continue, however, this Requirement change will require a 2/3rds approval of the voting delegates. If not approved by the delegate vote, this Requirement will return to the original/current wording as of January 1, 2013.

REQUIREMENT 4 – WORLD TOURNAMENT PLAY (also see RGS pages 25, 26)

Current Wording:

Section F – Playoffs

In a World Tournament, games won and lost shall determine the order in which the winners are placed. Pitchers tying for first place of a Division shall be decided the winner as follows: if two tie, a one-game playoff to forty (40) points; if more than two tie, the first place shall be decided by a ladder-type playoff based upon ringer percentages; in all others ties (second and below), trophies and prize money shall be awarded based upon ringer percentage. First place ties at the "Class" level will be determined by forty (40) shoe playoff games. Percentage ties for all move-up positions into a Championship Class shall be broken by a forty (40) shoe playoff game.

Change Of Wording: (mostly all new or revised wording)

Section F – Playoffs

In World Tournament play, games won and lost shall determine the order in which the winners are placed. If there is a tie for first place, a playoff game will determine the winner. All playoff games will follow the same format as the round-robin play for that Class. If more than two players tie for first place, a ladder-type playoff will be used, based on ringer percentages in that competition. All other ties (second place and below) will be determined by ringer percentage. If still tied, "who beat who", and then "ringer % vs entry %" will be used. **Note:** Percentage ties for all move-up positions shall be broken by a playoff game. If still tied, additional innings will be played (see Rule 8, Secion B.2).

Reasons For Rules Change:

The current Requirement states that Championship playoff games must be 40-point games, or in some cases, 40-shoe games. This requirement is not realistic for our recently added Junior Cadets Division. These very young pitchers should not be expected to pitch 40-point games or even very many 40-shoe games. This new Rule also allows for changes that may occur in the future, including possible pitching format changes in other Divisions. It has also been determined that using "total points" as a tiebreaker may not be fair for our higher-percentage pitchers, in cancellation play. You may have witnessed some very competitive games (Alan Francis vs. Brian Simmons, for example) where the final score of a preliminary, 40-shoe game was 15 to 12, for example; *because of all those canceled ringers!* In these situations, the better players may not score as many "total points" as the other, lower-percentage pitchers, and could lose a tie, on this basis. The analysis of many past games/tournament summaries has actually shown this claim to be true for cancellation play. The second and third tiebreakers that have been included here are much more fair and, for these reasons, are now being used/recommended in HS Master.

Please note: A Proposed Rules Change (PRC) in the area of Medical Exemption forms was accepted/changed by the NHPA Council, and it was agreed that this action will not require a delegate vote. There are several other RGS Rules and/or Requirements that have been questioned/discussed via the NHPA Forum and/or *Newsline Magazine* during the past year or so, but for which no PRCs were submitted by the December 31st deadline. These include: 1) Tournament awards/prizes for the Junior Division, and 2) Play-off games, as it relates to World Tournament "move-ups". Look for more information on each of these Rules/Requirement decisions in the up-coming issue of *Newsline Magazine*.