



PROFESSIONAL BOWLING ORGANIZATION

OFFICIAL COMPETITION RULES & MEMBERSHIP STANDARDS

Founding Edition | Board Approved

Revised September 4, 2026

Board approved and effective September 4, 2026

Document control

Adoption status: Approved by the PBO Board of Directors and effective September 4, 2026. This edition establishes the Women's Division, current Senior 50+ pricing, division entry-fee schedules, entering-average eligibility standards for the Open, Senior 50+, and Women's Divisions, and Women's Division classification, confidential verification, privacy, and appeal procedures.

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Using this rulebook: Read the event bulletin first. This rulebook supplies the standing framework; the bulletin supplies the event's specific format, times, fees, prize fund, equipment limits, and approved variations.

ARTICLE 1 | PURPOSE, SCOPE, AND AUTHORITY

1.1 Purpose and guiding principles

These rules establish a fair, consistent, and professional framework for events conducted or sanctioned by the Professional Bowling Organization (PBO). PBO administers professional bowling tournaments for athletes and fans while protecting competitive integrity, participant safety, and the reputation of the sport.

PBO will apply these rules in a neutral manner. No participant is entitled to preferential treatment because of ranking, reputation, sponsorship, membership tenure, or prior results.

- Athlete-led competition with transparent procedures.
- Fair access and equal application of published rules.
- Fan-friendly events that respect athletes, host centers, partners, and officials.
- Prompt decisions that preserve safety, schedule, and competitive integrity.

1.2 Who and what these rules cover

These rules apply to members, nonmember entrants, alternates, coaches, caddies, guests, credentialed personnel, contractors, and any other person who enters a restricted PBO competition area or participates in a PBO activity.

Registration for, attendance at, or participation in a PBO event constitutes agreement to follow this rulebook, the event bulletin, official notices, host-center requirements, and lawful instructions from PBO officials.

1.3 Rule hierarchy

When authorities overlap, PBO will use the following order. An event bulletin may supplement this rulebook and may modify a rule only when this rulebook permits event-specific treatment or when the bulletin clearly identifies the modification before the affected competition begins.

- Applicable law, emergency directions, and immediate safety requirements.
- This PBO rulebook and formally adopted PBO policies.
- The published event bulletin and later written event notices.
- The current USBC Playing Rules and Equipment Specifications for matters not addressed by PBO.
- A written or recorded ruling issued by the Tournament Director for the event at hand.

1.4 Event bulletins

Every event will have a bulletin or equivalent published notice describing the venue, schedule, eligibility, entry fee, field limit, format, advancement method, lane pattern disclosure, prize structure, points, dress requirements, equipment limits, withdrawal terms, and event-specific tie procedures. Competitors are responsible for reviewing all updates before each round.

If the event bulletin is silent, this rulebook controls. Verbal instructions that materially affect play should be confirmed in writing or posted electronically as soon as practical.

1.5 Authority to interpret

The Tournament Director has final authority over on-site interpretation, scoring administration, scheduling, lane assignments, and immediate discipline, subject to the appeal rights in Article 16. The PBO Board of Directors has final authority over the meaning and amendment of this rulebook.

1.6 No waiver by inaction

Failure to enforce a rule in one circumstance does not eliminate the rule or require the same result later. A specific waiver must be written, limited to the stated facts, and issued by an authorized PBO official.

1.7 Severability

If a provision is invalid or cannot lawfully be applied, the remaining provisions remain in effect to the fullest extent allowed.

ARTICLE 2 | MEMBERSHIP AND COMPETITOR ELIGIBILITY

2.1 Membership program

PBO may offer competitive, affiliate, supporter, honorary, or other membership classes approved by the Board. Current dues, benefits, renewal periods, and participation privileges will be published in a separate membership schedule so they may be updated without rewriting competition rules.

Membership is personal, nontransferable, and subject to continued good standing. Membership does not create employment, agency, partnership, or ownership rights in PBO.

2.2 Good standing

A member is in good standing when required dues and financial obligations are current, requested eligibility information is accurate, no suspension is active, and the member is complying with PBO rules and policies. PBO may restrict services or event entry while a balance, identity question, or disciplinary matter remains unresolved.

2.3 Event eligibility

Eligibility is determined by the event bulletin. Events may be open, members-only, invitational, age-based, developmental, championship, or otherwise classified. PBO may use verified average, recent competitive performance, ranking, qualification, invitation, or a combination of these standards.

Membership alone does not guarantee a place in a capped or invitational field.

2.3A Competition divisions and eligibility

PBO conference events may include an Open Division, a Senior 50+ Division for eligible athletes age 50 or older, and a Women's Division. The following entering-average standards apply to participation in those divisions:

Open Division: A competitor must have a USBC-verified entering average of 195 or higher.

Senior 50+ Division: A competitor must be age 50 or older and have a USBC-verified entering average of 185 or higher.

Women's Division: A competitor must satisfy all other published Women's Division eligibility requirements and have a USBC-verified entering average of 185 or higher.

Average verification: The qualifying average must be from either of the two most recently completed USBC seasons as of the event entry deadline. PBO may require an official USBC average record or other USBC verification before accepting the entry.

All division standards must be administered consistently with applicable law, venue requirements, accessibility obligations, and PBO's nondiscrimination policy.

The Year 1 operating target is 64 paid Open entries, 64 paid Senior 50+ entries, and 25 paid Women's Division entries at each conference event. These figures are planning targets only and do not guarantee field size, reserve entries, or limit the Tournament Director's authority to administer a published field cap.

2.3B Women's Division classification and verification

Eligibility standard: The Women's Division is limited to athletes whose biological sex is female, as assigned at birth. PBO will use the sex shown on the athlete's birth certificate as the default classification record.

Documentation: Each entrant must certify eligibility during registration. Before accepting or continuing an entry, PBO may require a legible copy of the entrant's birth certificate. If that record is unavailable, illegible, or does not resolve the classification, PBO may accept another official government record that reliably establishes sex recorded at birth.

Confidentiality: Eligibility records must be submitted privately through the method designated by PBO. Access is limited to the Executive Director and specifically authorized reviewers. PBO will use the records only to determine division eligibility, will not disclose them to competitors or the public, and will retain or securely destroy them in accordance with applicable law and PBO's records policy.

Challenges and review: A challenge must be submitted confidentially in writing to the Tournament Director or Executive Director and state a specific factual basis. Rumor, appearance, or speculation is not sufficient. Event staff and competitors may not demand to inspect another participant's records. PBO will not use a physical examination to determine eligibility.

Decision and appeal: PBO will provide the affected entrant notice and a confidential opportunity to respond before a final adverse determination, unless temporary action is reasonably necessary to protect competition integrity. A written determination may be appealed under Article 16. This section will be administered consistently with applicable law.

2.4 Accurate information and verification

Applicants and entrants must provide complete and accurate identity, contact, age, average, membership, tax, and eligibility information. PBO may request government identification, league or tournament records, governing-body records, or other reasonable verification. Knowingly submitting false or altered information is a major violation.

2.5 Minors

A participant under eighteen years of age must provide written parent or legal-guardian consent and any release required by PBO or the host venue. The adult signing the consent remains responsible for travel, supervision outside restricted competition areas, medical authorization, and compliance with event policies.

PBO may impose age minimums or additional safeguarding requirements for specific events.

2.6 Accessibility and reasonable modifications

PBO will consider timely requests for reasonable modifications related to a disability or medical condition. A request should be made as early as possible and may require supporting information limited to what is reasonably necessary. A modification will not be granted if it creates a direct safety risk, fundamentally alters the competition, or provides an avoidable competitive advantage.

2.7 International participants

International participants are responsible for travel authorization, tax documentation, insurance, and compliance with the laws governing their participation. PBO may accept equivalent records from a recognized national federation or bowling organization.

ARTICLE 3 | REGISTRATION, ENTRY FEES, AND WITHDRAWALS

3.1 Registration

An entry is complete only when PBO receives the required form, payment, eligibility documentation, and any event-specific agreement. A confirmation number or written confirmation is the participant's evidence of entry. Participants must promptly correct account or roster information.

3.2 Field limits and entry priority

The event bulletin will identify the field limit and priority method. Priority may be based on completed registration time, membership status, ranking, qualification, sponsor exemption, or another published category. PBO may hold a reasonable number of spots for operational, broadcast, host, or qualification purposes if disclosed.

3.3 Payment

Entry fees must be paid in an accepted form by the stated deadline. Returned, reversed, disputed, or declined payments may result in removal from the field and recovery of documented processing costs. A participant may not initiate a chargeback to avoid an established withdrawal or disciplinary obligation.

3.3A Division entry-fee schedule

The current conference entry-fee schedule is: Open Division, \$275 for members and \$325 for nonmembers; Senior 50+ Division, \$200 for members and \$250 for nonmembers; Women's Division, \$200 for members and \$250 for nonmembers. Each nonmember price includes a \$50 event-only surcharge and does not provide membership benefits.

The Board may revise entry fees or authorize a promotional or event-specific fee only through a written resolution or published schedule issued before registration opens. The event bulletin must state the controlling entry fee, included charges, processing costs, refund terms, and any approved discount or waiver.

3.4 Waitlists and alternates

When an event is full, PBO may maintain a waitlist. Offers will be made according to the published priority and will expire at the stated time. Waitlist position has no cash value and may not be sold or transferred.

3.5 Nontransferable entries

A participant may not sell, assign, or give an entry to another person. PBO alone may replace a withdrawn participant from the waitlist or approved alternate pool. Team roster changes require written approval.

3.6 Withdrawal and refund terms

The event bulletin will state the withdrawal deadline and refund schedule. Unless the bulletin provides a more favorable rule, a timely withdrawal receives the entry fee less disclosed nonrefundable processing costs; a withdrawal after the deadline is nonrefundable unless PBO approves a documented medical, family, travel, or other substantial hardship.

A participant who begins competition is not entitled to a refund because of performance, elimination, equipment failure, disagreement with a ruling, voluntary withdrawal, or disqualification.

3.7 No-shows

A confirmed entrant who neither competes nor withdraws before the applicable deadline is a no-show. PBO may retain the entry fee, assess a published administrative penalty, require payment before future entry, or refer repeated no-shows for discipline.

3.8 Cancellation, postponement, or relocation

If PBO cancels an event before competition begins, paid entry fees will be refunded unless the participant elects a transfer or credit. If an event is postponed or relocated, PBO will publish revised terms and a reasonable response deadline. Travel, lodging, equipment, and other personal expenses are the participant's responsibility unless PBO expressly agrees otherwise in writing.

3.9 Tax and payment documentation

Prize payments may be withheld until the recipient provides legally required tax forms, payment instructions, identity verification, and resolution of any PBO balance. Participants are responsible for their own tax advice and reporting.

ARTICLE 4 | CHECK-IN, SQUADS, PRACTICE, AND LATE ARRIVAL

4.1 Participant responsibility

Each participant must know the correct venue, reporting time, squad, lane assignment, equipment deadline, and rules-meeting requirement. PBO is not responsible for a missed notice when the information was posted to the registered email address, participant account, event page, or on-site notice board.

4.2 Check-in and roll call

Participants must check in with photo identification and required credentials by the published time. PBO may conduct roll call or an electronic acknowledgement before any round. A participant who is present but fails to respond remains responsible for proving timely arrival.

4.3 Rules meetings

A first-time entrant, nonmember, or any participant designated by PBO must attend the scheduled rules review. Missing a mandatory review may result in loss of practice, removal from the field, or another proportionate penalty.

4.4 Squad and lane assignments

PBO may assign squads and lanes randomly, by ranking, by qualifying position, for field balance, or for production needs. Requests based on travel preference, friendship, sponsorship, or convenience are not guaranteed. An unauthorized lane or squad change is a violation.

4.5 Late arrival

If no alternate has taken the position, a late participant may enter play at the frame then in progress with zero for each missed frame. If an alternate has been activated or the format cannot accommodate a late entry, the late participant may be disqualified from the round or event. The event bulletin may impose a stricter rule for television, elimination, or team competition.

4.6 Official practice

Only authorized participants may use an official practice session. Lane movement, number of shots, ball changes, and any restricted practice areas will be announced. Practice scores are unofficial. Intentionally delaying, repeatedly re-racking, or interfering with another participant during practice is prohibited.

4.7 Warm-up

Warm-up time and lane access are set by the Tournament Director. Participants must stop immediately when warm-up closes. A participant who arrives late is not entitled to additional warm-up unless required for safety after a lane or equipment breakdown.

4.8 Alternates

An alternate must remain available and respond within the time stated by PBO. Once an alternate is formally activated, the replaced participant may not reclaim the position unless the event bulletin expressly allows it.

ARTICLE 5 | EVENT FORMATS, ADVANCEMENT, AND SUBSTITUTIONS

5.1 Published format controls

The event bulletin will state the number of games or matches, lane movement, qualifying stages, cuts, seeding, bonus pins, byes, carryover, stepladder or bracket procedures, and the method used to determine final positions.

5.2 Qualifying and cuts

Qualifying position is based on the scoring method in the event bulletin. A participant must complete the required games to remain eligible unless an official approves a substitution or emergency procedure. Cut lines are not final until scores and eligibility are verified.

5.3 Match-play formats

PBO may use round-robin, single-elimination, double-elimination, eliminator, bracket, stepladder, group, or other clearly published formats. Match order, lane choice, practice, and tie procedures will be announced before the first affected match.

5.4 Seeding and byes

Seeds will be assigned from qualifying position or another published metric. A bye is part of the format and is not a forfeited match. PBO may reseed after a round only if the event bulletin provides for reseeding.

5.5 Team and doubles competition

Team composition, lineup order, substitution rights, individual and team scoring, and prize allocation must be published. A lineup becomes locked at the announced deadline. Participants may not bowl on more than one active team in the same event unless specifically authorized.

5.6 Substitutions

No substitution is permitted in singles competition. In team or doubles formats, a substitution is allowed only under the event bulletin and with official approval. The official will determine whether prior pinfall, bonus pins, points, and prize eligibility remain with the team, departing participant, or substitute.

5.7 Shortened or modified competition

PBO may shorten, suspend, relocate, or modify a format when necessary because of lane failure, weather, power outage, safety, broadcast limitation, venue restriction, or another circumstance beyond reasonable control. The Tournament Director will select the method that best preserves completed competition and treats similarly situated participants consistently.

5.8 Interrupted events

If play resumes, verified scores already completed remain in effect unless conditions make their use materially unfair. If play cannot resume, PBO may declare results from the last completed common round, schedule completion later, or cancel the affected stage. The decision and prize treatment will be documented.

ARTICLE 6 | COMPETITION PROCEDURES AND LANE COURTESY

6.1 Order of play

Participants must bowl in the assigned order and on the assigned lane. A participant should be ready with the correct ball when the lane and adjacent courtesy area are clear. Deliberately changing order to gain a lane-condition advantage is prohibited.

6.2 Lane courtesy

Unless the event bulletin announces another system, one-lane courtesy applies: yield to a participant who is ready to bowl on the immediately adjacent lane. Courtesy must not be used to delay play, reserve a preferred transition, or repeatedly jump another participant.

6.3 Pace of play

Participants must proceed without unreasonable delay. The official may place an individual, pair, or group on the clock after warning. Repeated failure to be ready may result in loss of practice, a scoring penalty where authorized, fine, or other discipline.

6.4 Approach safety

No powder, rosin, liquid, adhesive, cleaner, or foreign substance may be placed on an approach or shoe in a way that could alter slide conditions for another person. A participant who observes a safety issue must stop and notify an official rather than attempt an unauthorized repair.

6.5 Bowlers' area

Only competitors, assigned coaches or caddies, and credentialed personnel may enter the bowlers' area. Bags, loose balls, tools, food, beverages, cords, and personal items must remain in designated locations and may not block walkways or equipment returns.

6.6 Re-racks

A participant may request a re-rack when pins are visibly off spot or improperly set. The official may limit repeated requests, inspect the rack, or require play to continue. A re-rack request may not be used to delay play or influence an opponent.

6.7 Mechanical breakdowns

After a material lane or scoring breakdown, the official may move play to an alternate pair, allow safety warm-up shots, reconstruct verified scores, or suspend the round. No participant may continue on a different pair without authorization.

6.8 Coaching and assistance

Coaching is permitted only from an authorized location and must not disrupt play. No person may touch or alter another participant's equipment without permission. During broadcast or championship rounds, coaching may be restricted to scheduled breaks.

6.9 Electronic and listening devices

A participant may not use a phone, camera, earbud, headset, smart display, or similar device in the competition area unless approved for medical accommodation, scoring, event communication, or production. Devices must not supply real-time outside coaching where coaching is restricted.

ARTICLE 7 | PLAYING RULES, SCORING, FOULS, AND TIES

7.1 Governing playing standard

PBO competition uses standard American Tenpins unless the event bulletin clearly identifies a modified format. This Article states the playing rules most often needed on site. The current USBC Playing Rules govern technical situations not addressed here unless a published PBO rule lawfully establishes a stricter or event-specific procedure.

The Tournament Director will resolve conflicts by applying, in order, immediate safety requirements, this rulebook, the event bulletin and later written event notices, and the incorporated USBC standard.

7.2 Standard tenpin game

A standard game consists of ten frames. A participant may make two deliveries in each of the first nine frames unless the first delivery is a strike. In the tenth frame, a strike earns two additional deliveries and a spare earns one additional delivery. Frames must be completed in the assigned order. The maximum standard-game score is 300.

7.3 Strike, spare, open frame, and split

A strike scores ten plus the pinfall from the next two deliveries. A spare scores ten plus the pinfall from the next delivery. An open frame scores the legal pinfall from its two deliveries. A split is a scoring notation for a qualifying leave after the head pin falls; it does not change the value of the frame.

7.4 Modified formats and handicap

No-tap, Baker, alternate-frame, best-ball, match-play bonus, handicap, and other modified formats are permitted only when described in the event bulletin. The bulletin must state the scoring method, lineup and rotation rules, artificial strike or pinfall treatment, and any effect on records, points, prizes, or advancement.

A handicap event must publish the base score, percentage, rounding method, applicable average, cap or negative-handicap rule, and when corrections may be made. When the bulletin is silent, competition is scratch and standard tenpin scoring applies.

7.5 Legal delivery

A legal delivery occurs when a participant releases the ball by manual means and it crosses the foul line into playing territory. Every legal delivery counts unless an official declares a dead ball. A device that imparts force, moves during delivery, or detaches from the ball is prohibited unless specifically allowed as an approved accommodation under the governing equipment rules.

7.6 Delivery hand and approved assistance

A participant must use the same delivery hand throughout the event. A two-handed approach is permitted when the same dominant hand releases the ball and all gripping holes comply with the equipment rules. Alternating hands, using a ramp or mechanical aid, or materially changing the delivery method requires advance written approval based on disability, injury, or another authorized accommodation.

7.7 Legal pinfall

Legal pinfall includes pins knocked down or completely off the lane surface by the ball, by another pin, or by a pin rebounding from an authorized part of the pin deck or pinsetter. A leaning pin touching a kickback or side partition is down. String-pin action counts only to the extent recognized by the current governing standard. Pins may not be conceded.

7.8 Illegal pinfall and standing pins

Pinfall does not count when caused by a foul; a ball that leaves the lane before reaching the pins; a pin rebounding from the gutter; unauthorized human or machine contact; or contact involving dead wood or another foreign object in a manner classified as illegal. The delivery still counts unless a dead ball is declared.

If another delivery remains in the frame, illegally displaced pins will be restored as accurately as practical. A pin that moves but remains standing stays at its new location unless the pinsetter cannot safely reproduce it, in which case the official will establish the fairest available setup.

7.9 Fouls

A foul occurs when, during or after a legal delivery, any part of the participant's body, clothing, wheelchair, walker, or delivery aid in contact with the participant crosses the foul line and touches the lane, equipment, or building beyond the line. The delivery counts, but the participant receives zero for that delivery.

An approved automatic detector should be used when available. An assigned official, official scorer, clear video, or credible direct observation may establish a foul when the detector is unavailable or demonstrably incorrect. A participant must raise a dispute before the next delivery when practical.

7.10 Deliberate fouls

A participant who intentionally fouls to obtain a scoring, lane-transition, or strategic benefit receives zero for the delivery and no additional deliveries in that frame. Deliberate conduct may also be treated as an integrity violation and may result in forfeiture, disqualification, or further discipline.

7.11 Dead-ball situations

An official will declare a dead ball when a delivery cannot fairly produce a valid result, including a wrong-lane or out-of-turn delivery that must be replayed; significant physical interference before release is completed; a missing or displaced pin noticed before impact; a pin moved before the ball reaches it; or contact between the delivered ball and a sweep bar, person, or foreign obstacle.

A dead-ball delivery is canceled and replayed from the proper setup and lane. The official may allow a participant who experienced unexpected physical contact during delivery to accept the resulting legal pinfall instead when the governing standard permits that choice.

7.12 Wrong lane or out of turn

When one participant bowls on the wrong lane or out of turn and the error is discovered promptly, the delivery is a dead ball and the proper participant re-bowls on the correct lane. If multiple participants have already bowled before discovery, completed deliveries may stand and play will return to the correct order and lanes, consistent with the event format and current governing standard.

A participant who intentionally bowls on the wrong lane or out of turn to affect transition, pressure, or scoring commits a separate integrity violation.

7.13 Provisional delivery or frame

When a dispute involving a foul, legal pinfall, dead ball, lane assignment, or scoring decision cannot be resolved before play must continue, the Tournament Director may require a provisional delivery or frame. The original and provisional results must both be recorded, together with the disputed facts. The final ruling determines which result counts.

7.14 Official scoring and correction

The event scoring system is the primary record, subject to correction by an authorized official. Participants must monitor their scores and promptly report errors. Handwritten records, scoring-system logs, photographs, or video may be used when electronic scoring fails or a result is disputed.

At the end of a game, match, or block, each participant must review the score before signing, submitting, or leaving the scoring area. A correction request should be made within fifteen minutes after the block unless the error could not reasonably have been discovered then. PBO may correct a clear clerical or arithmetic error before final payouts.

7.15 Incomplete games and withdrawal during play

A participant who stops without an approved injury, disability, emergency, or official direction receives zero for each uncompleted frame unless the event bulletin provides another published consequence. Verified completed frames remain in the record. The Tournament Director will determine whether an approved interruption permits resumption, relocation, substitution in a team format, or another equitable procedure.

7.16 Disputed pinfall and evidence

When pinfall is disputed, play should stop before the pinsetter cycles if safely possible. The official may use direct observation, scoring-system data, official or broadcast video, photographs, equipment logs, and credible witness information. If reliable evidence does not establish a different result, the on-lane ruling stands.

7.17 Default tie procedure for advancement

Unless the event bulletin states otherwise, a tie that determines a cut, advancement, seed, or alternate position will be resolved by a two-frame roll-off using the ninth and tenth frames. The procedure repeats until the tie is broken. Lane order and starting lane will be assigned or drawn by the official.

7.18 Default tie procedure for head-to-head matches

Unless the event bulletin states otherwise, a tied elimination or championship match will be decided by one-ball sudden death. Each participant bowls one complete delivery on the assigned lane; if still tied, participants alternate lanes and repeat until the tie is broken.

7.19 Ties not affecting advancement

When a tie does not require a roll-off, the tied prize amounts will be combined and divided equally unless the bulletin uses another method. Points and official positions will be assigned under the published points schedule.

ARTICLE 8 | EQUIPMENT AND BOWLING BALL COMPLIANCE

8.1 Baseline equipment standard

Bowling balls, cleaners, inserts, gripping devices, shoes, and other competition equipment must comply with the current USBC rules, approved-product lists, and equipment specifications in effect on the first day of the event, together with any stricter PBO event restriction.

8.2 Approved and eligible bowling balls

A ball must be an approved model and must not appear on an ineligible or nonconforming list applicable to the event. PBO may publish an event-specific list based on ball age, hardness, coverstock behavior, product status, or test capability. Participants are responsible for checking eligibility before travel and competition.

8.3 Registration and inspection

PBO may require a ball list, serial number, photograph, weigh-in, hardness check, or other inspection before or during competition. A participant must present requested equipment promptly and may not substitute, conceal, or alter an item after inspection without approval.

8.4 Gripping holes and delivery

All gripping holes and gripping devices must comply with the current governing specifications. The participant must use the same delivery hand throughout the event unless a documented injury or disability modification is approved before the change. A two-handed approach does not change the delivery-hand requirement.

8.5 Surface preparation

A bowling ball surface may be prepared only before the start of the applicable competition block or at another time expressly authorized by the event bulletin. Once the participant's competition begins, abrasives, polish, cleaner, or any substance that changes the ball surface may not be used until the block ends.

A dry towel may be used during competition. If foreign material appears on a ball, the participant must obtain official approval before using any other cleaning method.

8.6 Damaged equipment

A ball damaged during competition may be removed and replaced with an eligible ball after official inspection. Repair or surface work during the block is permitted only when expressly authorized. Normal track wear, lane shine, or a participant's preference is not damage.

8.7 Spot checks and evidence

PBO may conduct random or targeted equipment checks. A good-faith request by a participant must identify the item and factual basis and may not be used to harass an opponent. Equipment may be temporarily secured while a ruling is made.

8.8 Responsibility and penalties

The participant is responsible for every item used, regardless of who drilled, sold, prepared, inspected, or transported it. Depending on the violation and intent, the remedy may include warning, removal of the item, score adjustment, forfeiture, disqualification, fine, suspension, or referral for further review.

ARTICLE 9 | LANE CONDITIONS AND MAINTENANCE

9.1 PBO control of lane conditions

PBO controls lane conditioning, cleaning, maintenance timing, pattern selection, and related competition procedures. The goal is a demanding but reasonably consistent playing environment; no rule guarantees identical ball reaction or scoring pace across lanes or squads.

9.2 Pattern information

PBO may publish pattern name, length, volume, ratio, lane-machine data, or other information. The event bulletin will identify what will be disclosed and when. Unofficial measurements, rumors, or third-party lane data do not bind PBO.

9.3 Maintenance access

Only authorized personnel may enter the lane-conditioning work area, observe protected setup procedures, or handle lane-machine records. Participants may observe from approved locations when permitted but may not interrupt staff.

9.4 Approach or lane concerns

A participant must promptly report a sticking, sliding, debris, pinsetter, scoring, or lane-surface concern. Play may continue on unaffected lanes while the issue is assessed. Participants may not apply a substance or make a physical adjustment to the approach or lane.

9.5 Emergency maintenance

The Tournament Director may authorize cleaning, reconditioning, or relocation when a failure or contamination materially affects safety or fairness. The remedy need not recreate every prior condition; it must be reasonable and consistently applied to the affected competition.

9.6 Professional communication

Good-faith technical feedback is welcome through the designated official or post-event process. Public accusations of manipulation, cheating, or bad faith without a reasonable factual basis may be treated as a conduct violation. Nothing in this rule prevents truthful reporting of safety concerns or protected complaints.

ARTICLE 10 | PROFESSIONAL APPEARANCE, APPAREL, AND LOGOS

10.1 Professional standard

Participants must present a clean, safe, and professional appearance during official practice, competition, awards, media, and required public functions. The event bulletin may establish different requirements for qualifying, championship, formal, or themed events.

10.2 Competition apparel

Unless otherwise announced, acceptable competition apparel includes an approved bowling jersey, polo, or collared performance shirt; tailored slacks, skirt, skort, or approved shorts; and bowling shoes. Denim, sleepwear, torn clothing, workout-only garments, and clothing that creates a safety hazard are prohibited unless expressly approved.

10.3 Name and identification

PBO may require the participant's last name, country or region, membership designation, sponsor identification, or PBO mark on apparel. Lettering must be readable and may not impersonate an official, misstate credentials, or obscure required marks.

10.4 Logo approval

PBO may require advance approval of sponsor and commercial logos. A mark may be rejected because of size, placement, broadcast conflict, exclusivity, legality, safety, obscenity, hate content, deceptive claims, or conflict with PBO or host partners. Approval for one event does not guarantee future approval.

10.5 Restricted content

Apparel and equipment may not display discriminatory, threatening, sexually explicit, defamatory, or knowingly false content. Promotion of unlawful products or conduct is prohibited. Alcohol, gaming, tobacco, cannabis, political, religious, or age-restricted sponsorship may be limited by law, venue, broadcast, or event policy.

10.6 Headwear and accessories

Headwear, jewelry, wearable technology, and accessories must be safe, professional, and permitted by the event bulletin. PBO may require removal or secure placement of any item that distracts from competition, conflicts with production, or presents a hazard.

10.7 Correction before play

When practical, an apparel or logo issue will be addressed by allowing the participant to change, cover, or remove the item before bowling. Refusal, repeated noncompliance, or deliberate concealment may result in loss of practice, removal from the round, fine, or discipline.

ARTICLE 11 | CONDUCT, SAFETY, AND COMPETITIVE INTEGRITY

11.1 Code of conduct

Participants must act honestly, respectfully, and professionally. Conduct may be reviewed whether it occurs on the lanes, in the venue, at lodging or transportation connected to an event, online, or elsewhere when it materially affects PBO safety, operations, reputation, or competitive integrity.

11.2 Sportsmanship

Participants must respect opponents, officials, host-center employees, volunteers, fans, sponsors, media, and production personnel. Profanity directed at another person, abusive gestures, intimidation, equipment kicking or throwing, intentional distraction, refusal to shake hands when part of an announced presentation, or celebration aimed at humiliating another participant may be penalized.

11.3 Harassment, discrimination, and retaliation

PBO prohibits harassment, discrimination, sexual misconduct, bullying, hazing, and retaliation based on an actual or perceived protected characteristic or protected report. This includes unwelcome conduct in person, by message, on social media, or through a third party.

11.4 Threats, violence, and weapons

Threats, fighting, stalking, coercion, intentional physical contact, property damage, or conduct creating a credible safety risk are major violations. Weapons are prohibited in restricted PBO areas except as required by law for authorized public-safety personnel. PBO may remove a person immediately while the matter is reviewed.

11.5 Alcohol, drugs, and impairment

A participant may not compete while impaired or consume alcohol, cannabis, or an unlawful controlled substance in a competition or restricted athlete area. Lawful medication should be used responsibly; a

participant concerned about safety or accommodation should privately contact the Tournament Director. Distribution of unlawful substances at a PBO activity is a major violation.

11.6 Tobacco and vaping

Smoking, vaping, and smokeless tobacco are prohibited in competition areas, media areas, and while a participant is performing an official PBO function, except in a lawful location specifically designated by the venue.

11.7 Betting and manipulation

No participant, official, contractor, or person with material nonpublic competition information may bet on a PBO event, arrange or accept a benefit to influence a result, intentionally underperform, manipulate lane transition, misuse inside information, or fail to report an approach concerning manipulation. Lawful fantasy or gaming activity remains prohibited when it involves a PBO event and the person has inside access.

11.8 Dishonesty and obstruction

Falsifying scores, eligibility, identity, equipment information, expenses, tax forms, or evidence is prohibited. Destroying evidence, influencing a witness, refusing a reasonable inspection, or knowingly making a materially false complaint is a separate violation.

11.9 Property and restricted areas

Participants must respect venue and personal property, credential requirements, locker or staging areas, production sets, and staff-only spaces. Removal of another person's equipment or PBO property without authorization is prohibited.

11.10 Reporting and cooperation

Safety concerns, harassment, corruption approaches, score manipulation, and serious rule violations should be reported promptly to the Tournament Director or Board-designated contact. Participants must cooperate honestly with a reasonable review. PBO will limit disclosure to people with an operational or legal need to know.

11.11 Participant welfare and minors

Adults must maintain appropriate boundaries with minors and vulnerable participants. Private one-on-one situations, transportation, lodging, electronic communication, photography, and physical contact must comply with law, parent or guardian instructions, venue policy, and any PBO safeguarding policy.

11.12 Emergency directions

Everyone must follow emergency, evacuation, medical, weather, and security instructions. A person who believes an instruction is unsafe should move to safety and notify an official; competition consequences will be reviewed after the immediate risk is controlled.

ARTICLE 12 | MEDIA, PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT, AND BRAND USE

12.1 Media cooperation

Participants selected for reasonable interviews, introductions, photographs, autograph opportunities, press conferences, or production segments should cooperate unless excused for competition, medical, safety, religious, or substantial personal reasons. Requests must be coordinated through PBO when made in a restricted event area.

12.2 Event recording and publicity

By entering a PBO event, a participant authorizes PBO and its event partners to photograph, record, stream, broadcast, display, and archive the participant's name, image, voice, scores, statistics, and competition performance for event coverage, news, historical record, and promotion of PBO and its events, subject to applicable law and separate written commercial agreements where required.

12.3 Participant recording and streaming

Personal recording is subject to venue, privacy, credential, music, sponsor, and broadcast restrictions. Live streaming from the bowlers' area, use of production audio, or recording another person's private conversation requires approval. PBO may designate permitted camera locations and embargo periods.

12.4 Social media

Participants may express opinions and share accurate event experiences. They may not reveal protected personal information, confidential investigation material, nonpublic lane or production information obtained through special access, or content that violates the conduct rules. Satire and criticism are not violations merely because they are unfavorable.

12.5 PBO name, marks, and credentials

The Professional Bowling Organization name, PBO marks, event marks, credentials, and official titles may not be used to imply approval, partnership, employment, or sponsorship without written permission. Accurate factual statements about membership, entry, ranking, or results are permitted.

12.6 Pro-Am and fan programs

When a participant accepts an assignment to a Pro-Am, clinic, exhibition, or fan program, attendance is part of the event commitment unless the Tournament Director grants an excuse. Participants should introduce themselves, encourage amateur bowlers, offer safe and constructive guidance when appropriate, and thank fans and host personnel. Trick shots or unusual deliveries require permission when safety, scoring, or lane conditions could be affected.

12.7 Sponsor conflicts

PBO may reasonably limit apparel, statements, activations, or product placement that conflicts with an event partner, law, broadcast standard, or written exclusivity obligation. PBO will attempt to identify material restrictions before the event.

ARTICLE 13 | PRIZE FUNDS, POINTS, TITLES, AND AWARDS

13.1 Prize-fund disclosure

Before competition begins, PBO will publish the guaranteed prize fund or a clear formula for calculating it, the minimum cashing ratio when applicable, and the treatment of ties. Added money, optional side pools, brackets, and sponsor awards will be identified separately.

13.2 Eligibility for payment

Payment depends on verified results, eligibility, required appearances, tax documentation, and resolution of protests or discipline that could affect placement. PBO may offset a final, undisputed amount owed to PBO after written notice.

13.3 Payment timing

PBO will issue payments within the period stated in the event bulletin or, if no period is stated, within a commercially reasonable time after results are certified and required documents are received. PBO will communicate a material delay.

13.4 Unclaimed or declined awards

A recipient must keep contact and payment information current. An unclaimed payment may be handled under applicable unclaimed-property law. A participant who declines prize money must do so in writing; decline of payment does not automatically change another participant's placement.

13.5 Points

PBO points are awarded only under a published schedule. The schedule will state eligible events, finishing-position values, tie treatment, participation minimums, and any event tiers or multipliers. PBO may correct a points error when discovered.

13.6 Official titles

A PBO title is awarded only for an event identified in advance as title-eligible and completed under a format approved by PBO. The Board may establish additional standards for majors, championships, team titles, age divisions, or invitational titles.

13.7 Awards and honors

Season awards may consider points, titles, performance metrics, sportsmanship, service, or a published voting process. Eligibility and selection criteria should be announced before the relevant season ends.

13.8 Results corrections

PBO may correct a clerical, scoring, eligibility, or disciplinary error after publication. When a correction affects money, points, title status, or records, PBO will notify affected participants and publish a revised result.

ARTICLE 14 | OFFICIALS, ON-SITE RULINGS, AND PROTESTS

14.1 Tournament Director

The Tournament Director manages the event and may delegate scoring, equipment, lane-maintenance, media, or rules responsibilities. Delegation does not prevent the Director from reviewing an on-site ruling.

14.2 Neutrality and conflicts

An official must disclose a material financial, family, coaching, sponsorship, or personal conflict involving a ruling. When practical, another qualified official will decide the matter. A disclosed relationship does not automatically disqualify the official if no reasonable substitute is available.

14.3 Immediate rulings

A participant must request an on-site ruling before the next delivery or before leaving the affected pair when practical. Play may be paused, continued under protest, or moved while facts are gathered. The official may rely on observation, score data, video, photographs, documents, equipment tests, and credible witness information.

14.4 Protest requirements

A protest that could affect advancement, seeding, or a match result must be raised immediately and confirmed in writing within the time announced by the Tournament Director. Other protests must be submitted no later than one hour after the affected block unless the participant could not reasonably have known the facts.

14.5 Contents of a protest

The protest should identify the rule, facts, requested remedy, witnesses, and available supporting material. A protest is not complete when it merely states disagreement or demands that another participant be punished.

14.6 Playing under protest

When a prompt final decision is not possible, the Tournament Director may direct competition to continue under protest. Compliance with that direction preserves the participant's rights; refusal to bowl may result in forfeiture unless the participant reasonably believes continued play creates an immediate safety risk.

14.7 Final on-site authority

The Tournament Director's decision governs the event unless stayed or changed through the appeal process. Officials may correct their own clear error before the next stage begins when doing so does not unfairly prejudice reliance by other participants.

ARTICLE 15 | ENFORCEMENT, PENALTIES, AND DUE PROCESS

15.1 Proportionate enforcement

PBO considers safety, competitive impact, intent, prior history, cooperation, remorse, concealment, repetition, and consistency with comparable cases. Progressive discipline is preferred for correctable conduct, but a serious first offense may justify disqualification, suspension, or expulsion.

15.2 Available actions

One or more actions may be imposed when authorized and proportionate.

- Instruction, informal correction, or documented warning.
- Loss of practice, lane choice, warm-up, guest, media, or other event privilege.
- Removal of equipment or apparel from use.
- Score correction, zero for a frame or game where the rules require it, forfeiture, or disqualification.

- Restitution, reimbursement, administrative charge, or fine established by a published schedule or written decision.
- Probation with reasonable conditions.
- Suspension from a round, event, series, membership benefit, or all PBO activity.
- Termination or expulsion from membership.

15.3 Minor, serious, and major violations

Minor violations are correctable issues with limited impact, such as first-time tardiness, dress correction, or accidental procedural delay. Serious violations materially affect operations, another person, or competition, including repeated minor conduct, refusal to follow an official direction, or unsafe equipment handling. Major violations include violence, credible threats, manipulation, intentional cheating, significant fraud, sexual misconduct, severe harassment, retaliation, or unlawful conduct materially connected to PBO.

15.4 Score and equipment consequences

A scoring or equipment remedy should remove any competitive advantage and protect the field. Disqualification of a ball does not automatically disqualify the participant unless the governing rule, intent, use, concealment, or repeated conduct warrants that result.

15.5 Notice and opportunity to respond

Except for immediate on-site action, PBO will provide written notice of the material allegations, rules involved, and potential range of consequences, and will give the person a reasonable chance to submit a response. The response may be written, virtual, or in person at PBO's discretion.

15.6 Interim measures

PBO may impose a temporary restriction before a final decision when reasonably necessary to protect safety, evidence, operations, or competitive integrity. An interim measure is not a final finding and should be reviewed promptly.

15.7 Unpaid obligations

A final fine, restitution amount, chargeback, or other documented obligation becomes due on the date stated in the decision. PBO may withhold membership privileges, entry, or payment while the amount remains delinquent, subject to any appeal or payment arrangement.

15.8 Confidentiality and publication

PBO may publish event penalties, disqualifications, suspensions, corrected results, and information reasonably necessary for safety or transparency. Investigation details, medical information, minor information, and personal data will be limited as appropriate.

ARTICLE 16 | APPEALS

16.1 Right to appeal

A person may appeal a written decision that imposes a fine, score or placement change, disqualification, probation, suspension, termination, expulsion, or a material membership restriction. Routine lane assignments, pattern choices, scheduling decisions, discretionary invitations, and factual on-lane judgments are not appealable unless the appellant identifies a material rule or process error.

16.2 Deadline

An appeal must be received within five business days after the written decision is sent, unless the decision gives a longer period. The Board-designated appeal officer may extend the deadline for circumstances beyond the appellant's reasonable control.

16.3 Required submission

The appeal must identify the decision, specific grounds, requested outcome, and supporting material. New evidence should include an explanation of why it was not reasonably available earlier.

16.4 Appeal panel

The Board will appoint one or more neutral reviewers who were not materially involved in the original decision. A reviewer must disclose conflicts. For a major sanction, PBO should use a three-person panel when reasonably available.

16.5 Grounds for relief

Relief may be granted for a material misapplication of the rules, significant procedural unfairness, unsupported material finding, disproportionate penalty, conflict of interest, or important new evidence. The appeal is not a complete rehearing unless the panel determines one is necessary.

16.6 Effect while pending

Filing an appeal does not automatically pause an on-site result or penalty. The appeal officer may grant a stay when the appellant shows a strong likelihood of success and the stay will not create an unreasonable safety, integrity, or operational risk.

16.7 Decision

The panel may affirm, reverse, modify, remand, or dismiss the decision. A written appeal decision is final within PBO unless the Board accepts extraordinary review because of organizational significance or clear conflict.

16.8 No retaliation

Good-faith use of the protest or appeal process is protected. False evidence, threats, harassment, or retaliation remain separate violations.

ARTICLE 17 | GOVERNANCE, AMENDMENTS, AND EFFECTIVE DATE

17.1 Board authority

The PBO Board of Directors adopts and amends this rulebook. The Board may assign administration to officers, committees, staff, or event officials while retaining ultimate policy authority.

17.2 Regular amendments

Material amendments should be approved before a season or with reasonable advance notice. PBO will publish the effective date and a summary of significant changes. A participant is governed by the edition and event notices in effect when the event begins.

17.3 Urgent amendments

The Board or authorized officer may issue an urgent temporary rule for safety, law, equipment integrity, venue operation, or a newly discovered competitive risk. The temporary rule must be written, posted promptly, and presented to the Board for review.

17.4 Records

PBO will maintain adopted editions, material rulings, disciplinary decisions, certified results, and amendment history for a reasonable period under its record-retention policy.

17.5 Related policies

PBO may maintain separate policies for privacy, safeguarding, waivers and releases, media credentials, anti-corruption, employee and contractor conduct, medical response, and event operations. A separate policy does not override this rulebook unless formally authorized.

17.6 Effective date

This Founding Edition was adopted by the PBO Board of Directors and became effective September 4, 2026. The Board records and adoption page establish the official approval.

APPENDIX A | DEFINED TERMS

These definitions apply throughout the rulebook unless the context or event bulletin clearly requires a different meaning.

Term	Meaning
Alternate	A person approved to replace a withdrawn, disqualified, unavailable, or absent participant under the event format.
Block	A scheduled group of games or matches treated as one unit for scoring, equipment-surface, or advancement purposes.
Bowlers' area	The restricted seating, approach-adjacent, ball-return, staging, or competition space designated for participants and credentialed personnel.
Competition	For equipment-surface purposes, the period beginning with a participant's first delivery for score in a block and ending when that participant's final score for the block is certified, unless the event bulletin defines a broader period.
Event bulletin	The official event-specific notice containing format, schedule, eligibility, fees, prizes, and rule modifications authorized by this rulebook.
Good standing	Membership status meeting the financial, eligibility, and disciplinary requirements in Section 2.2.
Major violation	Conduct that presents significant safety, integrity, legal, or organizational harm and may justify severe discipline for a first offense.
Member	A person whose PBO membership is active in a class recognized by the Board.
Participant	Any entrant, member, nonmember, alternate, coach, caddie, guest, or credentialed person covered by these rules.
PBO	Professional Bowling Organization.
Restricted area	A location controlled by credential or official instruction, including the bowlers' area, locker or staging area, production space, scoring office, lane-maintenance area, and equipment-inspection area.
Round	A defined stage of competition consisting of one or more games or matches.
Tournament Director	The PBO official with primary operational and rules authority for an event, including an authorized designee.
USBC	United States Bowling Congress, referenced as the baseline source for playing rules and equipment specifications when applicable.

APPENDIX B | PENALTY GUIDANCE

This appendix promotes consistency but does not create mandatory minimums or maximums. Article 15 controls, and facts may justify a different response.

Level	Illustrative conduct	Typical starting range
Correctable / minor	First-time lateness, attire correction, accidental delay, failure to carry a credential	Instruction, warning, loss of a limited privilege, or published administrative charge
Competitive / serious	Unauthorized equipment use, repeated slow play, refusal to follow a ruling, avoidable safety breach	Equipment removal, scoring remedy, forfeiture, disqualification, fine, or probation
Integrity / major	Intentional cheating, score falsification, match manipulation, bribery, evidence destruction	Disqualification, prize and points consequences, suspension, or expulsion
Safety / major	Violence, credible threats, sexual misconduct, severe harassment, retaliation	Immediate removal, interim suspension, long-term suspension, or expulsion
Administrative / repeated	No-shows, unpaid obligations, repeated noncompliance, false registration information	Entry restriction, financial hold, probation, suspension, or membership termination

Integrity rule: A penalty should remove any proven competitive advantage and protect the field. Serious deception or concealment may justify a more severe result than the underlying technical violation alone.

APPENDIX C | REQUIRED EVENT BULLETIN CONTENTS

Event staff should complete and publish this checklist before opening registration. A missing item should be resolved in writing before the affected competition begins.

- Event name, dates, host center, address, and official contacts.
- Eligibility, membership status, age or division requirements, and verification documents.
- Registration opening, entry deadline, field limit, priority, waitlist, and check-in time.
- Entry fee, processing cost, refund deadline, withdrawal method, and no-show treatment.
- Official practice, warm-up, rules meeting, squad times, lane movement, and late-arrival rule.
- Complete competition format, games, cuts, seeds, carryover, bonus pins, byes, and substitution rules.
- Default and event-specific tie procedures.
- Lane condition or disclosure timing and any reconditioning schedule.
- Equipment registration, ball limit, model restrictions, inspection, and surface-preparation rules.
- Dress code, name requirements, PBO marks, sponsor-logo review, and broadcast restrictions.
- Guaranteed prize fund or formula, cashing ratio, points schedule, title status, and payment timing.
- Media, Pro-Am, autograph, sponsor, awards, or other required participant functions.
- Protest method, immediate on-site deadline, and appeal contact.
- Emergency, medical, accessibility, minor-participant, and venue-specific requirements.

Change control: After registration opens, a material change to fees, eligibility, format, or prizes should include prompt notice and, when appropriate, a withdrawal or refund option.

External standards and official resources

PBO incorporates current USBC playing and equipment standards as described in Article 1. Event staff and participants should use the current official resources rather than saved or unofficial copies.

USBC rules and general resources: <https://bowl.com/rules>

USBC equipment specifications and approved products: <https://bowl.com/equipment-specifications>

APPENDIX D | BOARD ADOPTION

The Board of Directors of Professional Bowling Organization adopted this Founding Edition of the Official Competition Rules and Membership Standards on September 4, 2026.

Effective date: September 4, 2026, as recorded in the official PBO Board records.

Board resolution: Recorded in official Board minutes Adoption date: September 4, 2026

Name and role	Approval record	Date
Randall DeBolt Executive Director	Recorded in Board minutes	September 4, 2026
Randy Baker CFO	Recorded in Board minutes	September 4, 2026
Alex Cady Director	Recorded in Board minutes	September 4, 2026
Nicholas Bachteler Director	Recorded in Board minutes	September 4, 2026
James Cox Director	Recorded in Board minutes	September 4, 2026
Jennifer Shultz Director	Recorded in Board minutes	September 4, 2026
Justin Clement Director	Recorded in Board minutes	September 4, 2026
Sean Daniels Director	Recorded in Board minutes	September 4, 2026

Professional Bowling Organization | Founding Edition | Official copy maintained with the Board records