

New England Pinball League
<h1>League Handbook</h1>
Rules, By-Laws, and Other Stuff
Accepted April 21, 2025



The New England Pinball League is maintained by volunteers within the pinball community. Dues paid into the New England Pinball League players are used to maintain league operations and league player benefits. Dues are redistributed back to the players, via prize winnings, trophies, or swag. There are no paid positions or employees in the New England Pinball League. All money generated goes directly into the New England Pinball League for redistribution back to its players. New England Pinball League is a division of NEPL LLC.

New England Pinball League Mission Statement:

Connecting people across New England and beyond
through the great game of pinball.

Current Officials and Admin Team:

President - Chuck Webster

Vice President - Steven Amlaw

Rules Commissioner - Kenny Weiner

CT State Rep - Daniel Cleary

MA State Rep - Matt Guay

ME State Rep - Nicole Bernier

NH State Rep - Chris Brunette

RI State Rep - Chris Harvey

Elections Administrator - Colin Alsheimer

Webmaster - Andy Stevens

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0.0 The Short Version

League dues are \$40 per season. They go toward league operations, finals prize money, swag, and awards. All you have to do is show up at any one of the available dates and locations and play four games of head-to-head pinball in 3- and 4-player groups to earn points to determine your rank at finals. To be eligible for finals you must attend at least 3 of the first 5 weekly sessions and a total of 5 of the 8 weekly sessions. (Plunge extra balls / bonus balls to save time!).

Each player is responsible to pay their own coin drop or house fee every week. At public locations, games are usually set from \$.25 - \$2.00 per game and private locations have a house fee, typically \$10.00.

A player's 2 lowest scoring sessions are discarded to calculate their adjusted points for the season.

Adjusted points at the end of week 8 will determine your position at Finals.

Want to know more? Read on...

1.0 Introduction

The New England Pinball League (NEPL) rules provide a format for running a friendly league for pinball players of all skill levels. These rules are designed for locations of any number of players using four or more machines. The nature of the league allows players to participate while being fun for everyone.

The schedule consists of 8 weekly sessions and a playoff final. The NEPL was founded on the principles of not only being an equal opportunity league but also an equitable opportunity league for all skill levels.

During each weekly session, there are several dates and locations scheduled. Each player may only participate at one league location in a given week. Players may select any location and may mix and match where they play from week to week. A full list of these locations with their days and times will be available at www.nepl.org before the start of league.

A player must complete at least 3 of the first 5 weekly sessions to determine which division they will compete at finals. Complete at least 5 of the weekly sessions for the season to be eligible to compete at finals. At finals, each division is ranked by the eligible players adjusted points which is the total of their six highest session scores. Any missed week receives a score of zero.

These rules allow maximum flexibility to fit some pinball in around everyone's schedule.

Special thanks to the Pittsburgh Pinball League, the Free State Pinball Association, the IFPA and the Professional and Amateur Pinball Association, as these rules are modified from theirs.

1.1 League Officials/Admins

League officials make decisions on rule interpretation. If possible, rulings of malfunctions or interference should be deferred to an official that is not directly involved in the game. At least one league admin must be present at each league meet. League officials/admin are eligible to participate in the league. See Section 8 for more information about league officials and their duties.

1.2 Discretion of League Officials/Admin

These rules are a guide. At times, situations will arise that aren't specifically covered by these rules. In these cases, league officials/admin will make decisions in the spirit of the rules. These decisions will be discussed and applied consistently should the situation arise again in the same season.

1.3 League Locations

League officials must approve a location for play before it can be used as a league site and must be approved before the start of league for the season. Locations must be equipped with at least four and ideally six or more playable pinball machines and be able to accommodate at least 16 people.

Sites may choose to run multiple league nights.

New locations should not conflict with existing locations and must be approved by league officials.

League sessions may be hosted at public locations or private sites (homes / co-ops).

Games at private sites will most often be on free play and attending players will be asked to pay an entrance fee. Public locations will typically have a coin drop.

League games are expected to be in good working order with tilts set appropriate for play.

Rough play is not tolerated at any location, especially at a private site. It is the players' responsibility to respect all locations and the games.

Site hosts may set a limit on the number of players who can attend a session at their site. In these cases, the site host will arrange a method to register to attend. A player who shows up without reserving a spot may not be allowed to play if the session is full.

All locations and their restrictions are noted on www.NEPL.org.

2.0 Dues, Player Conduct and Other Stuff

2.1 League Dues

League dues are \$40 per season. 100% of league dues are used to fund league, operating costs, fees, player awards and swag. League dues are collected by electronic payments through www.nepl.org. All dues must be paid in full prior to attending their first session of each season.

2.2 First-Time Players and Players 12 and Under

First time players and players 12 and under have the option to join the league without paying the \$40 dues. Players who choose to participate without contributing dues are not eligible to win prize money or receive an entry in the pinball machine giveaway. They are eligible to receive a trophy and the glory should they place in their respective division. Any unawarded prize money will remain in league funds for the following season.

2.3 Registration

All players must register prior to attending their first session each season. Registration details will be posted online and will be open through the first 3 sessions of each season

2.4 Swag

Periodically, swag will be purchased with league dues for all league participants. This could be t-shirts, travel mugs, key chains, etc.

2.5 Player Conduct

During league play, every league player represents the NEPL and is expected to conduct themselves accordingly. Be a respectful, gracious guest whether in a public location or a private home. Pinball machines are expensive and we are very fortunate to have so many owners willing to share their collections, treat the games better than you would treat a game if you owned it.

The NEPL has just two rules, **no illegal substances are to be consumed or carried to any NEPL location** and follow all location's house rules.

Common House Rules include, but are not limited to:

Do not hit games or make moves so aggressively that you raise the legs off the ground.

Do not turn on or turn off games without express consent from the owner or host. Most hosts would make an exception to this rule if the game is smoking or smells hot.

No acts or threats of physical violence.

No discriminatory or derogatory comments (hate speech)

Do not place food or drink on games.

If you drop food or drink, clean it up immediately or ask for assistance.

Take care of your empty containers and other trash.

Smoke only where permitted.

Alcohol consumption only where permitted.

Marijuana consumption only where permitted.

Adult language or loud outbursts may not be allowed at all locations.

If a location does not have their house rules posted and you have the potential to break any of the common rules noted above, ask for clarification before league play begins.

No site host likes to have to enforce rules or correct bad behavior, please do your best to make it so they do not have to.

If you commit **serious** or repeated violations of any location's house rules you could be banned from the location at the site hosts discretion. Should this happen, NEPL Officials will convene to determine if the violation warrants a ban from the NEPL as a whole.

2.6 Loyalty Program

Every third season The NEPL will hold a drawing for a major prize giveaway(aka brand new Stern Pro level Pinball machine). Every dues paying player who has completed at least 5 sessions during the three seasons preceding the drawing will be eligible for the drawing. Complete one season, receive one entry. Complete two seasons, receive three entries. Complete all three seasons, receive six entries.

League player names and the number of entries they have earned will be published in advance of the drawing. It is each league player's responsibility to check the accuracy of their entries.

Players may only win a major prize giveaway (aka Pinball machine) once. If a player's name is drawn a subsequent time they'll receive a \$500 cash prize and their name will be removed from the drawing. Another name will be drawn for the Major prize giveaway.

Players who are selected for a major prize giveaway are responsible for any applicable taxes per IRS regulations.

Entries cannot be purchased. Drawing subject to minimum paid dues per season. If fewer paid dues are collected, the major prize drawing may be adjusted to accommodate the reduced budget.

3.0 Attendance

NEPL will post the schedule before league play begins. Players are encouraged to attend every week, but 100% attendance is not required. To be eligible for League Finals a player must complete at least 3 of the first 5 weekly sessions and at least 5 sessions overall.

3.1 Locations

League sessions are held at multiple locations each week. Players may participate once per week at any of the locations for league play. League sites may skip holidays and other dates where conflicts occur, or for inclement weather. The league will still meet at its other locations during such weeks, and the week will still count in the overall standings. A location that skips a date may provide a makeup session, when possible. Each player is responsible to pay their own coin drop or house fee every week.

3.2 Start Time

A specific start time for each location will be announced in advance. Any games in progress at league start time shall be promptly halted. Players are to join their assigned group and begin league play immediately.

3.3 Tardiness

Players who arrive after a league session has begun may still participate providing there are three-player groups with games left to be played. The tardy player will be assigned to the group containing the fewest number of players that has the most games remaining. The tardy player will receive a last-place finish for all missed games.

A tardy player may not enter into a game already in progress (the first ball has been completed). The group will receive 4-player points for all games in that session.

3.4 Early Leaving

Players who leave before a league session has finished will receive a last-place finish for all missed games.

3.5 Forfeits

If a league player does not show up to any location for league night in a given week, that player will not be awarded any points for the week.

3.6 Inclement Conditions

League officials/admins may cancel a league session due to inclement weather or other conditions, particularly if travel may be unsafe for players. League officials/admins are responsible to notify all players if it is deemed that a league session cannot be held as scheduled. A makeup date may be scheduled when possible.

Extra time may be allotted for tardiness in the event of inclement conditions at league officials' discretion.

4.0 Scoring

It is each player's responsibility to be sure that their machine scores are recorded correctly on the score sheet as each game is finished. Any possible scoring errors that cannot be resolved by the players should be brought to the attention of league officials immediately. All players in the group must agree before any requested change is accepted. Please make sure that the name of the game is being captured on your score sheet as well.

4.1 League Player Groups

All players who are in attendance at league start time will be randomly assigned to 3- and 4-player groups. A 5-player group will not be used unless there are exactly five players in attendance.

Ideally, all groups will have 4 players. When the number of players is not a multiple of 4, 3-player groups will be assigned. For example, if there are 15 players, the group sizes will be 4, 4, 4, and 3. If there are 17 players, the group sizes will be 4, 4, 3, 3, and 3. When assigning players to groups, 4-player groups will be assigned first.

4.2 Game Selection and Play Order

Site Administrators have a choice in how games are selected at their location.

Option 1: Site Admin will randomly assign groups and games.

Option 2: Groups are selected randomly by a manual method, i.e. drawing cards. Games are selected by the players in each group. In 4-player groups, each player will select one machine to be played, and those four machines will make up the group's schedule for the session. In 3-player groups, the fourth game will be chosen by the player who played first. No machine may be selected more than once unless there are fewer than four functioning machines at the location. The player who chooses the game plays first on that game then play order continues as follows:

Order of play for 5-player groups: 1-2-3-4-5, 2-3-4-5-1, 3-4-5-1-2, 4-5-1-2-3

Order of play for 4-player groups: 1-2-3-4, 2-3-4-1, 3-4-1-2, 4-1-2-3

Order of play for 3-player groups: 1-2-3, 2-3-1, 3-1-2, 1-2-3

4.3 Group Scoring

In each game, a player scores points for their finish against their opponents. The winner of a game gets 7 points, and last place gets 1 point. Specific points available depend on the size of the group:

3-player group:

1st = 7 points

2nd = 4 points

3rd = 1 points

4-player group

1st = 7 points

2nd = 5 points

3rd = 3 points

4th = 1 points

5-player group (rare)

1st = 7 points

2nd = 5 points

3rd = 4 points

4th = 3 points

5th = 1 points

The maximum number of points a player can earn in a session is 28.

4.4 Ties

In the rare case where two or more players have tied for machine score (typically on EMs and NBA Fastbreak) a one ball match will be played on the same machine to break the tie. If after one ball there is still a tie another ball will be played.

4.5 League Standings and Adjusted Points

Each player's weekly points are recorded for the 8 week season to make up Total Points. At the conclusion of week 5, players will be divided into a predetermined number of divisions based on the size limitations of the finals venue. Division sizes will be determined by a percentage of the number of eligible players. A player must complete at least 5 of the 8 weekly sessions, the best 6 weeks' points make up their Adjusted Points. Adjusted Points are what determine your overall league standing.

League standings will be updated and posted each week.

5.0 Finals Format (Effective Season 34)

Each player must play at least 3 of the first 5 sessions and at least 5 weekly sessions overall in order to qualify for League finals.

5.1 Finals Divisions (Effective Season 34)

The NEPL was founded on the principles of not only being an equal opportunity league but also an equitable opportunity league for all skill levels.

Divisions will be based on the adjusted scores (best 3 of the first 5 weeks) of all eligible players. The division splits will be determined and announced once season registration is closed (at the conclusion of week three).

5.2 Ties in Finals Qualification

If a tie in total adjusted league points would determine eligibility or seeding in finals, these ties will be broken based on each player's best weeks. The tie is first broken by the player's highest single week score. If the tie is still unresolved, the next tiebreaker will be the next highest single week score, and so on. If a tie still exists for finals eligibility, a single randomly-chosen game will be played to break the tie.

If there is a tie that affects only seeding in a division, the tie is first broken by the player's highest single week score. If the tie is still unresolved, the next tiebreaker will be the next highest single week score, and so on. If a tie still exists, a dice roll with the higher numbers will be the higher seeds.

5.3 Finals Pre-registration

Pre-registration will be used to determine the intentions of eligible players to attend finals.

When finals pre-registration opens, any player who has qualified for a division and completed at least 5-weeks during the season will have 24-hours to register their intent to attend finals on the website and will be ordered by finish position based on adjusted points (rank) in their respective division.

Once all available spots are filled, a waitlist will be formed based on timestamp. If a spot in the field becomes available, the next player on the waitlist will be added to the field and slotted in based on their adjusted points. Players will be seeded into 32-player divisions based on their adjusted points.

5.4 Finals Attendance

All eligible players are responsible to add or remove themselves from the field/waitlist through the website.

Pre-registered qualified players are expected to arrive by the announced check-in time. Players who commit to finals but do not arrive by the announced check-in time will be substituted with eligible waitlisted players in attendance.

If a registered player drops, their position will be offered to the next registered player in their division on the waiting list who will then be seeded based on their adjusted points.

Registration closes the Thursday before Finals at 7:00pm. For drops and no-shows on the day of finals, open spots will be filled up to 15 minutes before the start of the first round with the next waiting list player ranked for the open spot in attendance. If there are no waiting list players in attendance, that division will proceed without a full field.

Finals will have a firm start time.

5.5 Finals Scoring and Machine Selection

Scoring will be handled with the same system used in the regular season. See Section 5.3.

Final round banks will be manually created in groups to (ideally) include a mix of games representing different eras based on available games at the finals location. Banks will be assigned randomly to player groups and rotated each round. Banks are subject to change over the course of the event.

5.6 Finals Play Order

Finals play order is the same as in the regular league season. See Section 4.2.

5.7 Finals Groups

Groups of four will be formed based on position determined by the final league standings. I.E. positions 1,16,17 and 32, positions 2, 15, 18 and 31 and so on.

Finals			
Group	Position	Group	Position
1	1	5	5
	16		12
	17		21
	32		28
2	2	6	6
	15		11
	18		22
	31		27
3	3	7	7
	14		10
	19		23
	30		26
4	4	8	8
	13		9
	20		24
	29		25

Quarter-Finals			
Group	Position	Group	Position
1	1	3	3
	8		6
	9		11
	16		14
2	2	4	4
	7		5
	10		12
	15		13

Semi-Finals			
Group	Position	Group	Position
1	1	2	2
	4		3
	5		6
	8		7

The top 2 placing players in each group advance to the next round. In case of a tie there will be a one game tie breaker on a randomly assigned game.

After 4 rounds the winners will be determined.

NEPL Championship plaques will be awarded to the top 4 players in each division. Cash prizes will be awarded to the top 16 players in each division.

5.8 Tiebreakers

If two or more players are tied in points after a playoff round has been played, a one game playoff will occur and may be a predetermined game, noted on the scoresheet, or changed based on availability. The play order will be determined by the original finals standings.

5.9 Practice

Practice may or may not be allowed on the day of finals. If time permits, all divisions will be allowed practice time. If the location does not open early enough to allow for all divisions to have time to practice, no divisions will be allowed time to practice.

6.0 Machine Play Rules

6.1 Machine play promptness

If a player does not begin their turn in a reasonable amount of time (two minutes), other players may plunge the ball for them, and the player may not play the ball. If a machine has an auto-plunge, and it activates, no other players may attempt to save the ball.

6.2 Practice Games

Once a league session starts, a league player may not play or practice other games. They should remain with their group. If they must leave they should inform another player in their group.

6.3 Non-League Players

League players do not take precedence over other pinball players at a location. A non-league pinball player may accidentally play your ball: this is considered a distraction, not interference or a malfunction. If this happens, regain control of the ball as quickly and politely as possible. Pay attention to your game and this won't happen.

6.4 Rulings

Rulings shall be made by league officials/admins, which include site administrators and any person(s) designated by the site administrator. Any site administrator or designee is excluded from ruling on any play situation that directly affects their actual or potential standing as a league player. Such persons may also be recused where their decision affects a close friend or family player, at the discretion of other league officials/admins. If a ruling can't be made from rules here within, admins may refer to PAPA/IFPA official rules for clarification. The acting NEPL official/admin will always act in the best interest, and in the spirit of pinball.

6.5 Extra Balls / Bonus Balls

Extra balls & bonus balls are not allowed in league play unless declared otherwise by a league official/admin before league play begins.

An earned extra ball will be plunged, not played. When a player plunges an extra ball, they may touch the machine to set up a skill shot before launching the ball. Once the ball is set into motion, the player may no longer touch the machine. If the ball is returned to a launcher lane

that requires a manual plunge (e.g. by a ball saver, non-valid playfield), the player may re-plunge the ball.

If you plunge 3 times and the playfield doesn't validate due to a switch not being hit, you may give a single flipper hit (no aiming / trapping), just to hit a switch to validate the playfield and complete the extra ball.

If the machine awards a timed bonus ball, you must plunge to allow the timer to start, and then let the bonus ball time out with no further action until the time expires.

Ball saves are allowed. In some cases, a machine may state "extra ball" or "shoot again" for a ball save; these ball saves (such as F-14 Tomcat's Flight Insurance) are allowed. The simplest way to tell if a ball has ended is whether or not an end-of-ball bonus has been awarded.

players should be aware of whether they have earned an extra ball and not walk away from a machine until it has been plunged.

6.6 Replays and Specials

No award is given for credits earned by replays or specials during league play.

6.7 Special Score Handling

On the game NBA Fastbreak using basketball-style scoring, each championship ring collected by the player shall cause their recorded score to be increased by 100 points.

6.8 Machine Malfunctions

The league uses the PAPA/IFPA rules on malfunctions, which are listed below.

The Nature of Pinball

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

Minor Malfunctions

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

A minor malfunction that occurs repeatedly, to the extent that it is markedly affecting play of the machine, may be considered a major malfunction (or catastrophic malfunction) at the sole discretion of league officials/admins.

Major Malfunctions

A major malfunction is a gameplay problem with a machine that results in the premature loss of ball in play in a fashion that is not a normal feature of the machine's gameplay. These may be unusual one-time events, or they may indicate a recurring problem.

Examples of major malfunctions include:

- The bonus count begins while the ball is still in play. This can happen if, for example, the machine loses track of how many balls are in the drain trough.
- A flipper or other major playfield feature ceases to function properly.
- Any malfunction that results in the loss of one or more balls during multiball play, without losing all balls so as to end the player's turn, will only be considered a minor malfunction.

Loss of Tilt warnings, without loss of ball, shall not be considered a major malfunction. Loss of any lit feature, running mode, or other gameplay specifics, shall not be considered a major malfunction.

Note that unrepeatable physical failures, such as kickbacks or balls jumping off ramps, balls flying over flippers, or balls moonwalking into the outlane following a successful shot do not qualify as major malfunctions. This is the physical nature of pinball.

When a major malfunction occurs, it is the player's responsibility to notify an official/admin, calmly and promptly. If the official/admin(s) agree that the incident is a major malfunction, the player will be provided with one additional ball of play at the beginning of a new game, after the current game has been completed. The official/admin(s) may choose to allow the player to play ball 3 or 5 of the new game, if that player has been denied certain features that are freely awarded by the machine. Examples of this include 'Double Bonus' balls on many EM machines, as well as pity Mist Multiball on Dracula should the player have not yet played one. No attempt will be made to re-establish the state of the machine at the time of the major malfunction. The player's total score on the additional ball of play will be added to his or her previous score, and the new game will be terminated.

If a major malfunction occurs early in the play of the first ball by the first player, league officials/admins may rule that the current game is voided, and restart. If the machine has continued failures, it will be ruled unplayable, and another machine will need to be chosen.

Known Malfunctions

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

malfunction unless it worsens or interacts with another feature to yield a major malfunction. Players should notify officials of any game malfunctions during a session.

Catastrophic Malfunctions

A catastrophic malfunction is any event, not caused by a player, which immediately ends play for all players on the machine.

Examples of catastrophic malfunctions include:

- The game system crashes and/or resets due to a software error or component failure.
- Power is lost or interrupted.
- A new game starts.
- The game becomes unplayable.
- When a catastrophic malfunction occurs, if the scores are able to be recorded, players will be provided the appropriate number of additional ball(s) of play on a new game once the machine has been repaired. If the scores are not retrievable, players will be forced to start their game over. No attempt will be made to estimate scores, or reestablish state, at any time.

If a machine affected by a catastrophic malfunction cannot be repaired in order to continue play, it is considered disabled; please see "Disabled Machines".

Beneficial Malfunctions

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

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

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

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

Any situation which indicates the presence of a beneficial malfunction should be brought to the attention of a league official/admin.

If the issue cannot be easily addressed by a tech, then the machine shall be considered disabled, and a new game will need to be played in its place.

Stuck Balls

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

If the stuck ball has not been freed after four such searches, or if the machine is not performing searches for some reason, the player must have a league official/admin brought to the machine. The player must remain alert and at the machine, as he or she is responsible for the ball if it becomes freed at any point.

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

If the league official/admin is unable to free the stuck ball, the machine will be opened, and the stuck ball freed and placed on the upraised flipper on the side of the game the ball was stuck or in the shooter lane at the discretion of the official/admin. In the event this is not possible, the official/admin may select another location or feature where the ball can be placed safely while the machine is being closed in order to resume normal play. If the ball is inadvertently freed while the machine is open and drains without the player regaining complete control (stopped on a flipper), this will be treated as a major malfunction. If the machine cannot be opened successfully, or if opening or closing the machine terminates the game(s) in progress for any reason, this will be treated as a catastrophic malfunction. If the ball is freed and the machine closed without the player's loss of ball, play continues as normal. If the game is in multiball play and one or more balls are lost as a result of freeing stuck balls, possibly ending multiball but not ending the ball in play, this will be considered no worse than a minor malfunction. If any feature or mode that is lit or active times out while one or more balls are stuck, this will not be considered a malfunction.

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

If a ball becomes stuck during a multiball mode, the player should attempt to trap the other ball(s) in play and request assistance. A stuck ball during multiball often represents a significant beneficial malfunction, and intentionally taking advantage may result in a penalty. Please note specifically that a ball ending up in the plunger lane during multiball on a machine where there

is no autoplunger (or where the autoplunger for some reason refuses to fire) counts as a stuck ball, and the player must plunge the ball back into play.

Any player who misuses a game feature in order to intentionally trap a ball during a multiball mode, such as holding in the plunger on Tommy in order to defeat the autoplunger, may be given a warning and/or have his or her affected game disqualified by league officials/admins.

In situations where a ball is trapped in a way that it can be released through player action other than shaking or bumping – for example, a ball at rest underneath a flipper which the player controls – this is not deemed to be a stuck ball. Balls trapped in this fashion during multiball modes are not generally considered to be a rules violation, although the ruling will depend on the exact machine and situation.

Any ball that comes to rest in an outlane, where any portion of the ball is below the outlane post, is not deemed a stuck ball. In these instances, players will have the option of attempting to free the ball themselves or to ask a league official/admin to place the ball in the drain for them without triggering any additional switches. Please note that when this happens in multiball, in no way will a player be allowed to take advantage of this situation by continuing to play any other balls currently available. The situation of this ball that has come to rest needs to be dealt with immediately by either the player or league official/admin.

A ball which has come to rest on top of a center post, an inlane-outlane post/guide or a lamp insert/playfield divot directly above an outlane will not be considered a stuck ball. Players may choose to free balls resting in these positions through nudging of the machine, or request that an official end the ball in play by manually placing it in the drain for center post incidents, and the outlane for inlane-outlane incidents. If an automatically-triggered kickback exists that will send the ball back into play upon draining it in the appropriate outlane, that feature will be manually triggered, and the ball will be treated as a stuck ball from that point and placed on a flipper or other suitable location. Player-controlled kickback features, such as mini-flippers, posts, or manually-controlled kickbacks that send the ball back into play, do not count toward establishing stuck ball status in this case, and the player will not be permitted to utilize these features or touch the game until the ball has reached the ball trough.

One highly debatable stuck ball situation has to do with setting up Dirty Pool on Attack from Mars. Players will often avoid hitting the ball stuck behind the visor and sacrifice the ability to advance a saucer through Dirty Pool, and instead continue to play multiball. For this situation on Attack from Mars, this is not considered a stuck ball and players will continue to play on.

Disabled Machines

In the event of a machine breakdown, a new machine shall be chosen. If a machine keeps having either catastrophic, or major malfunctions, it will be considered broken down for the event. It will be repaired by the location when they can attend to it.

7.0 Bad Stuff / Player Errors

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

7.1 Playing an Extra Ball

Don't do this! If a player nudges, flips, or otherwise plays an extra ball, they are disqualified for the game. However, a player may use the flippers to set up a skill shot. Once the ball has been plunged a player may not touch the machine.

7.2 Playing an Opponent's Ball

Don't do this! If you play someone else's ball, trap the ball on a flipper as soon as you realize the mistake. The penalty for playing an opponent's ball is a disqualification for the game. It is your responsibility to know when it's your turn and when it isn't.

The victim may choose one of two options: continue playing the ball (if control can be recovered), or drain the ball and play an additional ball, either through an extra ball or in a new game. The player must decide immediately. If the player allows the ball to drain without deciding, then it is presumed that he wishes to play an additional ball.

7.3 Interference

Definitely don't do this!! Interference includes (but isn't limited to) tilting an opponent's ball or nudging the machine during another player's ball. It also includes intentional distraction of a player during their play.

Talking to or coaching of any league player at the machine during a game, in any round, is not allowed. Informing a player that there are too many or too few games entered into the machine will not be penalized as coaching.

If a league player interferes with another league player, causing a drain and/or loss of turn, this is treated as a major malfunction.

Intentional interference is a serious violation of league play rules and could result in expulsion from the league.

Accidental interference is regrettable but can happen. Any league player or non-league player who accidentally interferes with the play of any league game will be warned. If the interference was sufficient to cause the loss of ball, this will be treated as a major malfunction. If the interference terminated play for all players (for example, tripping over a power cord and pulling it from the wall), this will be treated as a catastrophic malfunction.

League officials/admin will be the sole determiners of what constitutes interference and whether or not it is accidental or deliberate.

7.4 Slam Tilts / Overly Aggressive Tilting

Please don't do this! A slam tilt is caused by an aggressive and excessive shove of the machine, or by an attempted bang back or death save, and is considered illegal. The violator will receive a disqualification for that game. For other players whose games are incomplete, this is considered a catastrophic malfunction.

7.5 Fraud

If you are playing at a commercial location you MUST use tokens that belong to that establishment. This could be considered theft otherwise. If an individual is found to be using outside tokens, they will be banned from that location for at least the remainder of the season, longer if the owner requires.

7.6 Not Starting the Proper Number of Games

It is the responsibility of all players in a group to make certain the appropriate number of games are started. If too few games are started, additional games are started, if possible, so that the number of games on the machine matches the number of players in the group. If the proper number of games cannot be started by the above means, or if too many games are started, the entire group restarts the game with the proper number of games.

7.7 Death Saves and Bang Backs

Techniques known as "Death saves" and "Bang backs" are sometimes employed by certain advanced players. Because the effectiveness of these techniques varies from machine to machine, and because of the risk of injury to either player or machine, these techniques are banned from play. In the event that a drained ball bounces back into play without deliberate player action, such as in the case of a "Lazarus", this is considered the mechanical nature of pinball and the ball may be played. If this situation occurs repeatedly, and there is a question as to whether the Lazarus ball was naturally occurring or induced by the player, league officials/admin may make the determination. Intentional death saves and/or bang backs are cause for game disqualification.

7.8 Cheating

Pinball can be frustrating. Violation of any rules with the clear intent of preventing another player from fairly playing the machine or unfairly increasing one's own score can only be described as cheating and is not tolerated. The penalty for cheating will be determined by league officials/admins based on the severity of the offense.

7.9 Waiting Your Turn

When playing at an arcade / barcade / or other commercial location, league players DO NOT take precedence over other customers. If they are playing a game we do not have the right to kick them off. Simply wait (within reason) or request to play a different game.

7.10 Coin Drop and House Fees

Each player is responsible to pay their own coin drop or house fee every week. At public locations, games are typically \$.25 - \$2.00 per game and private locations have a house fee, typically \$10.00-\$20.00

7.11 Serious Violations of League Rules

Serious and/or repeated violations such as slam tilts, interference, and other “bad stuff” listed above may become cumulative over an entire season, not just one match. For these violations, the following penalties are assessed:

First and second offense: Game disqualification.

Third offense: Session disqualification.

Behavior which causes a player to be ejected from the location hosting any league session will be penalized as an automatic third offense, even if it occurs before or after league play.

Fourth offense: Season suspension.

Violence of any kind against others, theft, and vandalism of pinball machines or other property will be penalized as an automatic fourth offense.

7.12 Disqualifications

Disqualified players will receive the lowest points possible to earn in that round. If multiple players are disqualified, they will play one ball on an assigned game to determine position for points.

8.0 League Officials and Admin

League officials consist of the elected positions of president, state representatives, and rules commissioner. League admins consist of the vice president as appointed by the president, elections administrator, digital content manager, social media manager, site admins and any other positions created to accomplish the business needs of the league. Additional league admin role, the state representatives may appoint a rules official for their state.

The president will have a 6 consecutive season term limit. Other officials will have 6 consecutive season terms with no term limits. Admin positions have no terms or term limits. Elections may be held for admin positions if determined to be in the best interest of the league by the President.

All League officials are requested to attend finals and may be asked to assist.

League comments, issues and suggestions should be submitted to the email group for all officials to view – it is important to keep all officials involved and on the same page to what the league is doing. Remember, what is discussed among league officials/admin should stay private until the decision is made by the president to reach out to the public.

8.1 Elections

Elected terms will be staggered so there is an election each year, or as needed.

Candidates for league officials must be a NEPL player for a minimum of 4 out of the last 6 NEPL seasons or ten seasons over 4 years. Candidates for president must be an NEPL player for a minimum of 6 consecutive seasons or ten seasons over 4 years.

Elected officials must attend two out of the three meetings each calendar year. Elected officials must be present to vote on any discussed issues.

The official elect's term will commence after the League finals.

Should any official be unable/unwilling to complete their term, an interim election may be held to fulfill the remaining time for the position's term. The president may appoint a role until an election can be held. This does not supersede the positions anticipated election which will occur as scheduled.

Schedule of Elections													
Season													
Position	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
MA	X						X						X
ME		X						X					
NH						X						x	
RI				X						X			
CT						X						X	
Pres			X						X				
Rules	X						X						X

8.2 President

The league president will ensure that all administrative tasks are completed. These tasks include, but are not limited to, collection and distribution of dues, the ordering of trophies and swag, league schedule, elections, website, social media, rules and bylaws, and league officials/admin.

The president will coordinate all conversations and meetings regarding league business.

The president reserves the authority to make decisions in the best interest of the league without league consensus when attempts to collect opinions and or votes are left unanswered beyond the time limit provided without the request for an extension.

8.3 Vice President

The president will appoint a vice president to assist with administrative duties. The vice president will not participate in decision making unless there is tie among the voting officers. The vice president will then be called upon to cast an unbiased tie breaking vote.

8.4 State Representatives

Each participating state will have one elected representative. The state representative will be responsible for making certain the voices of the locations are relayed to the other league officials/admin, regardless of their own opinion.

State Representatives are responsible to disseminate information to site admin in their state and, when applicable, to all league players in their state.

From time to time the President may request additional tasks be done by the State reps.

8.5 Rules Commissioner

The rules commissioner's primary duties will be to ensure that Sections 6 and 7 of the NEPL Handbook are current, applicable and followed. Bringing any issues to the attention of the president and participating in the discussion prior to a vote.

The rules commissioner should communicate with league admin to ensure the league is being operated uniformly across the states.

Rules commissioner should be available to attend league finals to assist with rulings and other duties as needed.

8.6 Site Administrators

These are volunteer positions. No league-wide elections are held for site admin. Every location site must have one site admin and should have at least one co-admin OR alternate admin. A co-admin would have divided duties on an ongoing basis while an alternate admin would only oversee the league in the absence of the site admin.

Site admin will confirm registration and payment for all league participants prior to allowing them to play at their location.

Site admin are responsible for organizing weekly league sessions and ensuring NEPL rules are abided equally and fairly by all participants. They must enter their location's scores online in the league site before the next session week begins.

Site admin will disseminate information to their location and relay the voice of their participants to other league officials/admin.

Site admin are allowed to also hold an elected position.

8.7 Rule Officials

Each state may have a rule official appointed by their state representative. Their term will run consecutively with the state rep's term.

The rules official's primary duties will be to ensure that Sections 6 and 7 of the NEPL Handbook are current, applicable and followed. Bringing any issues to the attention of the rules commissioner.

8.8 Election Official

The primary task of this position is to keep to the election schedule. Advertise for candidates and facilitate the elections.

8.9 Voter Eligibility

Players who have participated in at least 5 weeks in a season over the previous 3 league seasons are eligible to cast one ballot for a given election.

9.0 Decisions

League decisions should have the input of league participants. Because of this, all items to be put for a vote will be presented to league officials at least one week prior to a vote to ensure all league locations have an opportunity to have their voice heard. League officials should use that time to reach out to their local league players to determine how they would like to vote.

9.1 Consulting Committee

There may be times when the league President will recruit one or more league players to offer opinions on a topic that affects the league. A league player participating in a consulting committee has no voting authority.

9.2 Voting Authority

- The president, rules commissioner and state representatives will have voting authority for decisions affecting league business. They will use their vote to voice the decision of their players.

The vice president will have voting authority only in the event of a tie vote.

There may be occasion to extend voting authority to a select group of league players or the entire league. These situations will be decided by the president or league officials as a whole.

9.2 NEPL, LLC

The New England Pinball League is a division of NEPL, LLC. All decisions made by the officials of the New England Pinball League must be submitted to NEPL, LLC for final approval.

10.0 League Calendar

There are three seasons per year: Winter, Spring and Fall. Seasons are 8 weeks long with Finals generally held two-three weeks after the last weekly session.

There may be holidays, vacations, other events on the calendar on a session night, if needed, sessions will be rescheduled.

The Winter season usually begins the first full week of January.

The Spring season usually begins the first full week of May.

The Fall season usually begins the first full week of September.

League Officials meetings will be held at the conclusion of each league season. Additional League Officials meetings may be held for urgent league business.