



Maryland Cornhole Organization

Official Cornhole Game & Tournament Rules

I. Equipment

- A. **Boards** – Official MCO Boards are 24” wide x 48” long. Boards are made of $\frac{3}{4}$ ” birch plywood and surfaced with a urethane coating for optimum slide and board protection. The hole is 6” in diameter and cut 9” from the top center of the board.
- B. **Bags** – MCO currently uses custom made pro resin bags.
- C. **Score Towers** – Score towers are provided to ensure accuracy when keeping score during a match. The clips along the side are used to recognize the score of the game and the clips at the top are used to recognize the number of games won during the match in progress.

II. Scoring

A. Point System

1. 3 Points earned for a bag that goes through the hole.
2. 1 Point earned for a bag that rests on the board.
3. 1 Point earned for a bag that is hanging into the hole but not touching a bag that has already gone through the hole.
4. 1 Point earned for a bag that is hanging off the edge of the board, but not touching the ground or touching a bag that is on the ground.
5. No Points for a bag that lands on the board after hitting the ground. This bag should be removed from the inning.
6. No Points for a bag that is hanging off the board and touching the ground or a bag that is resting on the ground.

B. Cancellation Scoring Method

1. The team with the highest score for that inning shall add the difference of the two scores to their game score as recognized on the score tower.
2. The team who scored during the previous inning shall throw first in the next inning.
3. If both teams score the same amount of points during the inning, then honors of going first shall remain with the team that scored last.

C. Fouls

1. A player’s foot goes past the foot foul line or the front of the board.
2. A player throws out of turn. The throw that was made is considered a dead throw and the bag is removed from play regardless of where it landed.
3. Purposely making noises, yelling or making any gesture with the intent to disrupt an opponent’s throw is a foul. Players accused of this action will first receive a verbal warning from an MCO official. Any subsequent infractions will result in the affected player having the opportunity to re-throw the bag(s) in which the foul was committed.



D. Resolving Fouls

1. The players involved in the game shall honor each other's call and the first call shall be considered a warning.
2. If the foul in question continues, MCO officials should be notified and will observe as necessary or make a ruling depending on the situation.

III. Game Play

A. Doubles (Team) Play

1. Doubles partners shall stand on opposite Cornhole boards and shall stand directly across from each other. Players should not be shooting from the same side of the board.
2. Each team shall have 4 bags of one color.
3. All 8 bags shall begin from the same side.
4. A coin toss shall determine which team will choose bags and sides OR the honors of going first. The winning team shall decide between the two. Rock/Paper/Scissors is an acceptable format when a coin is not available.
5. The team who has the honors of going first shall begin the game with the throwing of the first bag at the opposite board.
6. Players may throw from behind the front of the Cornhole board on the side they are assigned. Players may not share the same side of the board.
7. Players should remain within three feet of the front of the board when moving sideways to make a throw.
8. Teams/Players alternate throws until all 8 bags have been thrown.
9. If a bag hits the ground, then bounces onto the board, it shall be removed from play and considered a dead throw.
10. After all 8 bags are thrown, count the points and award the difference in points to the higher scoring team. The game continues until one team has scored 21 points.
11. Achieving a score of 21 or more points ends the game and should be marked on the score tower. If the match is over, the winning team shall report the result to MCO officials.
12. MCO does not recognize "Skunk" rules.

B. Singles (Solo) Play

1. Singles Play shall follow the same format as doubles play with the exception that players are playing by themselves and will alternate throwing from opposite ends at the conclusion of each inning.
2. A coin toss shall determine bags and sides OR the honors of going first.

IV. Tournament Formats

A. 2/3 – Best 2 out of 3 Match

1. A team must win two games by achieving a score of 21 points each time to win the match.

B. 2/3 – The Championship Match

1. The last winning team and the last surviving team from the loser's bracket shall meet to determine the champion of the tournament.



a) Last Winner vs. Last Surviving Team – Previously Met

- i. If the final two teams previously met in the tournament, then the last winning team must win one game to 21 while the last surviving team must win three games to 21 in order to win the tournament. The justification is that the winning team has already defeated the best team from the loser's bracket and therefore should not need to win another two game match.

b) Last Winner vs. Last Surviving Team – Previously Not Met

- i. If the final two teams previously did not meet, then the winning team must win the first game to 21 in order to win the tournament.
- ii. In this scenario the last surviving team must win the first game of the championship in order to force a best 2/3 championship match to decide the tournament champion. The justification is that the losing team has not had an opportunity to play the winning team in a 2/3 match but did lose one 2/3 match during the tournament.
- iii. If a 2/3 match is forced, then the team that achieves 21 points in two games wins the match and is declared champion of the tournament.

C. 1/1 – One Game to 21

1. A team must win one game by achieving a score of 21 points to win the match.

D. 1/1 – The Championship Match

1. The winning team must win a one game to 21 points match to win the tournament.
2. The losing team must defeat that last winning team in two games to 21 points to win the tournament.

E. Round-Robin (Group) Format

1. Teams are broken down into groups of no more than 5 teams
2. Teams will be pitted against each other in group play and wins and losses are recorded as well as plus/minus for determining tie-breakers and seeding for elimination phases of the tournament.
3. Seeding for elimination phases will be based on the ranking in group play. Each team will automatically be assigned a line on the bracket based on their group standings.
4. Tournaments that include Round-Robin play shall be 1/1 during the group phases of the tournament.

F. Double & Triple Elimination Formats

1. In a double elimination tournament, the winner of each match advances through the winner's bracket and the loser of each match is placed in the loser's bracket. The winner of a loser's bracket match advances through the loser's bracket with the hopes of competing in the tournament finals against the last unbeaten team from the winner's bracket. A loss while in the loser's bracket eliminates a player or team from the tournament.



2. In a triple elimination tournament, the winner of each match advances through the winner's bracket and the loser of each match is placed in the loser's bracket. The winner of a loser's bracket match advances through the loser's bracket with the hopes of competing in the tournament finals against the last unbeaten team from the winner's bracket while the losers advance to the basement bracket to compete with other double eliminated teams for a chance at third place.

G. Blind (Random) Draw Format

1. Players will draw a card or be assigned a card by MCO officials to determine their random partner for the tournament. Players who normally compete together as a team may not be paired with their normal teammate even if randomly drawn. In these cases, MCO officials would redraw/reassign players to appropriate teams.

H. Bar Rules (Rally Scoring)

1. In tournaments with a large number of teams, MCO may employ bar rules in the early rounds of the tournament. In these cases, scoring will be a race to 21 points (win by 2 points), meaning that there will be no canceling of scores. The first team to amass 21 points or more and be ahead by 2 or more points will win the game. If both teams score 21 or more points and their scores are equal or separated by only one point at the conclusion of the same half inning, the two teams will throw one additional half inning until one team is ahead by two or more points. The throw off will continue in half inning increments until a winner is determined.

V. Tournament Payouts

A. Less Than 11 Individuals or 9 Teams

1. Singles tournaments with 10 or less individual participants will pay only the top two spots, regardless of the advertised number of payout positions.
2. Doubles tournaments with 8 or less teams will pay only the top two spot, regardless of the advertised number of payout positions.

B. 11 or More Individuals; 9 or More Teams

1. Payouts will be made as advertised on the official MCO website at www.marylandcornhole.net