



Ultimate Foosball

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1. Introduction

We introduce Ultimate Foosball, a new family of foosball rules for foosers of all ages and abilities. Ultimate Foosball is an extension of regular foosball played with two balls simultaneously. The objective is to hit both balls into the opponents' goal at the same time. Ultimate Foosball was created for doubles play, but can also be played in singles. We describe the basic game rules, and two variants: Rotational Ultimate Foosball, and Handicapped Ultimate Foosball.

Additional Keywords: Foos, fooser, foosed, refoos.

2. Basic Rules

Ultimate Foosball is played on an *Ultimate Foosball compliant table*. To qualify, the table must have a ball retrieval unit below each of the goals. The ball retrieval units must be accessible to the respective defensive players. Most ordinary foosball tables are Ultimate Foosball compliant.

Serving and Refoosing. To start the game, two balls are served simultaneously, one by any player on each team. When a ball enters a team's goal, the defensive player may retrieve the ball and *refoos* (re-serve) it. The offensive player cannot retrieve the ball. Once the defensive player removes the ball from the retrieval unit, the ball may be handed over to the offensive player for refoosing, if desired.

Scoring. A team scores whenever both balls enter the opponents' goal. However, if the opposing team successfully refoos the first ball in before the second ball enters the goal, then no point is scored and play continues. The first team to score five points wins the match. If the teams tie at four points apiece, they keep playing until a team wins by two. After a point is scored, both balls are refoosed, one by any player on each team. Ultimate Foosball is a very low-scoring game¹.

Foosed Balls. If a ball cannot be reached by any player, or hops out of the table, it is considered to be *foosed*. If the ball is between the two defensive rods of a team, then the defensive player is allowed to roll the ball to into reach, otherwise any team can call 'foos'. If the foosed ball is hit by the other ball before a team calls foos, then play continues, otherwise both balls are refoosed, one by any player on each team. A *double-foos* occurs when both balls are foosed simultaneously².

Spinning. No spinning is allowed. If a player spins and as a result, the team scores a goal, then play is stopped and both balls are refoosed, one by any player on each team.

3. Additional Rules

The following rules are designed in order to prevent stalemates and to keep the balls in play. However, they need not be carefully enforced in casual play.

Ball Hogging. Players are not allowed to hog the ball intentionally in order to maintain possession and slow down the game. If a player has possession of only one ball, s/he must play that ball in *reasonable time*, except in the following scenario: If an offensive player has possession of a ball, and the defensive player of the opposing team has possession of the other ball, then the offensive player is allowed to hog the ball until the defensive player clears the other ball. While these rules cannot be easily enforced without a referee and a shot clock, players are encouraged to warn opponents about excessive hogging.

¹ The longest game in recorded history was Lisa/Pedro 13, Aaron/Paul 11, which lasted approximately one hour and a half.

² It has only occurred once in recorded history, when Pedro Sander and Tristan Hromnik fired two balls, which after hitting each other, hopped out of the table at the same time.



Figure 1: The official Ultimate Foosball logo.

Intentional Foosing. A player cannot intentionally foos a ball in order to force a refoos of both balls. A foos caused by a ball hopping out the table is never considered an intentional foos. If a player is caught foosing a ball intentionally, the opposing team is allowed to pick up the ball and refoos it, once it has control of the other ball.

Own Goals. If an own goal is scored with the ball going in without touching a wall or opposing player, then the ball can only be retrieved after an opposing player has touched the other ball.

Trash Talking. Foosball has proven to be an extremely intensive game. The best foosball players have found it necessary to engage in constant communication during games in order to maintain quality and dynamism. Such communication, frequently verbal and oftentimes animated, is not limited to between teammates. Players are not only allowed, but also encouraged, to remind opposing players that their grandmothers could play better than that.

4. Ultimate Foosball Variants

Rotational Ultimate Foosball (RUF). RUF is a variation for teams of three players each. The additional player stands in the "out" position, behind the goal box. When a ball enters a team's goal, the players on that team rotate from defense to offense, from offense to out, and from out to defense. The player that is out when a goal is scored retrieves the ball, takes control of the defensive rods, and then puts the ball back into play. The defensive player cannot hand over the ball to the offensive player for refoosing, and can only refoos while holding the goalie rod with the left hand. By the time the ball is back into play, the previous offensive player should have rotated out, and is not allowed to hit a ball anymore. If the previous offensive player hits the other ball into the opponents' goal, then play is stopped and both balls are refoosed, one by any player on each team.

Handicapped Ultimate Foosball (HUF). HUF is a variation that makes it easier for one of the teams to score. When the handicapped team hits a ball into the goal, the other team cannot immediately refoos the ball. It can only refoos it after itself scores a goal. The foosing rules are slightly different as well. If the handicapped team scores with a ball, and the other ball gets foosed, then only the foosed ball is refoosed. HUF does not require the table to be Ultimate Foosball compliant, since only the handicapped team needs to be able to reach the ball quickly.

5. Summary and Future Work

In this paper we introduced Ultimate Foosball, a set of rules that takes foosball to a whole new level. We also described two variants. We are currently investigating new variants and performing some scalability tests using more than two balls.