

# Rules for Fight Night Combat

*This is the official Fight Night Combat (FNC) rule set for 1v1 combat juggling. It is an outline of concepts and rules to be read by match referees and tournament directors. With this rule set the referee can be confident in guiding fair play, controlling dangerous play, and being on the lookout for tricky situations that need adjudication between players. (There is a more concise guide on fair and safe game play for players wanting to take part in a FNC tournament)*

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## 1. Initial Terms

1. A club is a stick like object with about half of it's length being the handle and the other half being the body that is wider than the handle. Composite clubs from the producers "Henry's", "Play", "K8" and "Dube" are allowed in FNC. Other clubs can be allowed by the referee's or tournament director's discretion. Anyway they must fulfill these basic criteria:
  1. Each club must be no heavier than 250 g
  2. Each club must be no longer than 60 cm
  3. All 3 clubs must be equal in shape, size and weight.
  4. There must be no hard edges or spikes.
  5. The clubs must not give an unfair advantage to the player.
2. A round is the basic span of action in Fight Night Combat. It begins once both players are juggling three clubs each, and ends with either:
  1. One player winning the round and getting a point.
  2. Both players out of the round.
3. A club is considered to be dropped if the club's downward motion is arrested by contact with the floor or noticably slowed down by any other object or surface without first being caught and held by a player or the club going out of the agreed playing area and the player not being able to try to reach it for audience safety reasons.
4. A dropped club is considered immediately out of play. An out of play club is no longer part of the round, and can't be juggled.
5. A player is out of the round when:
  1. They have been attacked successfully
  2. They dropped a club without replacing it with a club steal
  3. One of their clubs was stolen and the opponent's discarded club is out of play
6. A club is considered to be in the player's pattern if the player, not the opponent, last threw the club, or was the last in non-dynamic contact with the club.
7. A high throw is any club thrown higher than a typical single spin cascade throw in a three club pattern. A high throw is considered to remain in the player's pattern unless it is attacked, stolen, dropped or discarded.
8. A club is considered discarded when a player throws it without the intention of catching it, either to steal an opponent's club or to dispose of a fourth club.
9. An attack is the attempt of making contact with an opponent's club with the intention of removing the club from the opponent's pattern.
10. A wild attack is an attack without a specific club targeted, or to a place where there is currently no pattern to target.
11. A blind attack is an attack at an unseen target club or pattern.
12. A club is considered broken if the stick of the club is snapped in two (or more) separate pieces or the knob or body is off.

13. A club is considered damaged if there is any form of damage in which the main parts (body, handle and knob) of the club stay attached. This includes but is not limited to cracks in the body or a broken stick inside the club that is still in one piece.
  14. Collecting the clubs is catching all currently juggled clubs (at least 3) such that they do not touch the floor before the catch.
  15. A clean finish is club collect where all juggled clubs are caught by the handle.
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## 2. Winning a Point

The player may be awarded a point if they maintain, without dropping a club, the only remaining and uncontested pattern of at least three clubs. They must maintain this pattern beyond the point when their opponent has unambiguously either dropped a club or otherwise lost control of their own three club pattern. At this moment the opponent is considered out of the round.

Once the opponent is out of the round, the player must be awarded a point if:

1. The player continues their pattern for a minimum of six catches beyond the moment when their opponent has dropped or otherwise been put out of round and after the last attack by the player, and stops juggling with collecting the clubs. The player can choose to discard clubs if they are juggling more than 3 clubs, see chapter 3.
2. The player continues their pattern for a minimum of a flash in a clean pattern beyond the moment when their opponent has dropped or otherwise been put out of round and after the last attack by the player, and stops juggling with a clean finish. In this case a clean pattern means no wrong ended catches, no fumbles, no trapping or holding the club other than in the hands, no wild catches or throws, all in a stable cascade with single spins.

A drop of one or more clubs is not considered a drop anymore after the clubs have been in the players hand caught for more than three seconds or the drop is caused by shifting the clubs between their hands by getting ready for playing the next round.

The player must not be awarded a point if the player drops a club for any reason, either intentionally or unintentionally, without further physical interaction with the opponent.

### **Intentional disruption when out of the round.**

A player who is out of the round must always and immediately make their best effort to do the following:

1. Stop juggling.
2. Stop any attacks against the opponent's clubs or pattern.
3. Stop any attempt to catch any high-thrown clubs remaining in the air, either their own clubs or their opponent's.
4. Keep out of the way of their opponent's pattern. If possible the player should get away of the opponent that is still juggling without disturbing their juggling pattern or freedom of motion. If not possible remain in place, or not change their current direction and pace of movement, so the opponent knows what volume of space to avoid with their own body and clubs.
5. Without disrupting the pattern of the opponent, to untangle or release any opponent's or player's club still held by the opponent that may be trapped between any two parts of the player's body (eg. under the arm, in the crook of the elbow) or trapped in any items of clothing. During this time the player should not pull on the club, nor move their body in an unpredictable fashion, and let the opponent continue juggling two in one hand for as long as it takes to gain full independent control over the three club pattern.

It is difficult for an attacked player to be completely aware of the entire situation in the heat of the moment. However, any player who goes against these guides, and doesn't make a clear effort to be considerate of their opponent's pattern, is considered to have committed a foul. At the referee's (if

there is none the tournament director's) discretion, a player may be awarded a point if the player's pattern is intentionally disrupted by the opponent, or a third party, before the player has a chance to maintain their pattern beyond six catches and stop juggling without dropping a club. This point may be awarded only if the player is otherwise clearly in control of their pattern, or when a high throw that otherwise would have been effortlessly caught into the player's pattern is deflected or disrupted by the opponent or a third party. The point is awarded regardless of any penalty for the foul committed by the opponent.

### **3. Attacking an opponent's club**

The aim of an attack should be to make contact with an opponent's club to remove it from the pattern. The contact can be between:

1. The player's club and the opponent's club.
2. The player's hand or arm and the opponent's club.

The target club can be:

1. In the opponent's pattern.
2. An opponent's high throw.

Unambiguously held clubs are not valid targets. Hitting a club that is held (and not part of an active juggling pattern e.g. during a high throw) out of the hand does not result in a point. However touching a held club during an attack aimed against a club in the air is not considered a foul.

A successful attack is one that puts the opponent's club out of play. This could mean:

1. The club hits the floor without being caught (i.e. a dropped club)
2. The club is knocked away from the opponent, such that the opponent would be unable to reach it even if they attempted to do so.
3. The club is knocked out of the agreed playing area and the opponent can not attempt to reach the club for audience safety reasons.

The moment the attack is successful and the club is out of play, the opponent is out of the round and is not allowed to do a counter attack.

### **4. Discarding a club**

A player's club is considered discarded if the player no longer intends to catch a club they have just thrown. This intention must be clearly shown and can happen in two situations:

1. The player is juggling more than three clubs and throws the extra club(s) out of their pattern.
2. The player makes a high throw and makes an effort to steal a club of the opponent. In this case the player must be in control or shared control of an opponent's clubs before their discarded club hits the floor. As soon as the club hits the ground it is considered dropped.

A player's club can not be considered discarded if it has been successfully attacked by an opponent. If the player can no longer reach or catch the attacked club, it is considered out of play, and the player is considered out of the round.

### **5. Stealing an opponent's club**

A club steal is when a player:

1. catches an opponent's club out of the pattern.
2. catches an opponent's high thrown club.
3. pulls a club out of their opponent's hand.

This is a valid attack that removes the club from the opponent's pattern, not by putting it immediately out of play, but instead potentially making it part of the player's own pattern.

### **How a player knows their club is stolen**

A player's club is considered stolen when it is removed from their own pattern or hand by their opponent, the player no longer has physical contact with the club.

If the player no longer has three clubs in their own pattern (the player and opponent haven't swapped clubs), the player is out of the round the moment:

1. the discarded club of the opponent hits the floor (this club is considered to belong to both players as long as it is in the air and can possibly still be caught by the player).
2. or they drop one of their own clubs in the process of catching this discarded club.

If the player still has physical contact with a club that has been grabbed by their opponent, it is not yet considered stolen. It is still part of the player's pattern.

When an attempted club steal results in both players catching the same club it is considered to belong to both players and the game continues with five clubs until either:

1. One player drops another club
2. One player lets go of the shared club

At this moment the player that is out of round has to let go of the shared club and get out of the way of their opponent.

### **Clubs are swapped**

If the player discards a club and catches their opponent's discarded club, the stolen club is considered part of the player's pattern from the moment they catch it. From this moment the opponent can try to catch the discarded club from the player but not attack in any other way. In case the opponent succeeds, two clubs are swapped between players, from then on, despite beginning the round as the opposite player's club, it is considered their club for the remainder of the round for purposes of these rules.

## **6. Fumbles and recoveries.**

During the round, a player must generally aim to keep three clubs in steady pattern; a maximum of two clubs held in the player's hands while one club is in the air. In this case, the player is in full control of three clubs. The club in the air must be unambiguously in the pattern of the player and not the opponent for it to be considered as under full control of the player. However, during a fumble or recovery, a player may still be considered in partial control of three clubs, and not out of the round, if the player has two clubs under full control, plus one club in dynamic contact with:

1. the player's body or other clubs.
2. the opponent's body or other clubs.

Dynamic contact is defined as:

1. Any single movement that immediately reverses a descending club with a maximum of one point of contact between the club and the player's body or other club (i.e. scooping a club upwards with a single point of contact or a neckroll).
2. Any single movement where more than one body part/club are ascending on contact with a descending club, with the aim of deflecting the club upwards to return it to a juggling pattern (i.e. hitting the club upwards with two or more points of contact).
3. A club bouncing or rolling off a player's body or other clubs.
4. A club bouncing or rolling off an opponent's body or clubs.

Non-dynamic contact is defined as:

1. Any player movement where more than one body part/club are intentionally descending on contact with the descending club, with the aim of controlling the club fully before launching it again (i.e. a catch followed by a throw).
2. The club is caught or held in the player's hand.
3. Any form of controlled catching and throwing motion with any non-hand body part/parts (e.g. a kickup).
4. The club is trapped or caught between any two parts of a player's body.
5. The club is trapped or caught between any part of a player's body and one or more of the player's other clubs.
6. The club is trapped or caught between the player's two other clubs.
7. The club is in a static or sustained horizontal balance with a single point of contact with a player's body or one other club.
8. The club is in a static or sustained balance with two or more points of contact with a player's body or other clubs.

A player is considered to still be in partial control of a three club pattern if:

1. They have one club in each hand and their third club is either in the air or in dynamic contact with the player or opponent.
2. They have one club in one hand and two clubs either in the air or in dynamic contact with the player or opponent.
3. They have empty hands and three clubs either in the air or in dynamic contact with the player or opponent.
4. They have two clubs in one hand and the third club is in the air. In this case, the player must throw one of the two clubs in one, leaving just one club in the hand, before the third club is caught or otherwise comes into contact with the player or opponent.

A player is no longer considered to be juggling three clubs if they have one club in each hand and their third club is in non-dynamic contact with either the player or the opponent.

A player is considered to still be juggling four clubs if they have one club in each hand, their third club is either in the air or in dynamic contact with the player or opponent, and their fourth club is in non-dynamic contact with the player (not the opponent). If a player is in control of two clubs and their third club is in non-dynamic contact with their opponent's body and/or clubs, the third club is considered stolen.

With these terms, and defining a catch as non-dynamic contact, we can define a valid three club pattern by stating: Non-dynamic contact with a specific club is allowed only when a player has a minimum of one other club in the air or in dynamic contact with the player's or opponent's body and/or clubs.

## 7. Damaged and broken clubs

If a club is damaged the player can call for a time-out. This can be called in between attacks when both players are juggling a cascade. They have to make the time-out clear to the opponent and referee before they stop juggling. In the time-out they have the time to replace the club for a new one and the round will resume. If a club breaks in between attacks there will be automatically a time-out so the broken club can be replaced. If the club breaks in an attack there are four different outcomes:

1. Both players can not keep juggling and drop. No points are made. The player of the broken club can replace the club before they start a new round.
2. Both players keep juggling with (pieces of) three different clubs. After the attack when both players are doing the cascade a time-out can be called by the players or the referee and the players can stop juggling by collecting their (pieces of the) clubs. After the broken club has been replaced the round resumes.
3. A point is made by the player without the broken clubs if the player with the broken club has dropped all parts of the broken club or is juggling with three objects in which two or more objects come from the same club.

4. A point is made by the player with the broken club if the opponent is out of the round and the player is juggling at least three parts of different clubs and collecting the (pieces of the) clubs.

The player has to make sure the force of their attacks or swings should not result in broken clubs. If a (not damaged) club breaks because they hit it with too much force this is considered a foul as dangerous playing.

## 8. Fouls

The only valid target of a player's attack is an opponent's club(s) in the air. add text

A foul is considered any play that may lead to:

1. Harm or injury to any part of the opponent's body.
2. Disruption of the opponent's pattern in an unsporting manner.
3. Results in a broken club that could have been prevented.

Wild attacks and blind attacks are allowed during play if the player is in control over the situation. However, if this leads to harmful contact, it should be penalized to a greater extent than a targeted attack against a specific club that accidentally hits an opponent. The player is considered to be under control of the situation if they show that they have awareness over where their opponent is at all time.

Contact between the player's attacking club and the opponent's hand, arms or body is acceptable only when:

1. The opponent raises their arm to block an attack.
2. The opponent otherwise intentionally uses their body to deflect an attack.

A player should use their hands, arms or body to attack the opponent's clubs only, never the opponent's hands, arms or body. Grabbing, grappling or pulling an opponent's hand, arm or body, rather than the opponent's club, is not allowed.

A player should not use their body to attack, push, shove, run over, run in to or otherwise body-check an opponent, only the opponent's clubs or pattern. If the opponent loses control of their pattern due to one of the actions above there will be no points awarded. A player is allowed to use their body to shield their clubs. A player should not push their opponent's body away to attack or attempt to catch a high throw that otherwise would be out of reach. In any case the difference in physical builds and playing styles of the players should be kept in mind while playing. Some form of physical playing style can be more harmful to certain opponents than others.

Contact between the player's body and the opponent's body is acceptable only when:

1. The player is attempting to make a catch or save, not an attack. In this case, stumbling or falling into an opponent's body is acceptable, though should be avoided by the player to avoid the chance of injury.
2. The player is moving towards a high thrown club and accidentally crosses paths with the opponent.

### Contact with the opponent's head

Any intentional contact between the player's attacking club, hand or arm and the opponent's face, head or neck is expressly forbidden. A wild or blind attack that leads to contact between the player's attacking club, hand or arm and the opponent's face, head or neck may be judged as intentional, as more care should be taken to avoid swings towards the opponent at head height. Here it should be taken in mind that the height of different opponents varies and therefore some tactics can be more dangerous. Contact with an opponent's face, head or neck may be judged as unintentional if:

1. The contact is a result of a deflected attack against a valid target.
2. The player had a clear intended target but the opponent moved their head into the path of the attack.

3. A blind attack by the player was directed at a reasonable height (well below head height) but the opponent fell or otherwise lowered their head way below their normal head height.

If contact with a player's head is:

1. Unintentional and minor, and doesn't result in either harm or the player dropping, it is considered good sporting behaviour on behalf of the opponent to stop the round by intentionally dropping. If the opponent did not realize or see that they struck the player's head, the referee or tournament director should declare the round ended and not aware any points.
2. Is unintentional and results in harm to the player, but happens after the player has already dropped or is otherwise out of play it is considered good sporting behaviour on behalf of the opponent to stop the round by intentionally dropping. If the opponent did not realize or see that they struck the player's head and they continue to a clean finish, the referee or tournament director should not award the point to the opponent.

If the player makes repeated wild, blind or intentionally close attacks towards the opponent's head but never makes contact, the referee may declare a player's specific attack or style of play to be too dangerous or threatening. At this point the referee should stop the round without awarding any score, explain to the player that they should be more careful and considerate, then restart the round. This warning can also be given in between rounds.

### **Summary of fouls**

In order of severity, with each considered to be either a consequence of intentional action or unsafe play:

1. General unsporting behavior.
2. Attacks that hit the opponent's held club(s).
3. Attacks that hit the opponent's hands or arms.
4. Disrupting an opponent's pattern when already out of the round. This includes late attacks.
5. Attacks that hit the opponent's body.
6. Attacking with the body against the opponent's body.
7. Attacks that hit the opponent's face, head or neck.

## **9. Penalties for Fouls**

These penalties should typically be applied in order. Depending on the severity of the foul, one or more penalties may be skipped, in order to award a more severe penalty earlier than the stated order. If a player commits two fouls in more than one category, they may receive a second warning. For example, a warning for intentional disruption when out of the round may be followed by a warning for dangerous play. During the same tournament they should not receive just a warning for the same fouls category as they already received one. A third foul should receive a greater penalty, not just a warning.

1. A warning.
2. The player not being awarded a point at the completion of a round where they committed a foul.
3. The player having one point deducted from their score.
4. The player having one point deducted from their score and a point being awarded to their opponent.
5. The player forfeiting the match. In this case, all play stops and the opponent is awarded the win. The score remains as it was at the moment of the foul, even if the forfeiting player is ahead.

All warnings and penalties should be accompanied by an explanation of the foul.