



# Rulebook

for the Hamburg Freestyle Football Open 2026

in Hamburg on 24 May 2026





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## 1. General

### 1.1. Event name, venue, date

The Hamburg Freestyle Football Open (hereinafter HFFO2026) will take place on 24 May 2026 at the 'Active City Arena' on Heiligengeistfeld in Hamburg.

### 1.2. Organiser & Status

HFFO2026 is an event organised by the German Freestyle Football Federation (hereinafter referred to as [DFFB](#)) and an official event of the World Freestyle Football Association (hereinafter referred to as [WFFA](#)).

### 1.3. Applicable documents

This rulebook is based on the currently valid WFFA documents governing the organisation of competitions that count towards the World Ranking. These include:

- [WFFA World Ranking Requirements](#)
- [WFFA Judging Criteria Summary](#)
- [WFFA Official Rules of Freestyle Football](#)

### 1.4. Language usage

For the sake of readability, we use the generic masculine form in this text. This refers to all genders equally.



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## 2. Organisation

According to the WFFA, the following roles are of particular importance for the smooth organisational preparation, execution and follow-up of WFFA events.

### 2.1. Event Director

The Event Director is responsible for the planning, organisation and execution of the event. They ensure compliance with WFFA rules and act as the official point of contact for the WFFA. For the HFFO2026, **Nils Effinghausen** will take on this role on behalf of the German Freestyle Football Federation (DFFB).

### 2.2. Judges Manager

The Judges Manager is the point of contact for the jury before, during and after the competition. For HFFO2026, this role is being undertaken by **Nils Effinghausen** on behalf of the DFFB.



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## 3. Tournament Rules & General Conditions

### 3.1. Eligibility

#### 3.1.1. Eligibility

There are no restrictions on participation in the Hamburg Freestyle Football Open 2026 with regard to background, culture, gender, age group, ability, orientation or identity.

#### 3.1.2. Exclusion criteria

The only individuals excluded are those whose participation in tournaments is prohibited either by the DFFB or by the WFFA (e.g. due to imposed penalties).

#### 3.1.3. Appeals and Exceptions

Appeals and requests for exemptions from the above provisions will be examined and decided on a case-by-case basis by the DFFB and the WFFA (where necessary).

### 3.2. World Ranking

HFFO2026 meets all the requirements for inclusion in the WFFA World Ranking.

### 3.3. Video recordings

- 1) All battles will be recorded with video and audio. This is a requirement of the WFFA for events that count towards the World Ranking.
- 2) The recordings will be published on the [DFFB's official YouTube channel](#) after the event.

### 3.4. Timing Records & Limits

- 1) All freestylers must strictly adhere to the specified time limits (see [section 6.1.2 for Qualification Circles](#), [section 6.1.5 for Battles \(Men, Women, Intermediate\)](#)).
- 2) Moves performed after the time has elapsed will not be scored.
- 3) Time overruns of more than 5 seconds will be penalised – depending on the severity – with a points deduction or, in particularly serious cases, disqualification. The severity of the penalty is at the sole discretion of the judges. The Event Director may be consulted by the judges in an advisory capacity.

### 3.5. Stage / Battle Ground

- 1) The performance area is clearly marked.
- 2) Freestylers may only leave the stage during their performance to retrieve the ball.
- 3) Only freestylers and personnel authorised by the Event Director may enter the stage.



### **3.6. Ball, Equipment & Gear**

- 1) Each freestyler plays with their own ball.
- 2) The standard ball size is 5, but balls from size 4 up to and including size 5 are permitted.
- 3) During a battle, only the ball originally used may be used.
  - a) Exception: If the ball falls off the stage, the opponent's ball may be used temporarily.
  - b) Alternative balls (e.g. from the audience) are prohibited.
- 4) Changing equipment (e.g. balls, shoes, clothing) during the performance is not permitted.
- 5) Clothing and accessories worn when entering the stage may be incorporated into the performance. External aids (e.g. skipping ropes, pens) are prohibited.
- 6) Clothing that has been taken off must be placed in such a way that it does not hinder the opponent.
- 7) Sticky substances (e.g. tape, glue) on the body, clothing or the ball are prohibited.
- 8) Violations may result in penalties, including disqualification.

### **3.7. Use of the hands**

- 1) Using the hands to cover up mistakes is considered a drop and has a negative impact on the score.
- 2) Tricks involving deliberate use of the hands (e.g. spinning the ball on a finger) are judged neutrally – they have no influence on the scoring.

## **4. Respect and behaviour on stage**

### **4.1. Core principles**

- 1) The freestyle football community welcomes people from all backgrounds, cultures, genders, age groups, abilities, orientations and identities, and celebrates this diversity.
- 2) Insults, threats, physical attacks or any other action that may be considered disrespectful or offensive towards individuals (opponents, audience, staff) or the community as a whole are strictly prohibited.
- 3) Faking an injury or deliberately underperforming to gain an unfair advantage (e.g. a more favourable draw in later rounds) is considered disrespectful towards the other participants.
- 4) Disrespectful behaviour may result in sanctions, including disqualification (see [Section 4.3.](#)).

### **4.2. Behaviour on stage**

- 1) While a participant is performing, the opponent must not enter their space or make any movements that could disrupt the execution of the tricks.



- 2) The opponent must keep their ball with them and must not leave it on the stage if this could interfere with the performance of the other freestylers.
- 3) Similarly, the performer must not intentionally or systematically enter their opponent's rest area.
- 4) After each round, the centre of the stage must be kept clear for the opponent's performance.
- 5) Misconduct on stage may result in sanctions, including disqualification (see [section 4.3.](#)).

#### **4.3. Penalties for disrespect and misconduct on stage**

- 1) Both the jury and the event director have the right to decide whether an action is disrespectful or constitutes misconduct on stage, and may issue warnings or impose sanctions.
- 2) In the event of serious breaches, the jury and the Event Director may jointly decide to exclude the participant from the event.
- 3) In such cases, the WFFA is entitled to initiate a further investigation and, if necessary, impose a ban on official WFFA events for a period determined by the WFFA.

## **5. Judging Criteria & Protest Procedure**

- 1) The judges determine the order in a circle or the winner of a battle based on the participants' overall performance in accordance with the current official WFFA judging criteria.
- 2) The judges' decisions are final and cannot be changed under any circumstances, unless there were issues that prevented the judges from carrying out their duties properly.
- 3) In such cases, the protesting party must provide sufficient evidence demonstrating how the issue affected the result.
- 4) In the event of a protest, the Judges Manager has the authority to make the final decision in the event of a disagreement between the judges. This decision is binding and no further appeals are possible.
- 5) The judging process for each competition is explained in more detail in [Chapter 6](#) and its sub-chapters.



## 6. Tournament schedule per competition

The following competitions will take place at GFFC2025:

- 1) [Battles \(Male\) → Chapter 6.1.](#)
- 2) [Battles \(Female\) → Chapter 6.1.](#)
- 3) [Battles \(Intermediate\) → Chapter 6.1.](#)
- 4) [Sick 3 → Chapter 6.2.](#)

The procedure and conduct of the individual competitions are explained below

### 6.1. 1 x 1 Battles (Male, Female, Intermediate)

#### 6.1.1. Initial seeding process for battles

- 1) The freestylers are divided into three pots (buckets) for the seeding process. This is based on an individual performance assessment by the DFFB.
- 2) Division into pots: The size of pots 1 and 2 depends on the number of circles to be formed (depending on the total number of participants).
  - a) **Pool 1:** Ranks 1 to X according to performance assessment as per paragraph 1 (X = number of circles).
  - b) **Pool 2:** Ranks Y to Z based on performance assessment in accordance with paragraph 1 (Y to Z = number of circles).
  - c) **Draw pot 3:** all other freestylers.
- 3) **Draw for the Circles:** First, the freestylers from Pot 1 are drawn into the Circles and are each assigned starting position 1. Next, the freestylers from Pot 2 are drawn (starting position 2). Finally, the freestylers from Pot 3 are drawn (starting positions 3 and 4).

#### 6.1.2. Qualification Circles – Procedure

- 1) The Qualification Circles are formed on the basis of the initial seeding process (see [section 6.1.1.](#)).
- 2) A circle consists of three or four freestylers.
- 3) Each freestyler within a circle is assigned a start number in accordance with the seeding process (1 = highest start number, 4 = lowest start number).
- 4) The freestyler with the lowest start number (3 or 4, depending on the size of the circle) starts.
- 5) The order within the circle is as follows: 4 → 3 → 2 → 1.
- 6) All participating freestylers compete against each other over three rounds.
- 7) Each round lasts 30 seconds. Once the 30 seconds are up, the next freestyler's 30 seconds begin (without a break).
- 8) If a freestyler finishes their round before the time is up, the next freestyler may start immediately.



9) Exceeding the time limit may result in penalties (see [Chapter 3.3, Paragraph 3](#)).

**6.1.3. Qualification Circles – Judging Process**

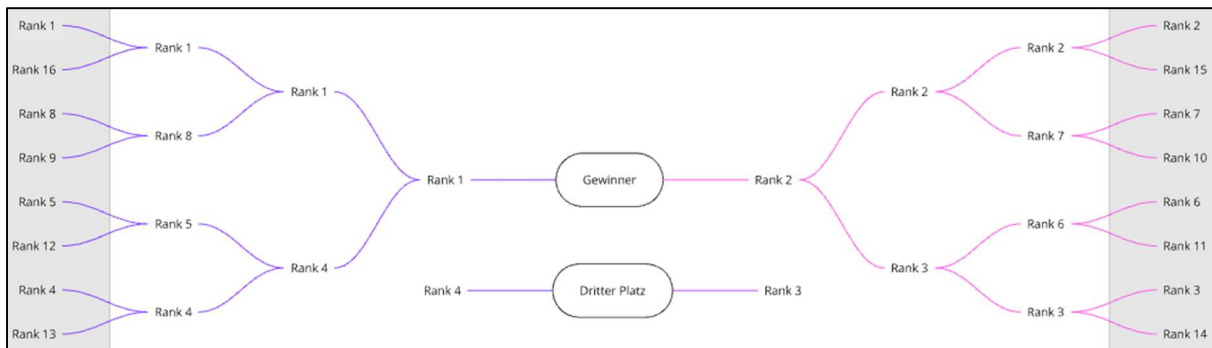
- 1) Performances are judged comparatively across the entire qualification, not just within a group.
- 2) Each freestyler receives a score from 0 to 10 from the judges, based on their overall performance.
- 3) The scores are announced publicly at the end of each circle.
- 4) The total of all points is used to determine the overall ranking of the qualification.

**6.1.4. Qualification Circles – Progressing to the Knockout Stage**

- 1) Depending on the number of registered users, the top 8, 16 or 32 freestylers (depending on the number of participants) who have achieved the highest scores in the overall ranking in the Qualification Circles will advance to the knockout phase.
- 2) All freestylers who do not qualify for the Battles/Knockout Stage (Male, Female) will automatically take part in the Battles/Knockout Stage (Intermediate).
- 3) In the event of a tie in the overall qualifying rankings, the following order shall apply
  - a) a majority decision by the judges: the competitor who has received the higher score from more judges is declared the winner.
  - b) The highest individual score awarded.
  - c) The judges by simple majority decision.

**6.1.5. Battles / Knockout Phase – Procedure (Male, Female, Intermediate)**

1) The overall ranking from the Qualification Circles is used to create the battle brackets (e.g. 1st vs 16th, 2nd vs 15th, etc., see the diagram below).



- 2) A battle determines the winner in a direct one-on-one duel.
- 3) The freestyler with the higher overall ranking from the Qualification Circles decides who opens the battle.
- 4) All participating freestylers compete against each other in three rounds in each battle.



5) The following time limits apply:

- a) For Battle Male & Battle Female: No time limit.
- b) For Battle Intermediate: A time limit of 30 seconds (without a break) applies up to and including the semi-finals; there is no time limit for the battle for third place or the final.

6) Exceeding the time limit may result in penalties (see [Chapter 3.3, Paragraph 3](#)).

#### **6.1.6. Battles/Knockout Phase – Judging Process (Male, Female, Intermediate)**

1. The winner of a battle is determined by a simple majority decision of the judges. Voting takes place immediately after being called upon by the MC via a clear show of hands.
2. If a judge is unable to determine a winner, they signal this by crossing their forearms (X). In this case:
  - a. If an X is signalled, whilst the remaining two votes are cast for different freestylers, the battle is extended by one round of 30 seconds each.
  - b. If there is an X and the remaining two votes are cast for the same freestyler, that freestyler wins the battle.
  - c. If there are two Xs and the remaining vote is for one freestyler, the battle is extended by one round of 30 seconds each.
  - d. If there are three Xs, the battle is extended by one round of 30 seconds each.
3. After an extension, the judges evaluate all rounds of the battle as a whole. A further draw (X) is not permitted; each judge must decide in favour of one of the two freestylers.
4. In the battles for 3rd place and in the final, a draw (X) is not permitted.

## **6.2. Sick 3**

### **6.2.1. General**

- 1) Sick 3 is a competition in which the best combination of 3 tricks is sought.
- 2) It is a low-air contest (lower and air moves).
- 3) Both women and men can take part.

### **6.2.2. Format and conditions**

- 1) Each freestyler has a total of five minutes to complete all attempts. Attempts made after the five minutes have elapsed will not be counted.
- 2) Each freestyler has a total of seven attempts, but a maximum of four attempts per combo.



- 3) Each freestyler must perform their main combo, consisting of three linked tricks. In addition, one reserve combo is permitted (a maximum of two combos in total).
- 4) All planned combos must be submitted to the judges in advance using the form provided.
- 5) Changes to the combos are only permitted up until the start of the competition; the most recently submitted version is binding.
- 6) Each combo will only be recognised if it matches the submitted version exactly.
- 7) Upon completion of the combo, the freestyler must demonstrate control of the ball, i.e. return the ball to the state it was in before the combo (e.g. resume juggling).
- 8) The ball must not be caught with the hands immediately after the last trick. Otherwise, points will be deducted.
- 9) Anyone who successfully completes both combos before the seven attempts are up is entitled to a third combo.
- 10) Anyone who fails to complete a combo is automatically eliminated.

#### **6.2.3. Judging criteria**

- 1) Judges will assess performances based on the following main criteria:
  - a) Difficulty – 40%
  - b) Execution – 40%
  - c) Control – 20%
- 2) Each criterion is scored on a scale of 1–10 points.
- 3) The overall score is calculated as the weighted sum.

#### **6.2.4. Judging process**

- 1) After each combo is completed, the judges indicate their rating for execution using coloured cards/flags:
  - a) 3× White → Combo valid.
  - b) 2× white + 1× red → Combo valid.
  - c) 3× Red → Combo invalid.
  - d) 2× Red + 1× White → Combo invalid, but the freestyler may lodge an appeal. In this case, a slow-motion review takes place. Once the judges have reached a new decision, the verdict is final.
- 2) If two or more freestylers successfully perform the same combo, the order of the criteria decides:
  - a) Execution.



- b) Control.
- c) Number of attempts.

## **7. Special rules**

### **7.1. Injuries**

- 1) If a freestyler sustains an injury during a circle that prevents them from continuing:
  - a) They are eliminated from the circle and receive points only for the laps completed.
  - b) To receive a score at all, at least 50% of the rounds must be completed.
  - c) The judges will only assess the performance actually delivered. Example: With 3 rounds and only 2 completed, a maximum of approximately 66% of the total points can be achieved.
- 2) If a freestyler is forced to withdraw due to injury during a battle and cannot continue, the opponent in that battle automatically wins.
- 3) In unclear situations where a freestyler shows clear signs of injury but wishes to continue, the judges, in consultation with the Event Director, will decide whether the risk is justifiable.

### **7.2. Force majeure**

- 1) The Event Director, in consultation with the judges, has the right to interrupt a battle or a circle if external factors so require (e.g. technical problems, safety concerns, environmental influences).
- 2) The judges will then decide whether the battle or circle will resume from the last fully completed round or start again from the beginning.

### **7.3. Changes & Interpretation**

The Event Director reserves the right to make changes or additions to the rules up until the start of the event.



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## 8. Change history

Version	Publication	Change