Every sport needs rules. Especially a growing sport like American Cornhole.

But Wait! Is it corn hole or cornhole. Official Corn Hole Rules or Official Cornhole Rules. The Official Word for this Game of Fun and Sport of Challenge is Cornhole one word not Corn Hole two words. So get with the Program and let’s move on.

The official sport of cornhole rules and regulations of the American Cornhole Organization (ACO). The rules and regulations allow the ACO to set cornhole tournament standards and sanction leagues. They’re also here to help casual players take part in sanctioned events.

Here's how ACO handles different types of events:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF EVENT</th>
<th>WHO RUNS IT</th>
<th>BOARDS</th>
<th>BAGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pro</td>
<td>ACO approved partner member owner</td>
<td>Only “Tournament Series” boards. Vinyl</td>
<td>ACO bags supplied by host.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or other approved party.</td>
<td>decals or other decoration NOT legal.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amateur (casual)</td>
<td>ACO approved partner member owner</td>
<td>Only “Tournament Series” boards. Vinyl</td>
<td>ACO bags supplied by host or players can</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or other approved party.</td>
<td>decals or other decoration ARE legal.</td>
<td>bring their own American Cornhole tourney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>bags.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-sanctioned</td>
<td>Anyone</td>
<td>“Tournament Series” boards recommended</td>
<td>ACO bags recommended</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Tournament Series” boards are blank or silkscreen direct from the American Cornhole factory.
THE RULES OF CORNHOLE

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See americancornhole.org for complete listing of tournament events.
1.1 The Cornhole Court – An American Cornhole court is a rectangular area 8 ft wide and a minimum of 42 ft long. The court consists of 2 boards, 4 designated pitcher’s boxes and foul lines (see illustration above).

1.2 Cornhole Pitcher’s Box – A pitcher’s box (rectangle 4 ft x 3 ft) is at each end of the court and on both sides of each board (4 boxes in all). Each cornhole player must remain in the pitcher’s box while pitching bags.

1.3 Cornhole Foul Lines – The front edge of each cornhole board is the foul line. This applies to all sanctioned and non-sanctioned games. Junior and wheelchair players have a different foul line (see Rule 2 Pitching Distances).

1.4 Multiple Cornhole Courts – There should be a two-foot buffer zone between the pitcher’s boxes of two parallel courts. This will leave a total of 10 feet between boards set up side by side.

1.5 Indoor Cornhole Courts – Pro-Sanctioned events must have 15 feet vertical clearance from the lowest possible obstruction. Amateur (Casual Play) Sanctioned & Non-Sanctioned should have 12 feet vertical clearance.

**TIP:** If you’re playing outdoors, the sun can be a problem. Try a north-south setting to minimize this.
RULE 2: CORNHOLE PITCHING DISTANCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF EVENT</th>
<th>BETWEEN FRONT EDGES OF BOARDS</th>
<th>BETWEEN CENTERS OF CORNHOLE CIRCLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pro</td>
<td>27 ft.</td>
<td>33 ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amateur (casual)</td>
<td>24 ft.</td>
<td>30 ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior/Wheelchair</td>
<td>20 ft.</td>
<td>26 ft.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RULE 3: CORNHOLE EQUIPMENT BOARDS AND BAGS

3.1 Sanctioned Cornhole Equipment
The ACO approves only American Cornhole boards and bags to be used in any sanctioned cornhole tournament or league.

1. Each board is a 47 1/2” x 23 1/2” rectangle.

2. Each cornhole is 6” in diameter, centered 8 7/8” from the top of the cornhole board to the center of the cornhole and 11 3/4” from each side edge to the center of the cornhole.

3. The front of the board is 3” from bottom to top, nearly a 90-degree angle to the ground.

4. The back of the board is 12” from bottom to top, nearly a 90-degree angle to the ground.

5. American Cornhole uses 15mm (5/8”) Baltic Birch Plywood. The cross-ply construction adds strength and stability, this in turn adds to consistent play on the board.
6. The surface has several clear coat Ultra Violet Finishes – unlike a water base or lacquer based finish the UV finish is applied more evenly. The UV finish is cured with special ovens.

7. The combination of the Baltic Birch Plywood and the Ultra Violet finish helps American Cornhole create the ultimate consistency in playing surfaces, no other manufacturer offers such consistent and durable playing surfaces as does American Cornhole with its 0151AC Tournament Series Boards. That is why the ACO uses only the Tournament Series Boards at all sanctioned leagues and tournaments. Due to the construction and weight of American Cornhole boards and highest of quality standards, players can expect to see consistent results time and again.

8. Cornhole Bags - Each bag is made from two fabric squares with a nylon double stitched seam on all four sides. The bags are American Cornhole SoftTouch, extremely durable suede like material, red and blue only for Pro-Sanctioned event. Each finished bag measures 6” x 6”. The finished bag is filled with the American Cornhole approved PET Resin. It requires 2 cups weighing approximately .915 to .935 lbs to fill each bag. (casual and non-sanctioned cornhole bags should be similar to pro specs but can be filled with 2 cups or approximately 15 to 16 ozs of hard corn feed as a substitute for our resin.)

3.2 Non Sanctioned Cornhole Equipment
(recommended construction if American Cornhole equipment is unavailable)

1. Each board is a 48” x 24” rectangle.

2. Each cornhole is 6” in diameter, centered 9” from the top of the cornhole board and 12” from each side edge.

3. The front of the board is 3”-4” from bottom to top, nearly a 90-degree angle to the ground.

4. The back of the board is 12” from bottom to top, nearly a 90-degree angle to the ground.

5. The playing surface should be finish-sanded to a very smooth texture. There should be no blemishes in the wood surface that might disrupt or distort play.

6. The playing surface can be painted with a high gloss latex paint or varnish. The surface should allow bags to slide when thrown, but not so slippery that bags slide back down the platform.

7. Each bag is made from two fabric squares with double stitched seaming. The bags should be made from a durable fabric like canvas or American Cornhole SoftTouch. Each finished bag measures 6” x 6” and weighs roughly 15-16 ounces.
RULE 4: CORNHOLE COURT PREPARATION AND MAINTENANCE

4.1 Cornhole Court Maintenance – Every effort shall be made to keep the cornhole board playing surface in perfect playing condition. Players are responsible for making sure the court is in good playing condition prior to starting the match. During a match, players are not allowed to alter the boards or court in any manner without the consent of the opponent or a tournament official.

4.2 Distractions During Play – Every effort shall be made to keep from distracting contestants during cornhole play. In particular, the courts should be free of anything that might cause a distraction.

4.3 Drinking – Players can drink while playing, but drinks must be placed outside the live court area, in safe zone, or on a drink stand or holder. *Exception: Pro-Sanctioned events drinks will not be permitted during play.*

RULE 5: CORNHOLE GAME PLAY

5.1 Singles Or Doubles Cornhole Competition – American Cornhole can be played as doubles or singles. In doubles play, two players are partners against another team of two (one member of each team pitches from one board and the other member pitches from the other board). In singles play, a player competes against another player (both pitch from the same board). All other rules are the same for doubles or singles play.

5.2 Opening Coin Flip – In Doubles play, the coin toss winner has the choice of picking who pitches against whom or which side of the board to play from. The coin toss winner also decides who pitches first. In Singles play, the coin toss winner decides who pitches first and what side of the board to play from.

5.3 Position Of Cornhole Players – In Doubles play, each player’s partner is directly across from them in the opposite box at the other board. So each team has one player throwing from the left pitcher’s box and one throwing from the right. Each player is assigned a pitcher’s box and will be required to pitch from their box the entire game.

In Singles play, a player from the left pitcher’s box of the head board would move to the foot board and toss from the right pitcher’s box.

The pitcher must not go outside the designated pitcher’s box during the process of pitching. The opposing player is to stand just behind their own pitcher’s box while competitor is tossing.
5.3 Delivery Of Cornhole Bags – Every match is broken down into frames of play. During each frame of play each player must pitch all four bags. In Doubles play, the “headboard” players (players pitching first) alternate until they’ve pitched all 8 bags, completing a frame. The “footboard” players (players pitching second) then call out the score before removing the bags. Once the footboard players also pitch in the same manner, their frame is completed. In Singles play, players alternate pitching until all 8 bags have been pitched, completing the frame.

Cornhole players must deliver the bag within 15 seconds of stepping into the pitcher’s box with the intention of pitching.

5.4 Cornhole Pitching Rotation – The player who scored in the preceding frame shall pitch first in the next frame. If neither pitcher scores, the player who pitched first in the preceding frame shall pitch first in the next frame. (In Doubles and Singles play, players switch “Pitchers Boxes” after each game)

5.5 Cornhole Scoring Designations

Cornholes – A bag-in-the-hole (or Cornhole or Holer) is a bag thrown through the hole in the board. A bag can be pushed in by other bags from either player.
1 Cornhole = 3 points.

Woody or Boarder – A bag that is not in-the-hole but lands with any portion resting on the board. It may not touch the ground before landing on the board. If it does, it’s called a “DIRTY” and must be removed from the playing surface before another bag is tossed. A bag hanging on the board surface but touching the ground as well is also a “DIRTY” and has no point value and should be removed from playing surface before play continues.
1 Woody or Boarder = 1 point.

Stanker or Foul Bag – A bag which is not a Cornhole or Woody, or a bag which was delivered in non-compliance with one of the rules of the game. It has no point value, scores as a “DEAD BAGGER” and is to be removed from the board surface before any more bags are pitched. Bags knocked into foul territory by a foul bag should be returned as closely as possible to their original position. This also applies to bags that are knocked into the hole by a foul bag.
1 Stanker or Foul Bag = 0 points.

1. The following rule violations, if spotted and called by a player or assigned judge, will result in the foul bag being declared a “STANKER” and removed from the court:
   (a) Any bag pitched when the player has made contact with or crossed over the foul line before the bag is released.
   (b) Any bag pitched when the player has started or stepped completely outside the pitcher’s box before releasing the corn bag.
   (c) Any bag not delivered within the 15 second time limit.
   (d) A bag pitched from a different pitcher’s box than the first bag.
   (e) Any bag that contacted the court or the ground before coming to rest on the board surface.

TIP: Players can pitch with either hand; he or she does not have to use the same one throughout the game.
(f) Any bag which struck a previously defined object such as a tree limb, wire, indoor court ceiling, etc.

(g) Any bag that leaves a player’s hand once the final forward swing of the toss has started shall count as a pitched bag. A bag that is accidentally dropped by a player before the final forward swing has started shall not be considered a “STANKER” and may be picked up and pitched.

2. A player’s bag shall be called a “STANKER” if the player removes it before the scoring of that bag has been agreed upon. A judge shall be called if a decision cannot be reached. The judge shall determine the scoring for the frame.

5.8 Protests – If a cornhole player desires to make a protest, the protest shall be made to the judge or tournament official at the time the problem occurs. The tournament judge shall make the final ruling on all protests.

**RULE 6: CORNHOLE GAME LENGTH**

6.1 Cornhole Game Options

*Traditional 21 Game* – The game is played until one cornhole team reaches (or exceeds) 21 points at the completion of a frame. The winning team does not need to win by two or more points.

*Frame Game* – The game is played until each team or player has pitched 13 complete frames. The winning team is the team scoring the most cumulative points out of an available 156 points. (52 of 52 cornholes is a perfect game for a 156 total score).

*Qualifier or Seeding Game* – Each player or team throws a minimum of one complete Frame Game. Team/Player seeding is determined by their total cumulative score when compared with the rest of the participants. Based on this ranking system, teams and players are qualified and seeded at the same time for a bracket tournament.

6.2 The Cornhole Frame Must Be Finished – Matches cannot end in the middle of a frame. Thus, if a cornhole team pitching first reaches or exceeds 21 points, the game is not over until the other side is allowed to pitch all of their bags to complete the frame.

6.3 Ties At The End Of A Frame – If a match is tied at the end of a Frame Game, a single bag toss off will determine the winner of the game. Teams/Players can throw from either side of board in sudden death. The player or team throwing the better bag will be declared the winner. In Doubles, all four players throw one bag from the same board, rotating shots until one team outscores the other.

6.4 SHUCK or Skunk – Skunks do not apply to sanctioned leagues, tournament play or a Frame Game. But for casual backyard play in the Traditional 21 game, a skunk or shuck automatically ends the game when a team scores 13 or more points before the other team scores any points. We call this a “SHUCK” as in “You’ve been Shucked”.

www.americancornhole.org
7.1 Cornhole “Traditional 21” Scoring – This is a negation or cancellation format where opposing cornhole players’ frame points cancel one another out. Only those points that do not cancel out apply to the total overall score. Example: Red team scores 7 points in a frame and Blue team scores 9 points in the same frame. The difference is 2 (9-7=2). Blue team scores 2 points in that frame.

7.2 Cornhole “Frame Game” Scoring – Unlike the negation process, Frame Game cornhole players are trying to accumulate as many points as possible over 13 complete frames. The perfect score, or maximum amount of points available, is 156 points, meaning a player would need to throw 52 of 52 cornholes. The player with the highest cumulative score at the end of 13 frames is declared the winner. All Woodys and Cornholes for each player are counted toward their score for the frame.

7.3 Cornhole “TRADITIONAL 21” LEAGUE FORMAT (Recommended) (applies to Doubles and Singles)
- Play one match per team or player in an outing
- 1 match = 3 games
- Games are scored with Traditional 21 scoring (negation scoring)
- Winner of best of three games wins the match
- 1 league point is given for:
  - Each game won within a match
  - Winning a match

An example
Game 1: Bailey Geers 21 – Max Charles 19 (one point BG)
Game 2: Bailey Geers 19 – Max Charles 21 (one point MC)
Game 3: Bailey Geers 21 – Max Charles 13 (one point BG)
Match winner Bailey Geers (one point BG)

Bailey's league points: 3 (2 for games; 1 for match)
Max's league points: 1 (1 for game)

League also tracks:
Cornhole Games Won
Cornhole Games Lost
Cornhole Matches Won
Cornhole Matches Lost
Average Points Scored in Cornhole Games
Average Points Given up in Cornhole Games
7.4 “TRADITIONAL 21” Cornhole Tournament Bracket (Recommended)
• Best of Three winner moves forward loser goes home
• Traditional Bracket Structure
• Seeding recommended as best option but random luck of draw works fine
• Ideally 16 / 32 / 64 / 128 / 256 team brackets recommended

7.5 “FRAME GAME” Cornhole League Format (Recommended)
Statistics in development set to release second quarter of 2008

7.6 “FRAME GAME” Cornhole Tournament Format (Recommended)
Statistics in development set to release second quarter of 2008

RULE 8: APPROPRIATE ACO MEMBER CONDUCT

8.1 On The Courts – American Cornhole thrives on good sportsmanship. ACO members shall make no disturbing noises or movements that would distract the opponent or players on adjacent courts.
   First offense: warning from the judge or tournament official
   Second offense: forfeiture of the game being played
   Further offenses: forfeiture of all games played in that event

8.2 Off The Courts – Any ACO member who indulges in heckling, unfair rooting, or any other form of unsportsmanlike conduct toward any other player or tournament official, shall be subject to expulsion from the cornhole tournament and the tournament site. This covers any inappropriate behavior (including profane or abusive language) in, or around, the court area. Member shall also be subject to a one year suspension from the ACO.
RULE 9: ACO RANKING AND AWARDS

9.1 ACO Rankings And Awards – The ACO tracks and reports results on players who are ACO members, recording all results in an exclusive sanctioned event database. Rankings and handicaps (both sanctioned and non-sanctioned) are in the works. The top 10 sanctioned players and teams in the world will automatically qualify for the ACO Nationals, bypassing the qualifying round.

9.2 Basis For ACO Rankings and Handicapping – You must be an ACO member to be considered for a sanctioned handicap and ranking. Non-members can still have a ranking and handicap but it will not be sanctioned. At this point, a player’s ranking is mainly based on his or her overall cumulative scoring percentage. In the future, winning percentage, earnings and sanctioned events played will also factor into overall world ranking.

(Additional details to follow regarding the future development of American Cornhole’s online player management ranking and handicap tool which is in production with scheduled phase one release second quarter 2008)

9.3 Handicapping – The ACO is working hard to create a fair and accurate handicapping system that can be used in open tournaments and league play across the country. We hope that the structure will be in place by the second quarter of 2007. Each tournament or league can choose whether to use the handicap system, but we highly recommend it at the Amateur level to make the game more competitive for all participants (much like golf and bowling apply successful handicap systems).

9.4 Reporting To The ACO – Members hosting ACO sanctioned tournaments will be responsible for submitting ACO Official Tournament Scoring Summaries to the ACO at the completion of every ACO sanctioned tournament. The scoring summaries set forth the names and ACO membership ID numbers for each player, the number of frames pitched and the number of Cornholes pitched for the tournament, along with other scoring information.

(Additional details to follow regarding the future development of American Cornhole’s online league and tournament management system that will help automate these manual processes via the internet. The product is in development and has a scheduled release of phase one by second quarter 2008)

9.5 Updating And Reporting – The official rankings will be updated and published on a bi-weekly basis. Up-do-date cumulative statistics will be reported for each ACO member who authorizes the release of this information in their membership application.

TIP: Members can also keep track of their own individual status and standings in the database.

Download a copy of the ACO Tournament Scoring Sheets and the ACO Tournament Scoring Summary. Or run your tournament online through our exclusive software at www.americancornhole.org releasing in Spring 2007
**RULE 10: ACO SANCTIONED CORNHOLE TOURNAMENT PLAY**

### 10.1 Hosting An ACO Sanctioned Tournament

1. Any member of the ACO may host an ACO Amateur or Casual Play sanctioned American Cornhole Tournament. Only the ACO can host a Pro-Sanctioned event.

2. Responsibilities of Hosting: The ACO hosting member is responsible for making sure that the equipment meets all ACO standards and that ACO rules of play are enforced during the tournament. The hosting member should also act as judge in resolving any ruling issues at the tournament.

3. Reporting Results: The hosting member is required to submit the ACO Official Statistical Reporting Summary for all ACO members competing in the tournament within one week of the completion of play.

### 10.2 Cornhole Tournament Play

- The standard method of play for an ACO sanctioned tournament is a seeded bracket where the winner of each match (best of 3 games) moves on. Play for the tournament can be either Traditional 21 scoring or Frame Game scoring.

### 10.3 Publicity For Your Cornhole Tournament

- All ACO Amateur Sanctioned tournaments will be posted on our up-coming tournaments list on the ACO web site. The ACO will also post results, pictures and comments requested by any ACO member.

### 10.4 Publicity For Your Cornhole Leagues

- All ACO Amateur Sanctioned leagues will be posted on our leagues list on the ACO web site. The ACO will also post results, pictures and comments requested by any ACO member.

_Additional details to follow regarding the future development of American Cornhole's online league and tournament management system that will help automate these manual processes via the internet. The product is in development and has a scheduled release of phase one by second quarter 2008._
ACO GLOSSARY OF OFFICIAL CORNHOLE TERMS

WOODY: a one-point shot landing and staying on board surface

CORNHOLE: a three-point shot, one that ends up in the hole on its own or with help, they all count

CORNZIZZLE™: when a player makes four cornholes in one round

SHUCKED™: refers to a team or player who is beaten 13 - 0 as in “You’ve been Shucked”

DIRTY: when a bag hits the ground before reaching the board

LIPPER: a Woody hanging on the lip of the hole and is ready to drop in

SLICK WOODY: cornhole, this one slides into the hole

FAULTN’: a foot fault; stepping past the front of the board

BLOCKN’: a player blocking the hole by the position of one of his bags

AIRMAIL: cornhole – nothing but hole

CANDYCORN: a short shot – this one didn’t make it to the board

STANKER: any foul bag such as a “Dirty”, “Faultn”, or “Candycorn” – zero point value

AMERICAN CORNHOLE: not just the game of cornhole, it’s the sport of cornhole