

HAAG Pinball Tournament Format 2012

For 2012 there are several structural changes to the pinball tournaments. There are two tournament arcs this year.

The Pinball Wizard tournament is the primary tournament. There is a cash prize of \$100 for First Place, \$75.00 for Second Place and \$50 for Third Place. These amounts will increase during the show based on play. Amounts will be announced during the show. Qualification is through playing the subtournaments. These are:

EM
Solid State
Eighties Alpha-Numeric
DMD
Stern Cash tourney

Each sub-tournament (or category) will have a \$50 cash prize for the winner. Prize will increment based on volume of play. A second place prize of \$25.00 will also increment based on play. New amounts will be announced throughout the show.

Each sub tournament has a \$5.00 entry fee per play, with the best score of two plays being recorded. Players may enter as often as they like. A newer high score will replace an earlier lower score. Each player will appear on the ranking chart once for each category. The order of finish for the sub-tournaments will determine the qualifiers for the playoffs Saturday evening. Eight players will qualify for the Pinball Wizard playoffs. Qualification is as follows:

Each category tournament will have a 'normalized' score assigned to the order of finish.

First place:	100 points
Second Place:	95 points
Third place:	90 points
Fourth Place:	85 points
Fifth Place:	80 points
Sixth Place:	75 points
Seventh Place:	70 points

Eighth Place: 65 points
Ninth Place: 60 points
Tenth Place: 55 points

The normalized points awarded for the category sub-tournaments will be added together. The top eight points earners will participate in the playoffs.

The qualifiers will play two games on each of the category games, except the Stern, as it will have it's own playoffs. The playoffs also use a normalized score:

First Place: 4 points
Second Place: 3 points
Third Place: 2 points
Fourth Place: 1 points
Sixth through Eighth Place: 0 points

The player with the highest normalized points is the winner of the Pinball Wizard Championship. Ties will be played in a single game head to head tie breaker, with the highest raw score being the winner. Choice of game is by the tournament staff. The winner will receive 25 IFPA points. Point awards for remaining finishers will be determined by the IFPA after the event based on their standard practice. The Houston Arcade Expo is not responsible for these point values and all questions should be directed to the IFPA.

Stern Tournament

The Stern tournament is now considered a secondary tournament in term of IFPA points. The winner will receive 12.5 point for a first place finish. Cash prizes will be awarded for First, Second and Third place, amounts to be determined based on a percentage of entry fees. Starting amounts will be:

\$100 First Place
\$50 Second Place
\$25 Third Place

Qualifying will be by raw score. Players will play two games for a \$5.00 entry fee. The highest score will be recorded. A subsequent high score will replace an earlier lower score. Players will appear on the ranking chart only once.

The top eight high scores will qualify for the playoff on Saturday evening. The format will be single elimination, with the players playing head to head with best two out of three advancing. Losers will play a 'losers' bracket to determine finish order for awarding IFPA points. Point awards for remaining finishers will be determined by the IFPA after the event based on their standard practice. The Houston Arcade Expo is not responsible for these point values and all questions should be directed to the IFPA.

HAAG Pinball Tournament Rules

Thanks to PAPA for the use of their rules as a guide.

A. Malfunctions and Rulings

1. The Nature of Pinball

The unique charm of pinball lies, in large part, in the physical nature of the game. Unfortunately, this means that unusual events and outright malfunctions cannot be prevented, nor can they be perfectly compensated for.

In certain cases, malfunctions will be dealt with more strictly during finals rounds than during qualifying rounds, at the discretion of tournament officials.

2. Minor Malfunctions

A minor malfunction is any incident without external cause which deviates from the normal course of gameplay, without directly causing a player's loss of turn and without providing any player a significant advantage over others. A minor malfunction is considered part of normal play. Tournament officials shall determine what constitutes a significant advantage; in the event that such an advantage is obtained, refer to "Beneficial Malfunctions".

A minor malfunction that occurs repeatedly, to the extent that it is markedly affecting play of the machine, may be considered a major malfunction at the sole discretion of tournament officials.

3. Major Malfunctions

A major malfunction is a gameplay problem with a machine that results in the premature loss of ball in play in a fashion that is not a normal feature of the machine's gameplay. These may be unusual one-time events, or they may indicate a recurring problem that will need to be addressed by technicians.

Examples of major malfunctions include:

- The bonus count begins while the ball is still in play. This can happen if, for example, the machine loses track of how many balls are in the drain trough.
- A lit kickback fails to return the ball to play, ending the player's turn. This does not apply to other ball saving devices such as timed ball savers, ball traps, gates, or "virtual" kickbacks.

Any malfunction that results in the loss of one or more balls during multiball play, without losing all balls so as to end the player's turn, will only be considered a minor malfunction. Loss of Tilt warnings, without loss of ball, shall not be considered a major malfunction. Loss of any lit feature, running mode, or other gameplay specifics, shall not be considered a major malfunction.

When a major malfunction occurs, it is the player's responsibility to notify the scorekeeper, calmly and promptly. The scorekeeper will request advice from a tournament official. If the official(s) agree that the incident is a major malfunction, the player will be provided with one additional ball of play at the beginning of a new game, after the current game has been completed. No attempt will be made to re-establish the state of the machine at the time of the major malfunction. The player's total score on the additional ball of play will be added to his or her previous score, and the new game will be terminated.

If a major malfunction occurs early in the play of the first ball by the first player, tournament officials may rule that the current game is voided. Machine repairs will be attempted and the player(s) will restart their play without needing to track the previous score.

In the event that two or more major malfunctions take place during the same game, the current scores of the player(s) will be recorded, and the game terminated. Once the machine has been repaired, players will be provided additional ball(s) of play on a new game, as necessary to provide the correct number of balls of play for each player. Alternatively, tournament officials may choose to allow the affected player(s) to replay the game from scratch, and the higher score for each player will be recorded as his or her official score, except in any case where the original score was unfairly improved by the malfunction or was significantly increased during attempts to investigate or cure the malfunction. In the event that a recurring major malfunction cannot suitably be repaired, the failure must be treated as a catastrophic malfunction.

Under certain specific conditions, a major malfunction may be declined by the player. This must be approved by the tournament official, and must not result in a situation which provides an unfair advantage to the player.

4. Known Malfunctions

Any malfunction or unusual behavior that is determined to be relatively minor but unusual enough to merit comment may, at the discretion of tournament officials, be posted for players to be aware of before playing the affected machine. Players who have played the machine before this notice is provided will not be allowed to replay the machine nor to replace it with play of another machine. The occurrence of any posted malfunction will be treated as a minor malfunction unless it worsens or interacts with another feature to yield a major malfunction.

5. Catastrophic Malfunctions

A catastrophic malfunction is any event, not caused by a player, which immediately ends play for all players on the machine.

Examples of catastrophic malfunctions include:

- The game system crashes and/or resets due to a software error or component failure.
- Power is lost or interrupted.
- A new game starts.
- A major malfunction repeatedly recurs in spite of attempts to repair the machine.

Any event caused by a player, intentionally or unintentionally, including Slam Tilts, is covered under "Player Errors" below.

In the event that two or more major malfunctions take place during the game, when a catastrophic malfunction occurs, the current scores of the player(s) will be recorded, and the game terminated. Once the machine has been repaired, players will be provided additional ball(s) of play on a new game, as necessary to provide the correct number of balls of play for each player. Alternatively, tournament officials may choose to allow the affected player(s) to replay the game from scratch, and the higher score for each player will be recorded as his or her official score, except in any case where the original score was unfairly improved by the malfunction or was

significantly increased during attempts to investigate or cure the malfunction.

If a machine affected by catastrophic malfunction cannot be repaired in order to continue play, it is considered disabled; please see "Disabled Machines".

6. Beneficial Malfunctions

Any malfunction which provides at least one player with a significant advantage over any other player competing on that machine is known as a beneficial malfunction. Tournament officials shall determine what constitutes a significant advantage.

Any beneficial malfunction which results in a player being able to continue play of a ball that normally should have ended is normally allowed once per game. Examples of this would include an unexpected software ball save, a ball that bounces back into play without player action, or a ball that comes to rest on an unlit kickback in the outlane. Any such behavior shall not be allowed if it repeats, meaning that tournament officials may require players to allow the repeatedly-saved ball to drain, or play on the machine may be terminated in accordance with catastrophic malfunction rules, at which point repairs may be attempted.

Any beneficial malfunction which provides one or more players with a significant scoring or strategic advantage in a way that is not part of normal gameplay will void the score of the affected player(s), unless all immediately-affected players and tournament officials can agree on a suitable adjustment of the score or other elimination of the advantage. If the beneficial malfunction has been specifically avoided by the player, it is unlikely that a penalty is necessary. If any player score(s) are voided, the affected player(s) may then replay the game after the other players have finished, and the new score(s) are used for the affected player(s).

Examples of beneficial malfunctions would include a jackpot switch that registers when a different target is hit, a valuable switch that scores repeatedly without the ball contacting it, a failed Tilt sensor, or a ball stuck during multiball. See also "Stuck Balls".

Any situation which indicates the presence of a beneficial malfunction should be brought to the attention of the scorekeeper promptly, who will alert tournament officials. Any player who intentionally takes advantage of a

significant beneficial malfunction may be given a warning and/or have his or her affected entry interrupted and disqualified by tournament officials.

7. Stuck Balls

During the course of play, it is possible for one or more balls to become stuck on a playfield feature, usually after becoming airborne. If this happens during single ball play, the player must wait for automatic ball searches to occur. The expiration of any timed feature during this period is not considered a malfunction.

If the stuck ball has not been freed after four such searches, or if the machine is not performing searches for some reason, the player must alert the scorekeeper, and a tournament official will be brought to the machine. The player must remain alert and at the machine, as he or she is responsible for the ball if it becomes freed at any point. Where possible, machines will be configured with "chase" features disabled, so that additional balls will not be released into play as a result of ball searches. However, in the event this occurs, the player is responsible for continuing play, and a suitable malfunction will only be ruled if the machine is unable to function normally from this point forward.

A tournament official may initially choose to try to free the stuck ball through judicious nudging, tapping, etc. The player must remain ready to resume play at the machine during this attempt. If actions by the official result in a Tilt, this will be treated as a major malfunction (not the fault of the player). If the official frees the ball but the player does not successfully continue play, this is normal play (the fault of the player). Loss of Tilt warnings due to tournament official nudging is considered normal play.

If the tournament official is unable to free the stuck ball, the machine will be opened, and the stuck ball freed and placed either in the plunger lane, if it is manually controlled, or on the upraised flipper of the player's choice, with the flipper button held by the player. In the event this is not possible, the official may select another location or feature where the ball can be placed safely while the machine is being closed in order to resume normal play. If more than one ball is stuck, all freed balls will be placed on the flipper(s) of the player's choice before play resumes, or in the plunger lane if the flippers are inactive while the machine is open.

If the ball is inadvertently freed while the machine is open and drains without the player regaining complete control (stopped on a flipper), this will be treated as a major malfunction. If the machine cannot be opened

successfully, or if opening or closing the machine terminates the game(s) in progress for any reason, this will be treated as a catastrophic malfunction. If the ball is freed and the machine closed without the player's loss of ball, play continues as normal. If the game is in multiball play and one or more balls are lost as a result of freeing stuck balls, possibly ending multiball but not ending the ball in play, this will be considered no worse than a minor malfunction. If any feature or mode that is lit or active times out while one or more balls are stuck, this will not be considered a malfunction.

Any player who chooses to shake or bump the machine in order to free a stuck ball does so at his or her own risk. No allowance will be made for a player who tilts while attempting to free a stuck ball, whether or not tournament officials are present.

If a ball becomes stuck during a multiball mode, the player should attempt to trap the other ball(s) in play and request assistance. A stuck ball during multiball often represents a significant beneficial malfunction, and intentionally taking advantage may result in a penalty. Please note specifically that a ball ending up in the plunger lane during multiball on a machine where there is no autoplunger (or where the autoplunger for some reason refuses to fire) counts as a stuck ball. See "Beneficial Malfunctions" for further details.

Any player who misuses a game feature in order to intentionally trap a ball during a multiball mode, such as holding in the plunger on Tommy in order to defeat the autoplunger, may be given a warning and/or have his or her affected entry interrupted and disqualified by tournament officials.

In situations where a ball is trapped in a way that it can be released through player action other than shaking or bumping - for example, a ball at rest underneath a flipper which the player controls - this is not deemed to be a stuck ball. Balls trapped in this fashion during multiball modes are not generally considered to be a rules violation, although the ruling will depend on the exact machine and situation.

8. Disabled Machines

Any tournament machine that breaks down during play will be attended to by technicians as promptly as possible. In the event that a breakdown is

severe and cannot be repaired promptly, the machine may be taken out of service temporarily or permanently. During qualifying rounds, players in the affected division must choose an alternate machine in place of a temporarily disabled machine. A permanently disabled machine will be replaced with a designated substitute by tournament officials. During finals rounds, tournament officials will designate an alternate machine; the game in progress on the disabled machine, if any, will be discarded, and play will continue on the newly designated machine.

Any machine that is temporarily disabled for more than two hours will normally be considered permanently disabled. During qualifying rounds, a permanently disabled machine presents a unique problem, as it is no longer possible for new qualifying entries to compete against ranked scores on that machine. If the machine in question is disabled before 3pm on Saturday, all scores recorded on the disabled machine up to that point will be voided. A substitute machine may be added to the division, which will have its own independent ranking of scores from that point forward.

Any player who has previously posted a qualifying score on the disabled machine may be eligible to play a "make-up" game on a substitute machine; his or her resulting score will then replace the previous score on the disabled machine.

In the event that a machine is disabled during qualifying rounds at any time after 3pm on Saturday, the scores and ranking up to that point shall stand. In this case, a substitute machine will not be added to the division, and no entries will be eligible for make-up games.

Qualifying entries played before 3pm on Saturday therefore enjoy a slight theoretical advantage in the event of machine failures. The addition of a substitute machine to a division does not allow existing entries to be modified except in the case of replacing a score from a disabled machine.

9. Player Errors

A player error is any player action, purposeful or accidental, which affects the normal play or outcome of a game in progress.

Any player who tilts his or her ball in play will not receive any penalty other than the normal loss of ball. Note that some older machines may penalize the

player with loss of game; this is equivalent to tilting all remaining balls in order. Abuse of machines is covered under "Player Conduct". Any player who tilts the ball of another player, either through interference or by tilting his or her ball so roughly that the next player's ball is affected before play continues, will receive a score of zero for that game, unless tournament officials grant an exception based on the behavior of the machine in question.

Any player who slam tilts a machine, thereby ending play for all players, will receive a score of zero for that game. The slam tilt is treated as a catastrophic failure for any other player(s) who have not completed their game(s) in progress; they will be allowed to replay a new game and choose the higher score. If a tournament official rules that the slam tilt sensor is not functioning properly, the slam tilt will be treated as a catastrophic failure for all players.

Any player who deliberately tilts or slam tilts a machine in order to derive some benefit to his or her own play, or the play of others, under these rules, may be ejected from the tournament.

Any player who deliberately interferes with the play of another player, through distraction, touching the machine or player, or disrupting tournament procedures, will receive a score of zero for the game. Any repeated offense under this rule will result in ejection of the player from the tournament. Any non-player, or tournament participant not playing in the game in progress, who deliberately interferes with the play of any tournament game, will be given one warning. On the second offense, the offender will be ejected from the facility.

Accidental interference is regrettable but can happen. Any player or non-player who accidentally interferes with the play of any tournament game will be warned. If the interference was sufficient to cause the loss of ball, this will be treated as a major malfunction. If the interference terminated play for all players (for example, tripping over a power cord and pulling it from the wall), this will be treated as a catastrophic malfunction.

A player who plays out of turn in a multiplayer game will receive a score of zero. The affected player may choose to take over the ball in play, if possible, or they may choose to have the incident treated as a major malfunction. In the event the player takes over, he or she shall be deemed "in control" after declaring his or her intent, taking his or her position at the table, and making contact with the ball via the flippers. The affected player

may not change his or her mind once he or she is "in control". Any player who plays out of turn deliberately in order to employ this rule will be disqualified entirely in the current division of play.

In qualifying rounds, any player who starts a multiplayer game will only be allowed to complete the "player one" game, regardless of when they noticed the error. Any player who restarts a qualifying game, rather than completing it and allowing it be recorded, will have that entire entry disqualified. Repeated offenses will lead to ejection from the tournament.

Because the tournament divisions consist solely of singles play, coaching of any player during a game, in any round, is not allowed. If a player specifically requests advice on a game feature during play, his or her question may be addressed only by a tournament official, and answered only in terms of whether or not the machine is functioning correctly. Players are not to seek assistance from other players or spectators. While not actively playing, players are of course free to discuss features and strategies as much as they like, including between balls during a game.

Tournament officials will be the sole determiners of what constitutes interference and whether or not it is accidental or deliberate. Scorekeepers are strongly encouraged to watch for and, if possible, prevent incidents of interference.

10. Rulings

Rulings shall be made by tournament officials, which includes event coordinators and any person(s) designated as officials by the coordinators. Designated officials may have restrictions on the breadth of rulings, and may be overridden by tournament officials. Any designated official or event coordinator is excluded from ruling on any play situation that directly affects his or her actual or potential standing as a player. Such persons may also be recused where their decision affects a close friend or family member, at the discretion of other tournament officials.

Complaints will be taken seriously, ruled upon, and considered resolved.

There is to be *no whining* :-)

B. Machine Settings

1. Software Settings

In general, the software settings of each machine will be adjusted to best accommodate tournament play. The following settings will be employed on any machine that supports them:

- Tournament Mode
- Free Play
- 3 Balls
- Extra Balls disabled
- Buy-In or Continues disabled
- Game Restart disabled
- 2 Tilt Warnings (may be 0 on older machines)
- Flipper AutoLaunch disabled
- Timed AutoLaunch disabled
- Standard Factory Settings for Ball Savers, Difficulty, Timers, etc
- Specific Difficulty Settings as determined by tournament officials
- Automatic Reflexing Features disabled
- Replays disabled (no score or Extra Ball awarded)

Certain older machines may include extra balls and/or five-ball play. These features may be utilized by the player unless otherwise posted. Players should also be aware that some machines end gameplay entirely for a Tilt (similar to modern games' Slam Tilt), that scoring mechanisms can malfunction (this is handled as minor, major, or beneficial, depending on the situation), that in some cases features that resemble pop bumpers and slingshots are not powered, and that some older machines employ gobble holes which end the current ball in play.

2. Hardware Settings

Machines used for tournament play will be prepared and kept in good working order to the greatest extent possible. Each machine will be properly leveled left-to-right and inclined front-to-back.

Any player with a complaint or question about the hardware setup of a machine should make his or her inquiry in between games, or in between balls, if urgent.

3. Machine-Specific Settings

In order to best suit tournament play, certain machines may be subject to specific settings or rules adjustments, at the discretion of tournament officials. These adjustments will be made before tournament play begins, and will be documented if possible. The intent is to eliminate features which can be abused by skilled players, or which arbitrarily extend play time to a degree that would hinder the smooth progress of the tournament.

C. Player Conduct

1. Facility

All areas inside the building are strictly non-smoking. Smoking is restricted to designated areas outside the building. Violation of this and/or other rules may lead to ejection from the tournament.

Weapons, illegal drugs, and alcohol are prohibited on the property. Naturally, any and all types of illegal activity are prohibited as well.

2. Personal Conduct

All players are expected to conduct themselves in a polite and sensitive manner. Outbursts, especially those including indecent language, are unacceptable. A wide variety of players and observers will be present, including media, and these types of outbursts do nothing to promote pinball as a sport.

Any express or implied threats or actions of violence are grounds for immediate ejection from the facility, and authorities will be contacted. Other possible grounds for ejection include but are not limited to fraud, theft, illegal activity, harrassment, inappropriate behavior, public drunkenness, etc.

Any person ejected from the facility is banned and may not return to the property. Banned persons will be prosecuted for trespass if necessary.

3. Abuse of Machines

Tilt sensors are employed to determine what constitutes unduly rough handling of each machine, within the parameters of normal play. Abusive handling such as punching, kicking, lifting, tipping, or rocking a machine, or

hitting the glass in any way, is grounds for a warning and possible disqualification of game or ejection from the tournament, at the discretion of tournament officials.

4. Interference & Cheating

Any player who intentionally interferes with tournament play or otherwise disrupts the tournament setting will be warned and/or ejected from the tournament, at the discretion of tournament officials.

Any form of cheating, including game restarts, tampering with games, tampering with recorded results, scorekeeper intimidation or collusion, or anything else not covered here, will be addressed by tournament officials as appropriate, including disqualification and/or ejection from the tournament.

5. Delay

Any player who delays the progress of his or her game for more than 30 seconds, for any reason other than to await a ruling or resolution of a temporary inconvenience, will be given a warning.

Temporary inconvenience is defined as any condition which can reasonably be expected to be resolved quickly, such as unusual noise, lighting problems, etc. An inconvenience such as sunlight glare does not normally qualify, unless easily resolved.

If the player is choosing to let a game mode time out, the total delay must be less than 30 seconds. Delay is defined as time during which the ball is left in the plunger lane, or held on a flipper by the player. Stuck balls do not count as intentional delays. If delays are repeated or willful, tournament officials may terminate the game in progress and record a score of zero for that player.

6. Death Saves, Bangbacks, etc

Techniques known as "Death Saves" and "Bangbacks" are sometimes practiced by certain advanced players. Because the effectiveness of these techniques varies from machine to machine, and because of the risk of injury to either player or machine, these are banned from tournament play. In the event that a drained ball bounces back into play without deliberate or significant player action, the ball may be played. This may require a ruling from tournament officials if there appears to be abusive force employed by the player.

7. Wagering or Gambling

Please note that gambling is illegal in our venue and the tournament does not endorse, condone, nor support wagering between players. We also feel that pinball is at least 75% skill-based, making any wagering at best ill-advised, in addition to being illegal.

8. Accommodating Disabilities

Tournament officials will make every reasonable attempt to accommodate genuine disabilities, and may also elect, on a case-by-case basis, to ameliorate injuries or other hardships. Players who are not fluent in English are allowed to utilize a bilingual assistant in order to understand these rules, official rulings, and so forth.