



Free State Pinball Association (FSPA) Player Guide

Written: May 2000
Updated: May 2018

The FSPA has been running pinball leagues for all ages and abilities since 1995! We have the best pinball leagues anywhere, right here in the Baltimore/Washington area!
Earn a chance to win a free pinball machine for each season you play with us!

Seasons: A season has 10 weeks of regular play. Don't worry if you can't make every week; there are provisions for preplaying as many as three weeks. At the end of the season, top players in each division compete in playoffs, which last one or two weeks depending on total league size. Top finishers in each division can earn trophies, and all playoff qualifiers in each division get a choice of cool prizes! Seasons usually begin in late January, late May, and mid September each year.

Grouping: At the start of the season, players will be assigned into groups of 3 or 4 people, based on historical or estimated ability. You compete only with your group-mates for league points. At the end of each week, the group winner will move up a group, and the low scorer in the group will move down. This group movement "bubbles" players into groups of similar skill, and also ensures you'll get to meet and play against many different people through the season.

Divisions: Generally, players who usually play in the top groups will be qualified for "A" division, while players in the lower groups qualify for "B" division. Larger leagues may also have "C", "D", or even more divisions, with players divided appropriately. Players with the most league points in each division at the end of the regular season move on to the playoffs, and there play only against players in the same division.

League Scoring: Each group plays four games per week. For each game played, you can score 0 to 4 league points. League points are awarded by ranking the actual machine scores for each game in your group. Players are also awarded 0 to 4 bonus match points based on their total performance against their group that week.

Two Player Scoring

Place	Base Pts	#1 > 3 * #2 ?
1st	3	Yes: +1
2nd	0	No: +1

Three Player Scoring

Place	Base Pts	#1 > #2 + #3 ?
1st	3	Yes: +1
2nd	2	-
3rd	0	No: +1

Four Player Scoring

Place	Base Pts	#1 > #2 + #3 ?	#2 > #3 + #4 ?
1st	3	Yes: +1	---
2nd	2	---	Yes: +1
3rd	1	No: +1	---
4th	0	---	No: +1

Extra Balls: On machines set to 3-ball play, you may play 1 earned extra ball (EB); on machines set to 5-ball play, you may not play any extra balls. Any EB's earned above these limits must be plunged. You may not flip or otherwise touch the machine once the ball is in motion. (If the machine gives you a "ball saver", you must plunge that away, too.) Sorry, you can't "buy in" an extra ball, even if you scored a replay during your game.

Etiquette: Basic rules of courtesy apply. Do not touch a machine when it's someone else's turn. When your turn comes up, be ready to play. If you need to step away for a moment, let your group know where you are and when you'll be back. Tilting your ball imposes no penalty other than that imposed by the machine (usually loss of ball and bonus). "Slam tilting" the machine, however, will cause you to forfeit that game; multiple violations may cause you to forfeit the season!

Participation: League pinball is more fun to play when all players participate regularly. Forfeiting games goes against the spirit of the league. Therefore, if you forfeit 8 games in a season, you will be dropped from the league for the rest of the season, and cannot qualify for playoffs. For occasions when it's just impossible to attend league night, you can submit preplays so you don't have to forfeit games.

Dated Preplays: If you know in advance that you will be absent a week, you may preplay that week. You'll need to play every game with at least one other player, as close to your absence as practical. Make sure to announce that you are preplaying before starting, and record the date that you will be absent. All standard league rules apply (e.g. restrictions on extra balls). When done, give your scores to a league official, who will apply them during play on the appropriate week. You may preplay no more than 12 games (3 weeks) per season. Playoffs may not be preplayed!

Undated Preplays: Prior to your third week of league play, you may complete a preplay session as described above, specifying no date for these preplays. These undated preplays will be automatically used if you are absent and have no dated preplays. Once used, you may not submit undated preplays again that season. If your undated preplays are used, they count against your 12 preplays per season. Some leagues use only undated preplays, aka "banked scores"... ask any league officer for details before starting your preplays.

League Dues: The league treasurer will collect dues in the amount of \$4 per week (\$40/season) per player. These dues pay for league prizes, trophies, parties, and other special events. You are responsible for paying dues even if you are absent on league night; your back dues will be collected upon your return.

Kitty: Players must pay for each game played (usually \$0.50 - \$1.00 per game). If credits are already accumulated on a machine when you begin a game (due to previous replays, match, etc), game money must be deposited in the kitty. The kitty is collected by the league, and used for the same expenses as league dues.

Special Rulings: Some leagues have slight variations on the rules described in this document. For more information, please ask any league officer.

Online: The FSPA offers a Web site at <<http://www.fspazone.org>>. On this site, you can read the complete league rules, learn more about the games at each location, and learn about special events. You can also subscribe to the league mailing list, which provides weekly results and statistics. Printouts of this information are also provided at league each week.

Cool Stuff!

- * About half of all players each season advance to the playoffs!
- * About 20% of all players each season can win a trophy!
- * FSPA players include world-champion caliber players, players who've only played a dozen games in their lives... and everyone in between!
- * The FSPA's rules and software have been adopted by hundreds of pinball leagues around the world!
- * The FSPA **gives away** a pinball machine each year just for playing with us!