

United States Air Hockey Association Challenge Match Rules

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1. Priority and Non-Priority

1. Challenge matches are divided into Priority and Non-Priority matches.
2. A Priority match must be played by the challenged player or the challenged player risks losing their world ranking.
3. A Non-Priority match is optional, or voluntary, although it does affect World Ranking
4. A player may play as many Non-Priority matches as they wish.
5. All players with a USAA World Ranking may be challenged for that ranking.

2. Effects on Rankings

1. If the challenger wins the match, the challenger takes the ranking of the challenged player who then drops just below the challenger in the rankings.
2. A match for world ranking will automatically affect and determine lesser rankings.
3. In order to determine priority in issuing challenges for ranking, a player's world ranking serves as their challenge ranking.
4. In the event that a player is unranked, their current national/world seeding (in the event that a national/world tournament was being held) determines their challenge ranking.
5. If a player does not show up for a scheduled Priority match, the player is dropped from the rankings unless they can show a valid emergency reason for not showing up. This applies to both the challenger and the challenged.

3. Match Length and Time Limits

1. Challenges for any top 16 USAA-recognized ranking must either be 3 out of 5 sets or 4 out of 7 sets.. Challenges for any USAA-recognized ranking outside of the top 16 may also be a best 2 out of 3 sets. Each set must be 4 out of 7 games.
2. Players have a maximum of one minute between games during a challenge match; however, either player may choose to take one two-minute break in between games each set. This break may be extended by the referee in emergencies.
3. Players may take a maximum 7-minute break between sets during a challenge match. This break may be extended by the referee due to emergencies.

4. Challenge Period

1. A Challenge Period begins on the 16th day of the month, goes through 15th day of the following month, and affects Priority Match commitments for the subsequent month.
2. Challenges must be issued by the 15th of the month for the following month's commitment.
3. At the end of the 15th day of each month, priority is given to the highest ranked (or challenge-ranked) challenger who has issued a challenge to a particular player during the previous challenge period.
4. There can be no Priority match commitment for the same calendar month in which a USAA-sanctioned National/International tournament takes place.
5. A player is not required to play any priority matches closer than 2 weeks before a USAA-sanctioned National or International-level tournament.
6. The loser of a priority challenge match must wait until after the 15th of the second month following the match to re-challenge the winner.
7. In the case of the National Champion losing the #1 ranking he or she has held since the nationals, the National Champion can re-challenge in the next challenge period following the match. (e.g. If the match is played January 10, he or she can issue a challenge by Jan. 16 for a March commitment; if the match is January 20, he or she can issue a challenge by Feb. 15 for an April commitment)

8. The standard deadline for completing an official priority challenge is the last day of the month following the challenge period in which the priority challenge was issued. The challenged player may extend the deadline until the last day of the third month following the challenge period, provided that the match is completed before any USAA-sanctioned National/International tournament takes place in the interim. See also sections 4.4 and 4.5 above.

5. **Challenge Conditions**

1. Challenges may be issued verbally, in writing, electronically, or by other means.
2. The higher-ranked player chooses how many sets will be played at the time of scheduling the match.
3. The challenger must travel, if necessary, to the home geographic area of the challenged player. This means the greater metropolitan area, but not necessarily the specific neighborhood or favored location of the challenged.
4. Both players must agree on a mutually acceptable table and location.
5. In the case of a player traveling from out of town, the challenged player is expected to be flexible when it comes to being available for possible challenge dates.
6. Once a date and time for a match is agreed upon, a week's notice is required to postpone or change the date/time of the match.
7. In the case of a player traveling from out of town, the match may be postponed/changed by the challenged player with a week's notice only if this does not cause hardship to the challenger. If the challenger incurs additional costs associated with changing tickets, etc., the challenged player may be required by the USAA Board to cover such costs.
8. With less than a week's notice, the match may be changed only upon agreement of both players. In case of disagreement, the player wanting the change may appeal to the USAA Board or its assigns. The USAA Board or assigns may grant such a request in case of valid reason such as injury, work schedule changes, or other exceptional situations.

6. **Grievances**

1. All disputes, disagreements, and other issues regarding challenge match procedure are subject to determination and enforcement by the USAA Board.
2. It is the obligation of the aggrieved player to bring match disputes to the attention of the USAA Board of directors in order to acquire board intervention.