

Laser Storm National Rules –

**Article I. Tournament level penalties:**

**Section 1.1 Barrier movement**

- A. Intentional: Any amount of intentional barrier movement is a penalty. Separating barriers to fire through them or leaning on a barrier to get a better shot or leaning on a barrier to provide extra cover is considered intentional movement.
- B. Non-intentional: Causing a barrier to move more than 1 foot in any direction is cause for a penalty even if the player stops the barrier immediately after hitting it.
- C. Barrel movement. Any movement of a barrel during the game is a penalty.

**Section 1.2 Firing over the E-Pod**

- A. An E-Pod barrier is a barrier located in front of an Energizer providing cover from the entire arena.
- B. Firing over, under, or through cracks between the E-pod barriers is not allowed.

**Section 1.3 Dividing Wall Barrier Infractions**

- A. The phaser and any parts of a player's body cannot cross the center dividing line in any way.
- B. If there is a barrel on the dividing line, the top of the barrel is considered neutral area until a player leans over the rim of the barrel. Only one player may occupy the top of the barrel by *actively* playing over the barrel. This makes the barrel the color of the player occupying it. A player on the opposing side cannot lean over the barrel until the other person has left.
- C. Players may not fire in between cracks created by barrels or barriers part of the dividing wall. Certain structures or obstacles may be intended for this purpose and should be noted by the hosting arena so as not to cause unnecessary penalties.

**Section 1.4 Diversions**

- A. No diversionary tactics are allowed, such as throwing objects or using artificial lights.
- B. Misleading the other team
- C. Calling out "HIT" when not hit is considered diversionary.
- D. Shouting incorrect scores or time left turns players' attention away from the game allowing the other team to gain an unfair advantage.

**Section 1.5 Dead Men Don't Talk**

After a player is hit, they cannot block for others or call out where opposing team members are located. Activation is considered to be when the flashing headset lights turn off while energizing. Only 'Hit' and 'Nice shot' is allowed after being tagged.

**Section 1.6 Stalling**

- A. Stalling is any time a player is in a position where they can not be deactivated for more than 10 seconds. Placing your headset or phaser into a position where you can be

tagged is all that is necessary to keep from being called for stalling. Firing your phaser into the air from your position does not qualify.

- B. Not energizing after being hit denies the other team the ability to tag you and thus can be considered stalling if no attempt is made to energize after 10 seconds.

### Section 1.7 **Phaser Over the Head**

- A. The phaser can be held up above the neck; however, it must be at all times aiming out towards play. A phaser cannot be held up vertical above the neck pointing at the ceiling or at the floor.

### Section 1.8 **Illegal Pod Hit**

Pod Zone rules apply as soon as a player's phaser or headset enters the pod zone. If a penalty occurs while the player is in the Pod Zone the player must leave and re-enter the Pod Zone to prevent an Illegal Pod Hit.

- A. Your headset cannot go below and stay below the force shield barriers.
- B. Your headset lights must be on before you enter the pod zone.
- C. A player's **entire body** must be inside the pod zone for a pod hit to be legal.
- D. "Dead Cycle" rule: Causing a penalty in order to get to the pod zone will create a dead cycle for the infracting player. They cannot tag the pod on the cycle after the infraction, and must wait until the next cycle begins.
- E. Only the player that caused the penalty is restricted from tagging the pod on the dead cycle.
- F. If the infracting player hits the pod during the dead cycle, the hit will not count.

### Section 1.9 **Covering sensors**

- A. Covering of headset sensors or the phaser tip with hands or any part of the body is not allowed and is called after 1 shot is fired and seen to be blocked.
- B. A player cannot tilt their headset for more than a second to another player that has an un-obstructed shot. While facing away from a player, covering is called after 1 shot is obstructed.
- C. Wearing the headset in a tilted from vertical position is not permitted.

### Section 1.10 **Unsportsmanlike conduct**

- A. A player cannot insult a player on the opposing team in any way directly (ex: "You suck," "You're out") or indirectly (ex: "Hey, that guy sucks," "I know someone who is horrible").
- B. You cannot taunt a player on the opposing team excessively. Example: "Steve is out!" is strategic communication. "Steve's out, AGAIN!" is taunting. Repetition such as "Steve's out, Steve's out, Steve's out" and direct rudeness such as "You're out" and "Go energize" is also considered taunting.
- C. You cannot use foul language (defined in Basic Laser Storm rules)
- D. Discrepancies are decided by the refs and/or tournament manager.
- E. Complaints about a player or the player's vest are acceptable to a point. When an issue is brought to a ref's attention and the ref deems the situation to be acceptable, the player

must cease complaining or risk an unsportsmanlike penalty. It is the ref's responsibility to pay attention to all players' complaints and investigate them to the best of his/her ability. "I can't hit his headset" is acceptable, but "Nice covering" is not acceptable.

- F. How things are said can be obvious penalties. The manner in which you say "Steve's out" can be spoken to convey the information to your team or to taunt the opposing players. It is up to the ref to distinguish the tone of what is said.
- G. The best solution is for the player to avoid using questionable communication methods.

### Section 1.11 **Equipment Abuse**

Tampering or abusing the laser tag equipment including the arena is cause for disqualification of the player and the team.

## **Article II. Calling Penalties**

Section 2.1 **Penalties must be shouted out by a referee and repeated by all referees until all referees have done so. The initial referee must repeat the penalty if the other referees do not repeat the call. If the tournament manager is using a P.A. system to announce the penalty, then refs will only communicate penalties to the person in charge of making the announcement.**

- A. Make sure you are clear. If players ask what it was, repeat it for them. The format is as follows:
- B. "Warning" then team color, then penalty name, then number of warnings on that team.
- C. Ex. "Warning, red team, dead men don't talk. Penalty number 1."
- D. Ex. "Warning, green team, illegal pod hit, POD HIT DOES NOT COUNT. Penalty number 3."
- E. Ex. "Warning, red team, dead men don't talk. This is the 5<sup>th</sup> penalty."

Section 2.2 **A player may ask a referee to move to a better position to see a penalty.**

- A. A referee should move to another location if they believe or have been told of penalties occurring out of their vision.
- B. A pod referee should ensure they can still see the pod if they move.

Section 2.3 **Allow the game to play out. Do not stop the game. The captains can call a refs meeting at the end of the game. After discussion, penalties may be withdrawn and possibly overturn a disqualification. Therefore, it is important to continue playing the game and not give up.**

Section 2.4 **Penalties are cumulative for each and all infractions and are applied by the following schedule. Points are subtracted from the offending teams score at the end of play.**

- A. First warning - 1 point.
- B. Second warning - 2 points
- C. Third warning - 3 points.

- D. Fourth warning - 4 points.
- E. Fifth warning - disqualification.

## **Article III. Specific Tournament-level Rules:**

### **Section 3.1 If the equipment breaks down, players must receive another pack.**

- A. Referees should determine if a player's equipment has become faulty during a game. If a player is not receiving hits, then a referee must change the player's pack. In this case, the referee will bring a new pack to the player. When changing the pack, the ref may remove the player from the game or permit the player to continue play.
- B. The player may be aware of problems such as sticky triggers, sound loss, inability to energize, or inability to fire. The player may feel the pack is ineffective, such as weak beam, cannot give hits, or takes hits too easily. In these cases, the player has the option to change the pack by going to the staging area to receive a new pack or to receive a pack from a pack referee (optional). A ref is NOT responsible for bringing a pack to the player when the player is requesting the change.

### **Section 3.2 A team more than five minutes late for their game will forfeit, although the tournament manager can override this rule if the tournament is still in first round of pairings and the schedule can be adjusted.**

### **Section 3.3 Players with long hair must pull it back or wear some head covering to ensure the headset is not covered.**

### **Section 3.4 No brimmed hats are allowed to be worn during a game since the brim of a hat can cover the headset sensors.**

### **Section 3.5 After the game is played, only captains may make complaints about penalties, equipment or the arena.**

- A. For five minutes, all the referees and the two captains can discuss the problem in the arena. If a conclusion is not met, they must move on to another room. The tournament will continue. If there is cause for a replay, the game must be played as soon as possible.
- B. One of the few reasons for a replay is massive equipment failure. Massive equipment failure is defined as defective vests equal to the number of players on the team. Malfunctioning equipment must be tested and verified as being defective by the tournament manager.
- C. Tampering with the arena is also cause for a disqualification outlined in Equipment Abuse.
- D. The tournament manager makes the final decisions based on their opinion.

### **Section 3.6 Disqualification**

- A. Upon referee discretion, some infractions may be severe enough to warrant a

disqualification.

- B. There are two levels of disqualification: Single game disqualification is equivalent to a loss, and tournament disqualification means you are no longer allowed to finish playing the tournament.
- C. Blatant cheating or breaking a rule to an extreme would be grounds for an immediate disqualification if all referees agree the behavior is unacceptable.
- D. Unless specifically stated by the arena, no player is to climb on any part of the arena. This includes but is not limited to e-Pods, Base Towers or barrels.
- E. Placing black tape over the sensors of the headset is blatant cheating and is call for immediate disqualification from the tournament. Since there is no way to tell if the perpetrator had done this during any of their previous games it is up to the player to ensure there is no tape over the sensors before the start of the game.

### Section 3.7 **Exceptions to the Rules**

- A. An arena can have house rules that must be presented during the captains meeting.
- B. Players can make exceptions to the tournament rules with a vote during the captains meeting.
- C. To vote in the captains meeting, your team must contain a regular player that has attended one of the last two Nationals.

### Section 3.8 **If a team shows up without their full team, then a player may be drafted onto the team.**

- A. First a local player must be found to fill the roster.
- B. If no local players are available to play, then the captain of the team can find a player to fill in from another team.
- C. Any captain can veto a pick.
- D. If a player cannot be found because of vetos, the tournament manager will assign a player.
- E. This procedure does not apply to the National Tournament. A player can play on only one team for the National Tournament.

### Section 3.9 No Spectators

- A. Rookie refs can shadow other refs but cannot make calls
- B. No additional refs allowed in the arena above the number specified in the captain's meeting
- C. No spectators allowed in the arena (specified viewing areas are permissible)

## **Article IV. Basic Laser Storm Rules:**

**There are two levels of disqualification: Single game disqualification is equivalent to a loss, and Tournament disqualification means you are no longer allowed to finish competing.**

### Section 4.1 **Do not climb on the energy pods or other fixtures in the arena including**

**barrels.**

**Section 4.2 No black tape allowed in arena for any reason. This is checked before the game.**

**Section 4.3 The headsets must be worn vertical at all times.**

If the headset is tilted back on the players head it makes the player harder to hit. To determine the vertical position, a player must stand against a wall, with heels, butt, shoulders, and head against the wall. Make sure the head is not tilted sideways and have the player look straight forward. The headset sensors should be perpendicular with the wall.

**Section 4.4 No horseplay is allowed.**

This is for the safety of the arena and players. Horseplay is also disrespectful to the other team and is considered to be unsportsmanlike conduct.

**Section 4.5 Intoxication or any illegal drug use will not be tolerated resulting in unsportsmanlike conduct.**

**Section 4.6 Be careful with the equipment. Equipment abuse is grounds for disqualification.**

To abuse the equipment is to risk the end of tournaments at that arena. Abuse to the system is to be dealt with strictly. Accidents happen, but intentional destruction of the arena's property will result in a Tournament DQ at the tournament manager's discretion.

**Section 4.7 Any player in possession of a dummy plug during play will be disqualified for that game.**

- A. The packs have a memory in them. This memory holds information about who hit you and how many shots you have used. When a player unit is reset the memory is cleared, headset lights will go out completely, then flash both colors, and then go out completely again. Referees should recognize this pattern, which is easy to see.
- B. During a game, a ref might need to reset a pack. Be sure to check if that pack has a hit on it. If a tagged pack is reset, then the other team gains one point after the game.
- C. On 5.X or higher StormTrak systems, a player scorecard will have asterisks next to the unit number for each time the unit has been reset.

**Section 4.8 Unplugging the headset or phaser by the player is not allowed.**

- A. By unplugging the headset from the pack unit, the player can no longer take hits in the headset and the lights go out until the headset is plugged back in. A ref who sees a player with no headset lights must go over to the player and check all the connections. If it is a faulty pack, then the player must be brought a new pack.
- B. Players should not attempt to fix anything wrong with the pack during a game. They should immediately change packs. However, it IS THE PLAYER'S RESPONSIBILITY to check all connections, trigger and sound level before the start of a game. You may not be able to choose your own vest, but you do not have to enter the game with a bad unit.

**Section 4.9 A player may only be on one team per tournament. This is not a call in the arena.**

The only time a player can play on more than one team is if another team comes short a player and one needs to be drafted.

**Section 4.10 Swearing, rude comments, obscene gestures will not be tolerated. The calls in the arena are to be appropriate with the penalty such as “Swearing.” Swearing is defined as any word or phrase referring *explicitly* to a part of the anatomy, sexual act, race, or religion.**

- A. If the player directs the comments toward another player, it is an automatic call. If a player quietly comments to himself, then a ref can use their discretion to call the penalty. Shouting obscenities is not acceptable anytime.
- B. While addressing refs, spectators or your own teammates, you must abide by the swearing rules.

**Section 4.11 Do not leave the staging areas with equipment. This is not a call during the game.**

- A. To prevent players from tampering with equipment, they are not to leave the vesting area with a pack on.
- B. Tampering with equipment is cause for immediate Tournament disqualification.

**Section 4.12 Tampering with the arena is cause for a game disqualification.**

- A. The placement of all barriers and barrels must remain exactly the same throughout the entire tournament. Barrier movement normally involves a player collision with a barrier causing the barrier to move but eventually return to the original position. Since a barrier cannot be completely secured, the barrier may stay out of the original position when hit. A barrel can be knocked over, nudged, or slid across the floor causing the barrel to be out of position. Barriers and barrels out of position are to be corrected immediately.
- B. If a barrier/barrel is moved out of position during a game and is seen by a referee, then the penalty is Barrier Movement.
- C. If the barrier/barrel is not moved back into its original position, every time a player attempts to play off that barrier/barrel, another penalty will be called.
  - a. The ref is responsible for notifying the player, but the player is responsible for moving it back into position.
  - b. If the player is somehow incapable of moving it back into place, then the nearest referee must attempt to or notify the tournament manager, who will either do it personally or instruct another staff member to do so. This should happen immediately, even during the game.
- D. If who or when the barrier/barrel was moved out of position, then the game must be replayed to ensure arena consistency throughout the tournament. Barrier/Barrel must be returned to original position.
  - a. Only the game in which it was discovered may be replayed.

- b. Barrier/barrel in question may be verified by team captains/players if necessary.
- c. Replay is subject to tournament manager's approval.
- d. The Tournament manager has the authority to deny the replay. To avoid this situation, an accurate grid/arena map should be available.
- e. If the position of the barrier/barrel in question is inconsequential to the outcome of the game, both captains may agree NOT to replay the game.

## **Article V. National Standard Game Format:**

### **Section 5.1 Headset lights must be on.**

- A. This is to ensure the headset is plugged in. If a player unplugs the headset in order to avoid being tagged, it is cause for immediate disqualification of the player and the team from the game.
- B. Headset lights also help determine the health of the pack. If the headset lights become very dim, the pack could have gone into "God Mode". This is when the battery is dying. The phaser can still fire and tag opponents, but the headset and phaser cannot take hits. Mechanical problems may cause red, green, or all lights to go in and out or to remain off. Sometimes only one side of the headset may be affected. If there are any problems with the headset lights, the pack must be changed.

### **Section 5.2 Target pods**

- A. Pods can be turned off for a tournament. If turned on, they award 5 points to the team who hit it.
- B. Pods may fire back if the arena has the capability. (3.1 pods cannot fire back.) "System fire score" is set to off meaning getting hit by the base does not give the other team a point.
- C. Pod timer settings (seconds): Sleep = 16, Warn = 2, Active = 1.5, Award = 1.5

### **Section 5.3 Player units must be set to shield level 1.**

This is done due to the effects of shield levels. When coming on to your second life, you have a delay where you can get one shot off before you are tagged. When pods are used, a team can take a hit and tag the pod while coming on their second life. This is a major advantage to the home teams, as distance and timing are critical issues that allow a team to do this. Practice is the only way to successfully do this, and the home teams will have the most practice on their arena.

### **Section 5.4 Friendly fire is set to off.**

### **Section 5.5 Games should be set to 10 minutes.**

### **Section 5.6 Double Elimination side choosing**

- A. Team with a higher placement gets to call a coin toss
- B. If the last game of the losers bracket wins, the next game is a new coin toss with the



team winning the last game making the call.

### Section 5.7 **Top Gun**

- A. Players are randomly assigned to teams for the first round of Top Gun
- B. Multiple games will occur in the first round, with the rankings determining teams after the first game set.
- C. Hits given = 2 pts, hits taken = -1 pt, pod = 3 pts until 2 vs 2 round
- D. In 2 vs 2 round, pod is reduced to 2 pts
- E. In Final round, player values are set to normal, and pods are worth 1 pt.

## **Article VI. National Standard Arena Format:**

### Section 6.1 **Any glass windows into arena must be covered to prevent bounce shots.**

Laser Storm arenas do not normally have mirrors in the arena. A reflective surface would be a huge advantage to the home teams as they know how best to use it. Therefore, all windows and other reflective surfaces must be covered.

### Section 6.2 **Only black lights allowed during play. No lighting effects or special effects allowed.**

This is done to promote a universal playing feel during tournaments. Each arena has their own unique lighting effects, when the effects are turned off the playing field is leveled for home and away teams, as well as creating a common "feel" for tournaments.

### Section 6.3 **Arena design must prevent players from being completely protected while firing at the pods.**

The defense and offense must have equal opportunities to do well. It would not be fair for a very defensive team if the pod runner were protected too much by barriers. Likewise it would not be fair for offensive teams if the arena gave the defense too much power. A player must not be completely protected while firing at the pod, and the pod must have a definable area from where it can be hit (the pod zone). There are currently no limits on the size of the pod zone.

### Section 6.4 **Arena design should ensure that any playable barrier in the arena allows for a player to be tagged from more than one vector.**

To prevent an over powered defense, any defensive barriers should be able to be taggable from more than just the top wilson. A player should not be completely protected from all sides when using a top wilson.

Likewise a side wilson (Invisibeam) should also be able to be tagged from either more than one vector or at a shallow angle (a wider angle on a point or a finger)

Ways to eliminate barriers at issue: Ensure they are hittable from another angle, one that is not overly difficult for the other team to get to. Alternatively, another barrier can be placed in such a way to reduce the effectiveness of the god barrier.

Energizer barriers can be excluded from section 6.4 out of necessity considering section 1.2.

Efforts should still be made to ensure they are not overly powerful.

Section 6.5 **Music is required but must be kept to a level to permit team communication.** Communication is very important in tournament play. Players tend to like music being played, which is now the normal environment for laser storm games. The volume must be kept at a lower level for teammates to talk to one another. If both captains agree, the music can be turned up, down, or off.

## **Article VII. Tournament Requirements:**

Section 7.1 **A special before the tournament gives the players extra practice time.** There are no set prices, and this is a suggestion. An arena can choose to sell discounted games the night of the tournament to tournament players.

Section 7.2 **Headset sensors must be checked to ensure they have not been tampered with.**

Check each headset sensor to be sure it is visible and at least level with the opening. Pushing in the headset sensors will result in equipment abuse. Players should check their own equipment before the game starts. If a headset is questionable, ask a referee.

Section 7.3 **Packs must be assigned randomly.**

A referee or a person in the vesting room must physically hand the packs to the players without looking at the player unit number. Players cannot refuse a pack unless there is a problem such as no sound, sticky trigger or some other equipment failure.

Section 7.4 **Refs**

- A. Refs will be provided by the teams that played the previous game (first game will be volunteers)
- B. Teams not providing a ref will take a 1 minute player penalty in their next game. Player chosen by the offending teams captain
- C. Teams have up to 1 minute after the last call for refs to provide a ref or receive a penalty.
- D. If a team does not want a particular person being a ref in their game, they must find an alternate.
- E. Players are allowed to address the refs when deactivated

## **Article VIII. Arena Designs:**

Section 8.1 **Arena Changes**

- A. Changes to the arena design can only be made before the final tournament begins with a unanimous captain's vote.
- B. For Nationals, changes to the arena can be made by majority decision of captains before the seeding rounds begin.

C. Design changes cannot violate the arena design rules in Article 6.

### **Notes**

This document is intended specifically for the Laser Storm system. While it may seem restrictive, keep in mind that the style of play exhibited by our highest caliber players leaves an enormous amount of room for error. It is our attempt to account for this error by being as specific as possible when developing the rules. Probably the most important thing is to have competent refs. We need people who are not afraid to call penalties and are correct when doing so. Problems will resolve themselves if all infractions are accounted for and all calls made are accurate and indisputable.

Changes made 8/7/2013:

Previous Article I -- Article V  
Previous Article II -- Article VI  
Previous Article III -- Article VII

Previous Article IV -- Article I  
Previous Article V -- Article II  
Previous Article VI -- Article III  
Previous Article VII -- Article IV

Section 1.5 **Deadman don't talk**

Section 1.8 (a) **Illegal pod hit**

Changes made 7/1/2019:

Added "Dead Cycle" rule from 2018  
Added Section 6.4 (old 6.4 moved to 6.5)  
Removed "Phaser below chin to hit pod" as per Nationals 2017  
Added new alt format from 2017  
Added 3.9 "No Spectators" from 2017  
Added Section 7.4 "Refs" from 2018  
Added Section 5.6 about coin tosses from 2018  
Added article 8 about arena chances from 2013, 2016, 2017, 2018  
Added section 5.7 about Top Gun from 2013 and 2015