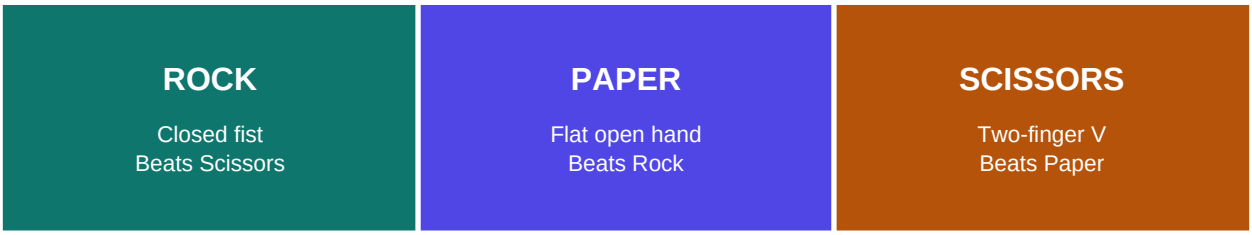
OFFICIAL ROCK PAPER SCISSORS RULES

The complete quick-reference ruleset for fair casual play, classrooms, clubs, and WRPSA competition.



1. Throw mechanics

Starting position. Both players face each other with one hand in a loose fist at chest or waist height.

Cadence. The referee, or both players together, calls: "Rock, Paper, Scissors, Shoot!" Keep a closed fist during the count and reveal the final shape simultaneously on "Shoot."

Timing. Opening early is a false start. Delaying a throw to react after seeing the opponent is a late throw and causes an immediate round loss.

Clarity. A legal throw must be clear and fully visible. Ambiguous hand shapes, hidden hands, props, gloves, novelty gestures, Lizard, Spock, and "Dynamite" are not legal in standard WRPSA competition.

2. Match format

Standard format. A standard match is best-of-3: the first player to win 2 rounds wins the match. Organizers may announce a longer odd-numbered format for later rounds.

Ties. Matching throws are a stalemate. Replay the round immediately; ties do not count as wins and there is no limit on stalemate replays.

RESULT	WINNER
Rock vs Scissors	Rock
Scissors vs Paper	Scissors
Paper vs Rock	Paper
Same throw	Tie - replay the round

OFFICIAL COMPETITION QUICK REFERENCE

Use this page for refereeing, tournament briefing, and classroom play.

3. Fouls and penalties

FOUL	FIRST OFFENSE	REPEAT OFFENSE
False start	Warning and round replay	Round loss
Late throw	Immediate round loss	Match forfeit
Illegal throw	Round loss; opponent may allow replay	Match forfeit
Stalling or delaying	Warning	Round loss
Unsportsmanlike conduct	Warning	Disqualification

Immediate action: Physical aggression, confirmed cheating, or blatant harassment may result in an immediate match forfeit or tournament disqualification.

4. Tournament procedure

Brackets. Events may use single elimination, double elimination, Swiss rounds, or group stages feeding into a knockout bracket. The organizer must announce the format before play.

Advancement. Winners advance in elimination brackets. Group and Swiss advancement uses announced points or standings; ties are broken by head-to-head record or additional RPS throws.

Referee authority. The referee enforces timing, calls fouls, and determines each round. The ruling is final during play.

Appeals. A serious rules protest must be filed immediately after the match. Officials may review video, witnesses, or device logs and overturn a result only for a clear rules breach.

5. Code of conduct

Be respectful. Keep the match moving. Hands must remain free and visible. No excessive trash talk, intimidation, physical contact, smart devices, or anything that obscures the throw.

READY TO PLAY?

Read the full rulebook, start a free match, or download fresh copies at wrpsa.com/rules

Ruleset v1.0 (2026). This handout summarizes the full WRPSA rulebook. Event-specific rules announced by an organizer take precedence where they do not conflict with safety or fair play.