

- [About Us](#)
- [Tournaments](#)
 - [2019 Throw Down Axe Festival](#)
 - [2019 South American Arnold Open](#)
 - [2019 Canadian Open](#)
 - [2019 Arnold Open](#)
 - [2018 World Championship](#)
 - [2018 U.S. Open](#)
- [News](#)
- [Official Rules](#)
- [Membership](#)
- [Round Robin](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

The official rules of
urban Axe Throwing

Competing in a WATL affiliated league? Opening up your own axe throwing facility?
Interested to learn more about the rules of axe throwing? You've come to the right place.
Scroll down to learn the rules.

- [Code of Conduct](#)
 - [The code](#)
 - [Sportmanship](#)
 - [Disciplinary Procedures](#)
- [Gameplay Rules](#)
 - [Section A: Pre-Game Rules](#)
 - [Section B: Gameplay](#)
 - [Section C: Scoring](#)
 - [Section D: Throwing](#)
 - [Section E: Attendance](#)
- [Procedures and Specifications](#)
 - [Section F: Lanes](#)
 - [Section G: Targets](#)
 - [Section H: Axes](#)
 - [Section I: Coaches](#)
 - [Section J: Safety](#)
 - [Section K: Regular Season](#)
 - [Section L: Playoffs](#)
- [The World Championship](#)
 - [Section M: Rules](#)
 - [Section N: Qualifying](#)
 - [Section O: Trophy](#)
 - [Section P: Championship 2017](#)

code of conduct

The mission of The World Axe Throwing League is to promote competition through sportsmanship and fair play. Our leagues/events should be played in a sportsmanship-like manner. Although competition may become intense, we expect our participants to maintain a high degree of sportsmanship up to and after the final throw. As a participant in any WATL tournament or event, you must pledge to:

- Respect the game, play fairly, and follow all rules and policies.
- Accept & respect the decisions of WATL officials.
- Demonstrate good sportsmanship before, during, and after games, win or lose.
- Be responsible for the sportsmanship of teammates and assist in maintaining a respectful environment for all participants.
- Be courteous to opposing players, teams, officials, spectators, monitors, or facilitators and treat all players and WATL officials with respect.
- Help to maintain and keep all equipment and conditions at the facility in good condition.
- Obey all facility rules, while respecting all equipment, common areas, playing areas, parking areas, and surrounding neighborhoods.
- Refrain from the use of abusive language or profanity. (Including but not limited to: contemptuous, discriminatory or denigratory words or actions concerning race, colour, language, religion, gender, or sexual orientation)
- Not engage in any behavior which would endanger the health, safety, or well being of any player, official staff member, or spectator.
- Not engage in verbal, written, or physical threats or abuse aimed at any participant, official, staff member, or spectator.
- Not initiate a fight, scuffle, or exchange with any individual (including but not limited to: pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, verbal threats or harassment).
- Not use alcoholic beverages at any location unless permitted by the facility/venue.
- Not allow, use or encourage illegal drugs at any location.
- Wear/use all required and issued equipment and/or uniforms.

Sportsmanship

Sports are filled with judgment calls and, as a result, disputes between players, opponents, and staff may occur from time to time. However, it is important that participants respect and handle all disputes that may occur in a civilized manner. No one may argue/protest a call made by a WATL official. Protests for player eligibility or rule misapplications/misinterpretations are time-sensitive and must be made before the next throw. Non-throwers do not have the right to argue or challenge any calls made by the league coach or referee.

All decisions made by on-site WATL Officials must be respected and obeyed. Any feedback regarding rules, players, officials, or staff members should be brought to the attention of a WATL Director during normal business hours in written form. Any behavior deemed unacceptable by WATL officials may result in a verbal warning, ejection, suspension, and/or expulsion as outlined below. Repeated Code of Conduct violations by the same player or team could result in an expulsion from the league without refunds. All Code of Conduct violations during and outside of matches will result in disciplinary measures.

Disciplinary Procedure

Upon an offense needing disciplinary action, it is recommended that the WATL official issue disciplinary action in this order:

- The offending thrower will first receive a verbal warning.
- Should similar offenses continue a second time then their most recent match points will be brought to 0 and the match will count as a loss.
- Upon a third offense by the same player, then the offending player will be suspended from the season or tournament.

A WATL official is not required to follow disciplinary measures in this order.

gameplay rules

Section A:

Pre-Game Rules

1. Minimum Age:

1. WATL does not enforce any age requirement or limit. Each affiliated location is allowed have an age requirement if they so choose. Please contact your local participating league location to inquire about their age rules.



2. Target Quality:

1. Targets should be relatively new and of sound quality prior to league commencement.

1. When targets deteriorate to a point where excessive movement or 'wiggling' of the axes occur when they land in the damaged area causing or risking good throws to fall out, the boards should be switched out to ensure fair play.
 2. If a large piece of wood or chunk falls out during play, the player may request to have the board changed but the ultimate decision will fall on the axe throwing referee (coach).
 3. Targets must be sprayed with water from a spray bottle prior to the start of league play.
 1. If boards are continually hard, league members may request to have more water sprayed on the boards.
1. No-one other than the official coach may alter the boards before, during, or after any match unless authorized by the presiding official.
 1. This includes pulling out pieces of boards, chopping or softening the board with their axe, watering the boards, etc

3. Warm Up Throws:

1. Players may have up to 5 practice throws prior to their first match.
2. Players may have 1 practice throw prior to any subsequent matches.
3. The axe throwing referee will notify players when their match will commence.
4. The league will allow practice throws before official league start time subject to availability, fairness and consent of referee on premises.

Section B: Gameplay

1. Each player is permitted to play only once per week.
 1. If an affiliated location has more than one league running per season the player may only attend one to be recorded officially.
2. Each league week allows every participant 4 matches.
3. Each match is played against different opponents, selected at random and consists of the following:
 1. 10 throws per match.
 2. In each match, players will take 5 throws then switch sides.
 1. This ensures fair play when there's varying density in wood.
 3. The winner of the match will be the person with the most points after 10 throws.
 4. In the event of a tie after 10 throws, there will be sudden death:
 1. See Section C.
 2. If both players tie again, they must continue with sudden death throws until there is a winner.
 3. Points are not counted or tallied during sudden death.
1. The match points and win/loss then be recorded and uploaded to the leaderboards.
2. After 7 weeks, the 8th and final week of each season will be the playoffs and final match to determine the season champion. See **Playoffs** section for details.

3. No wearing earphones while throwing

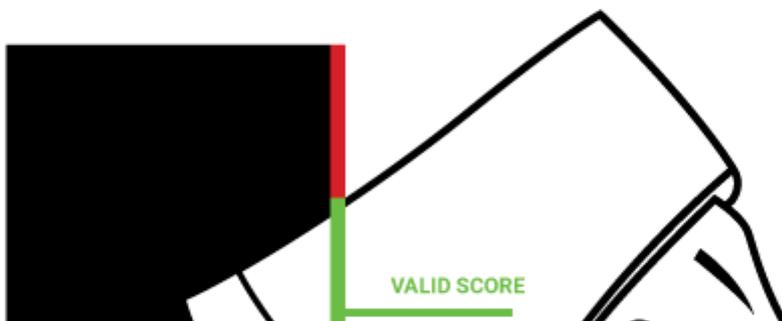
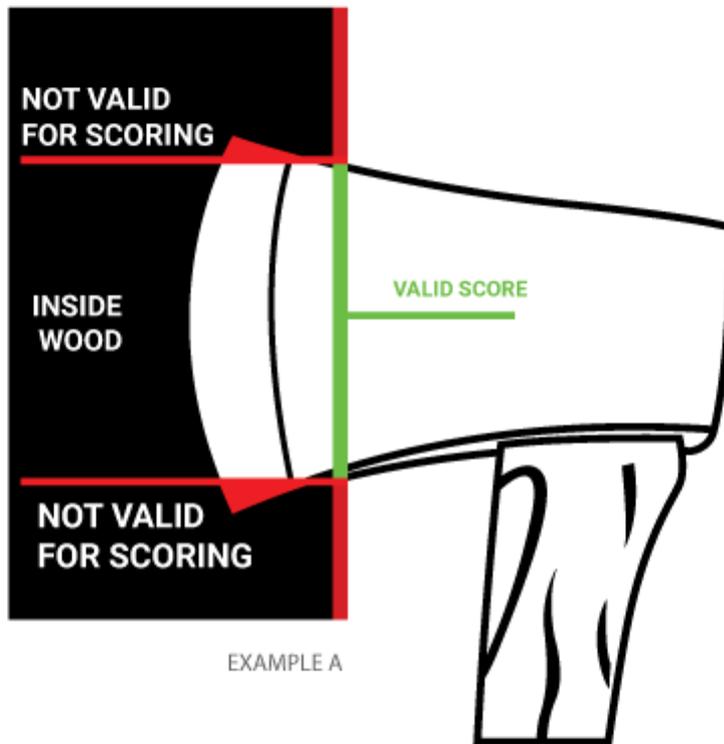
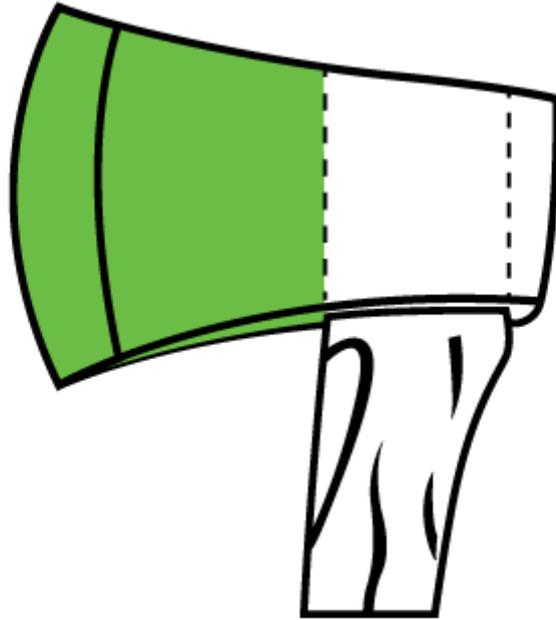
Section C:

Scoring

Points

1. Scoring Area of Axe
 1. The axe head, blade and cheek up to the front of the eye but not past it.
 2. If there is no visible eye of the axe in the top of the axe head then it counts as where the handle would meet if going straight through. To be determined by the official presiding over the match.
2. The black line awards points associated with the ring.
3. 6 points for the bullseye.
4. 4 points for the 2nd ring.
5. 3 points for the 3rd ring.
6. 2 points for the 4th ring.
7. 1 point for the 5th ring.
8. 8 points for the Killshot.

VALID SCORING AREA OF THE AXE HEAD



1. Killshot Throw

1. The Killshot is active for the 5th and 10th throw of the match only. Otherwise it will be treated as if the Killshot is not there.
 1. Before throwing for the Killshot, the player must make clear to the Judge and opponent they intend on throwing for the Killshot.
 1. This is referred to as "calling the Killshot" and activates it for the full 8 points.
 2. The player cannot change their call (Killshot or non-Killshot) once a Judge confirms, for that specific throw.
 2. The Thrower with the higher points must decide to call first. In the case of the tie, either thrower may volunteer to call first.
 1. If neither thrower volunteers to do so the Judge will flip a coin to decide and assign one player as heads, and the other as tails.
2. The Judge will confirm a Killshot call (or a non-Killshot call) with the throwers prior to a throw being made.
 1. If a throw is made prior to a Judge confirming the call, the throw will be counted as fault.
3. If the Killshot is called but the players axe does not hit the Killshot, then no points are awarded.

2. Sudden Death

1. In the event of a tie after 10 throws in a single match, the match enters into sudden death.
2. ONLY Killshots are allowed during all sudden death throws.
3. Players will remain in their respective targets for sudden death throws (no switching of targets required).
4. Players may not score on the same killshot twice in a row. Players must alternate Killshots.
5. Both players must throw within 5 seconds of each other but not before Judge confirms that the lane is open.
6. In the event that both players miss the Killshot during Sudden Death, a measuring tape or accurate measuring device will be used to measure the distance from the closest valid scoring area of the axe head to the closest edge of the Killshot. The player with the shortest distance will be awarded the match.
 1. If Player 1 has an axe that has dropped and Player 2 misses the Killshot, but is on the board, Player 2 will be awarded the match.
 2. If a player touches their axe before a measurement is made, the match is awarded to the opposing player.

3. Tallying Scores

1. When the axe is resting in its final place it will be scored.
2. The points from the axe will be determined by where the scoring area of the axe head meets the surface of the wood that the axe head is embedded into.
3. If a thrower touches any part of the axe before the presiding official announces the score, the throwers points are marked as 0.
4. If the score is too close to make an accurate call by eye, the presiding official will benefit the thrower and give the higher points.

5. If a thrower attempts to touch any part of their opponents axe at any time during a match without permission they will be suspended from the match.

Technicalities

1. A Break (breaking) is defined as when the surface of the axe is embedded in the wood and has the marked surface of the target area visible on both sides of the axe head.
2. If the axe breaks multiple sections of the target simultaneously, then the player is awarded the points for the higher valued section.
 1. To gain the points for a bullseye the axe must be inside the black line and break the red.
 1. The axe must break the red of the bullseye in order to be awarded 6 points.
 2. Breaking the outside black ring of the bullseye, that is 20mm thick, counts as 4 points
 2. To gain the points for the killshot the axe must be breaking the blue.
3. No Delays in Throws: Both players must throw within 5 seconds of each other. Players may not "delay" in throwing the axe in hopes that the opponent's axe may fall out of the target or use delays for strategic advantage.

Click image above for detailed Sudden Death Example



Section D: Axe Throwing

Axe Throwing Technique:

1. WATL players are allowed to throw axes in one of two ways:
 1. 1 Hand holding the axe with the blade facing the target before release.
 2. 2 Hands holding the axe with the blade facing the target before release.
2. No other style of throws are permitted.
3. No throw will be thrown without a verbal or gesture signal of an Open Lane from the presiding Coach and confirmed by all throwers.
 1. If no signal is given or confirmation received, and a throw is made by a thrower, then that throw will count as a throw fault.

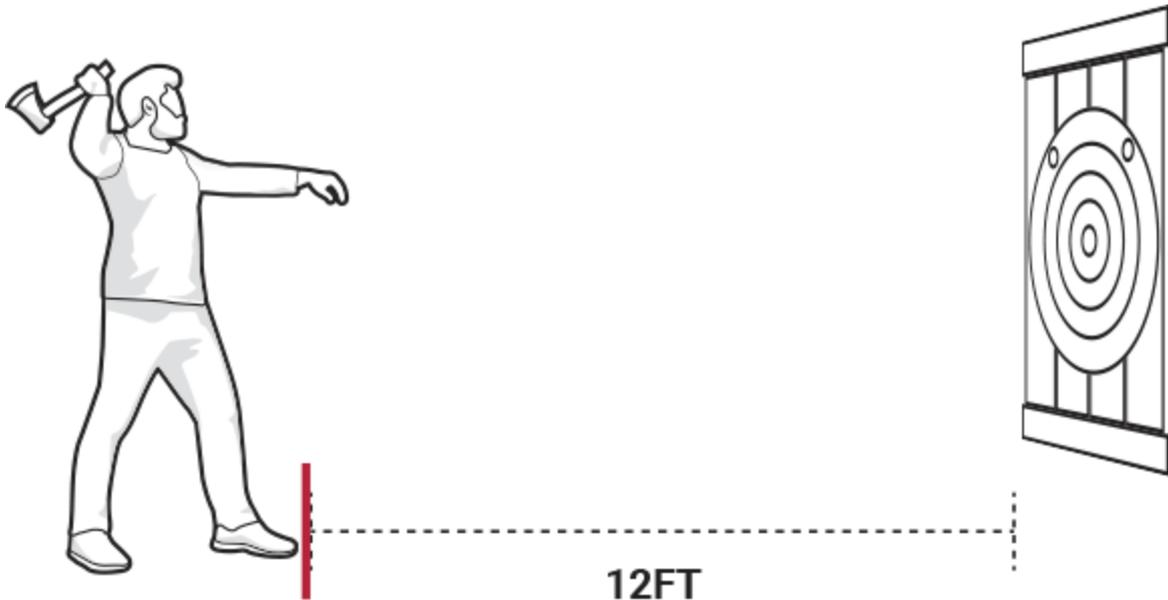
1. Throws must be taken within 5 seconds of each other.
 1. If a thrower throws after 5 seconds of the other thrower, this will result in a Throw Fault.
2. Rotation: the axe must make approximately 1 rotation in order for it to count.
 1. If the axe is close to making a full rotation (ie. 50% rotation) and a portion of the blade touches and sticks to the target, the throw counts.



Axe Throwing Distance

1. One foot must be on the floor while the axe is thrown.

2. No foot may cross the line marking 12ft/3.66 before the axe has left the thrower's hand.
3. If any part of their foot is over the line after the axe is released the throw is valid and counted.
 1. Players may not step forward, over the line during their axe throw.
 2. This exception is after the axe has been thrown/released and the player's momentum pushes them forward, past the line.
1. All Non-throwing Spectators must be to the side or at least 5ft behind throwers.



Section E: Attendance

Late Players and/or Early Departures

1. Players are allowed to arrive up to 1 hour late, after official league start time.
2. Players are allowed to leave up to 1 hour early, prior to the end of the scheduled official league time.
3. If a player arrives late, after the 1 hour official start time or leaves earlier than the 1 hour league completion time:
 1. The player that was scheduled to go against him will be granted an automatic win, but will perform 10 throws and have their points recorded.
 2. The late player will automatically receive a loss and a zero for all throws.
4. Exceptions are allowed with consent of opposing players affected that day and approval from referee.



Tournament/Playoff Exception

1. Players are required to arrive to the playoffs at the start of regulation play.
2. If a player is not present when their match begins, a 10 minute grace period will be offered.
 1. If the player does not show up, they will forfeit their match and the player that is present will be awarded the win.
 2. If the player arrives during their grace period, but is late for their next match, they will be immediately disqualified.

Absences

1. Players are allowed to miss up to 2 days of regulation play during the season and make up their matches and throws in subsequent weeks:
 1. Players must make up any missed matches by week 7, otherwise, a loss will be attributed to their absence with a score of 0.
 2. No missed matches and throws are to be performed during week 8 (playoffs) - the seven week mark is the cut off.
2. In order to miss a regulation league night, players are required to give a minimum 1 day notice to the referee of their absence.

procedures and specifications

Section F:

Lanes

1. Each throwing area is designated as a throwing lane.
2. A regulation lane for competition must contain 2 targets.
3. Fences or walls block this area from the rest of the facility to keep throwers and axes all contained in a safe environment.
4. Only the two participating throwers and the axe throwing coach are allowed inside the lane at one time. This includes ensuring the area behind the throwers is clear of any other person up to 5'.
5. 10 ft minimum/clear ceiling height (within the throwing lane) is recommended for safety reasons.

Section G:

Targets

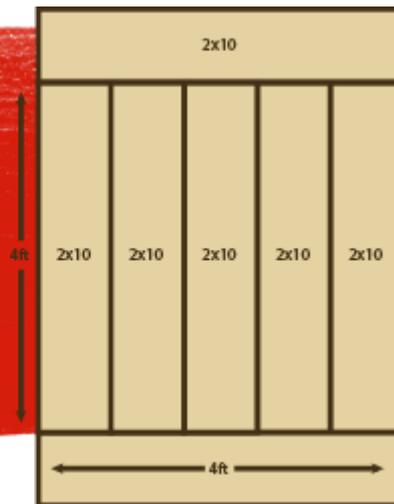
The target:

1. Each Target should be made of 3 layers of wood.
 1. The first layer should cover the wall in OSB or plywood.
 2. The second layer is called the Backboards and should be made of SPF wood.
 1. There should be horizontal 2x10s, that are 4' feet long, drilled into the wall and packed tightly together to cover the full space for the outer Targets. (This usually takes 6 – 8 boards) This will be the backboard where you will then drill your target boards against.
 3. The third and outer most layer is called the Target boards. These are also made of 4' feet long 2x10 lumber. The targets consist of two components: 1) the targets 2) the headers and footers.
 4. The exact measurements for the 2x10 boards
 1. U.S: Thickness:1-1/2 in • Width 9-1/4 in • Length 4 ft.
 2. Metric: Thickness 38mm • Width 235 mm Length 1.22m
 5. They should be arranged just like the example picture below.

Headers and footers:

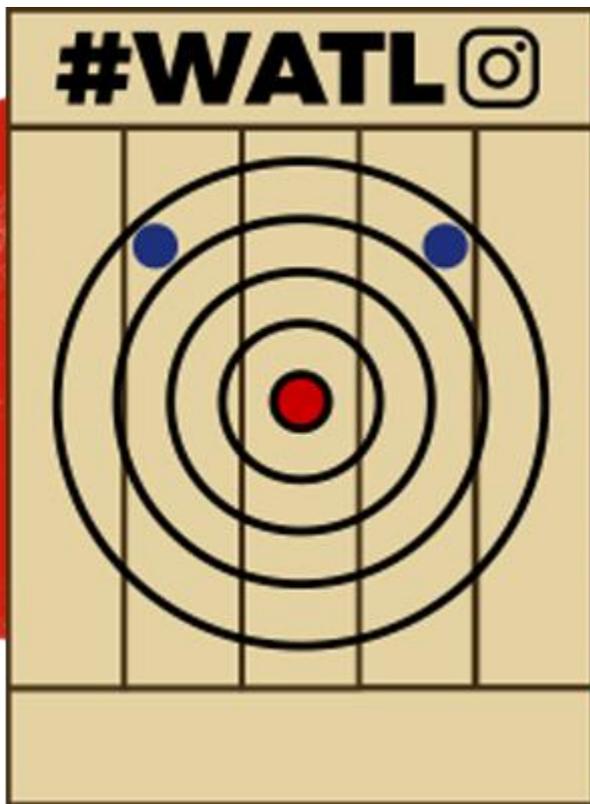
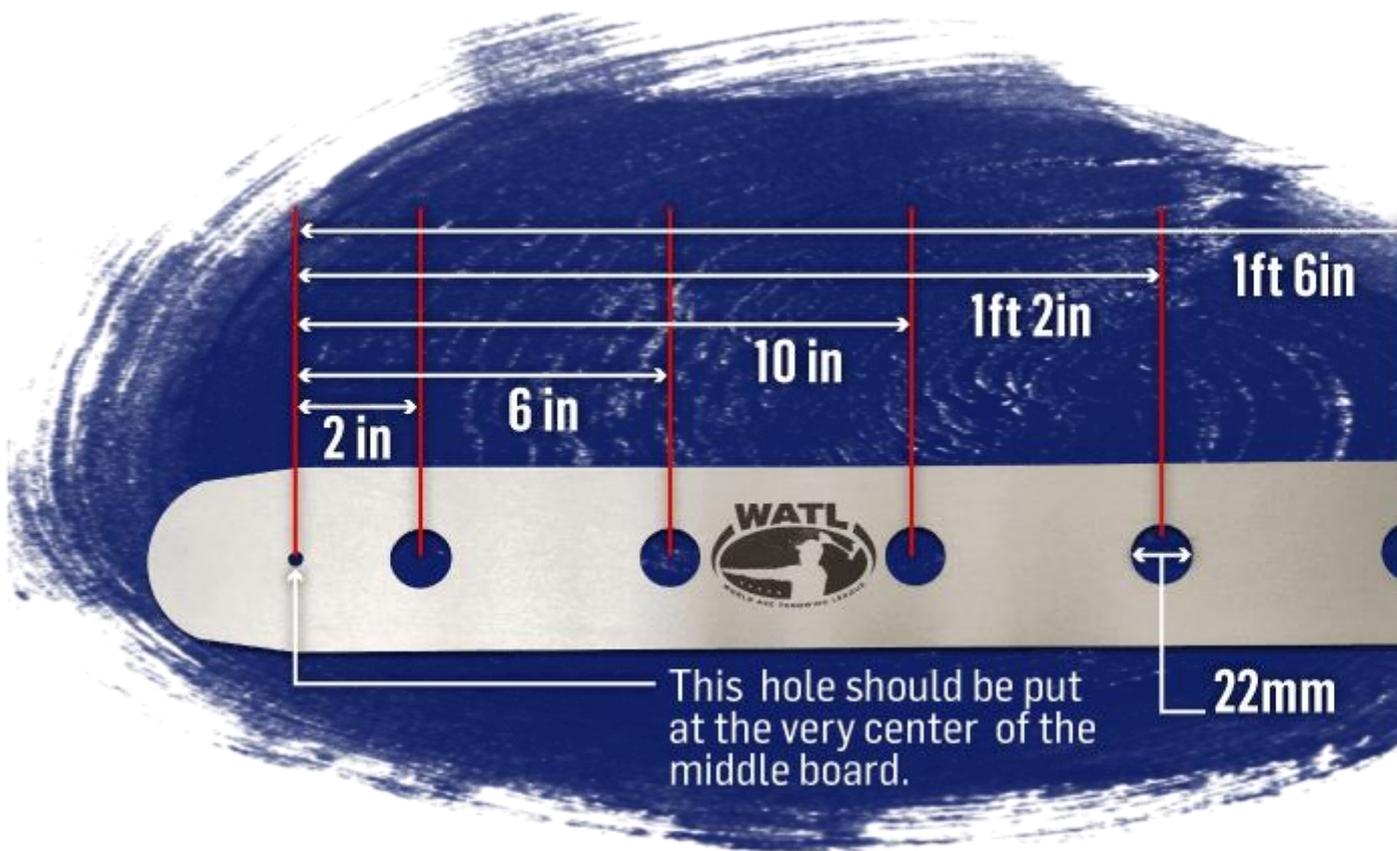
1. Above and below the targets, you will install headers and footers. This will help protect the top and bottom areas of the target while allowing for branding of your company.
 1. Header: drill one 4' foot long 2x10 pieces of wood horizontally on top of target against the backboard.
 2. Footer: drill one 4' foot long 2x10 pieces of wood horizontally on bottom of target against the backboard.
 1. The footer also provides the benefit of allowing you to change boards quicker and easier.
 2. The top of the footer should be 36 inches off the ground.
2. The end product is a backboard that is 4' feet x 6' and another layer of SPF that fully covers the back at 4' feet x 6' as well.

Once Complete,
your target boards
should look similar
to this example



Target Design

1. Each WATL affiliated location shall purchase an official target protractor/stencil.
2. The small hole on the left in the diagram to the right will have a screw that will be drilled into the center of the middle board. (Approximately 24 inches in the center of the board. That will make 60 inches from the floor).
 1. A black, 20mm marker will then be used to draw the remaining circles.
 2. Holes are 22" thick to allow for marker to fit that has 1/2" thick felt.
 3. Lines are only 20mm thick.
 4. The Bullseye is to be coloured in red.
3. All targets must be level (no slanting of the targets are allowed).
4. The bullseye (center red circle) must be 3.5" inches in diameter inside the center ring. The bullseye must be 24" inches (60.96 cm) from the bottom of the board. This should make the center of the bullseye 60" from the floor.
5. The killshot (2 blue circles) are 1.5" inches in diameter and positioned inside the 1 point ring.
 1. The bottom of the killshot is positioned approximately 36 inches from the bottom of the board and 2.5 inches from the outer side of the board ensuring they are centered inside the 1 point outer ring.
6. "#WATL" or "World Axe throwing League" is required to be listed prominently on either the header or footer boards

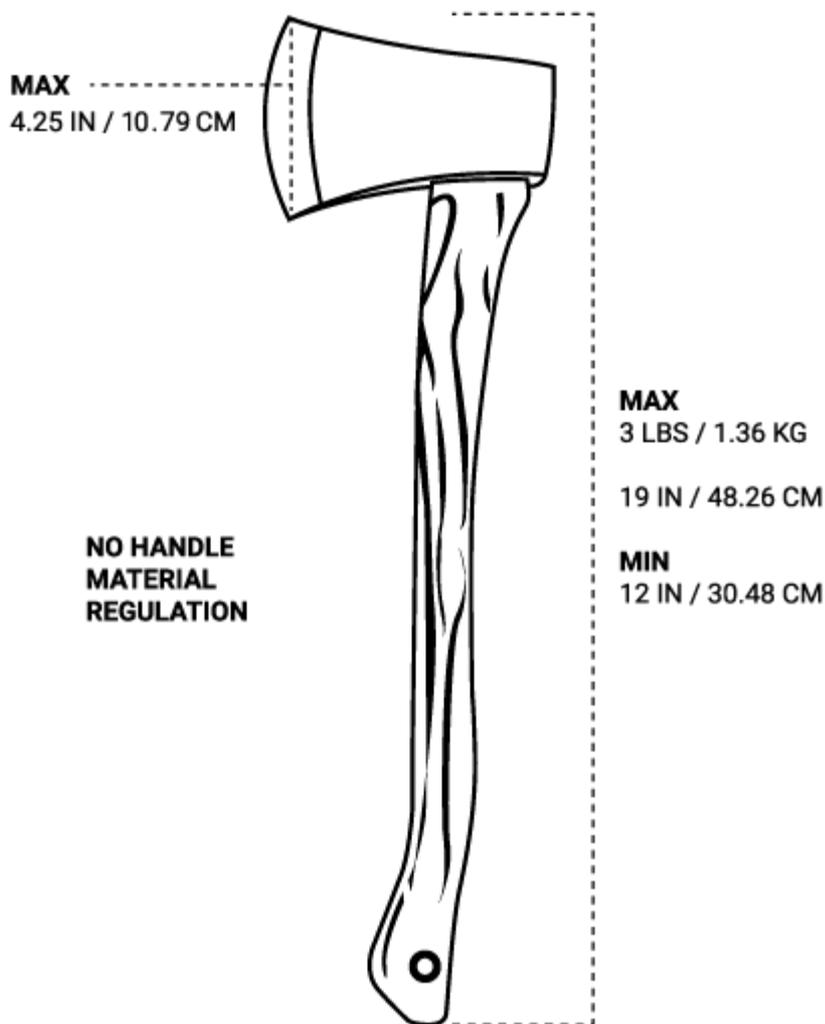


Once Complete,
your drawn target
should look simi
to this example

Section H:

Axes

1. Axe Regulations
 1. Scoring Area of Axe
 1. The axe head, blade and cheek up to the front of the eye but not past it.
 2. If there is no visible eye of the axe in the top of the axe head then it counts where the handle would meet if going straight through. To be determined by the official presiding over the match.
 2. The blade (or bit) of the axe may be not longer than 4.25 inches.
 1. This is to be measured from tip to tip in a straight line.
 3. No second bits or spikes on the opposite side of the axe head from the forward facing bit of the axe.
 1. Decorative blunt objects are allowed but there may not be anything that could be considered sharp. This will be determined by the presiding match official.
 4. Handle Max Length can be no more than 19in/48.26cm from the bottom of the handle to the top of the axe head.
 5. Maximum Weights of an axe
 1. Axe Total = 3 lbs/1.36 kg
 6. Broken axe
 1. If the coach determines that a throwers axe has broken during a match in a significant way. The thrower must provide a replacement axe to be verified and approved by the coach. If they do not provide a second non-broken axe within 1 minute they will have the rest of their match throws counted as 0.
 1. The thrower is allowed 1 practice throw with the new axe before continuing the match. This will only apply if their original axe is declared broken by the presiding official.



Section I: Coaches

1. Coaches must always be present while members are throwing during league play.
 1. A 5' radius should be maintained around every participant holding an axe, however, the coach may approach the participants and enter this 5' radius to provide instruction.
 2. An axe should never be thrown until a coach has provided a demo and instruction for which the participant has been present.
2. If an Affiliate/Judge/presiding official is caught cheating in any way such as but not limited to, falsifying data, making biased calls in a match, etc.
 1. Cheating results in a one year ban from hosting any WATL Sanctioned events including leagues, tournaments, etc.
1. Axes are to be retrieved only when both axes have hit the target or the floor.
2. Axes shall never be thrown when a participant is picking up an axe from the target area. This will result in an immediate disqualification (counted as a loss) for that match.



Section J: Safety

1. Axes
 1. Each and every axe is inspected prior to each league night to ensure the axe is up to standard.
 2. Broken axes may not be used.
 3. Participants are instructed to grip the axe by the handle and only the handle.
2. Injuries
 1. If there is an injury of a player during league play, the injured player must seek prompt attention for any injuries.
 2. The injured player may continue to compete after injury only after the player and league official decides it is safe to do so.
 3. The Player and League official may have up to 2 minutes to decide whether the injured player may continue. If no decision has been reached in 2 minutes the injured player must forfeit the match. Their match will count as a loss but all points earned in the match are still recorded.
 4. If either the player or the league official decides the injured player is too injured to continue, the injured player must forfeit the match. Their match will count as a loss but all points earned in the match are still record.

Section K: Regular Season

1. The entire season lasts 8 weeks including playoffs.

2. There are 7 weeks where players can work on their season total allowing for 280 throws that officially contribute to each player's season standings.
3. Levels of Competition - Sanctioned leagues and Rec leagues
4. Rec Leagues are not mandatory and will not count for league qualifiers.
5. Sanctioned League
 1. A Sanctioned League is the axe throwing league hosted at a participating WATL affiliated venue that follows the rules and regulations of the World Axe Throwing League.
 2. A Sanctioned League winner in a season, is crowned Regional Champion and is eligible for the World Championship.
 3. A WATL Sanctioned League must have a minimum of 6 different players.
 4. A WATL Sanctioned League may not have more than 60 players. If recruiting more than 60 players at the WATL Venue, then they must host Multiple Sanctioned Leagues.
 5. Sanctioned Leagues must begin within 1 week from the official WATL start dates for each season.
 6. Sanctioned Leagues must end within 1 week from the official WATL start dates for each season.
 1. WATL must be notified at least 2 weeks in advance, before the end of season, of delays to the end of a season tournament due to acts of God or national holidays.
6. Multiple Sanctioned Leagues
 1. A WATL affiliated venue may host more than one sanctioned league per season.
 2. For players registered in more than one WATL sanctioned league in each season (be it separate nights or separate locations), prior to the start of the league season, must immediately identify which league and location will be considered for their score and eligibility for the WATL Championship and official WATL leaderboards.
 1. Failure to do so will result in WATL making the determination from the lowest points in all registered locations.
 3. If hosting more than one sanctioned league, each sanctioned league must have a minimum of 10 different players not participating in another WATL sanctioned league.
 4. The winner of each Sanctioned League is considered to be a Regional Champion for the sake of determining who is eligible for the World Championship.
 1. This will allow one location to potentially have multiple Regional Champions for the World Championship invitations.

Section L: Playoffs

1. During the 8th Week playoff tournament all league members will participate in a single match, **Double** Elimination bracket.
2. All competitors in the season participate unless they've been absent for more than two weeks of league.

3. Seeding is done in the traditional manner based on the total points from weeks 1 through 7.
4. All competitors eligible for playoffs will be put into two sets of brackets, the winner's bracket and underdog bracket (W and U brackets for short) after the first round. The first-round winners proceed into the W bracket and the losers proceed into the U bracket. The W bracket is conducted in the same manner as a single-elimination tournament, except that the losers of each round "drop down" into the U bracket.
5. The final Championship round is between the winner of the W bracket and the winner of the U bracket consisting of best of 3 matches. Allowing for one practice throw between each match.
 1. The Winner: will be the person who wins 2 out of the 3 matches first.
 1. The W winner must lose twice in order for the U winner to win the Championship.
 1. This means that if the U winner, beats the W winner in a best of 3 match, they must play another best of 3 match in order for the U winner to win the Championship.



The world championship

Section M: Rules

1. The World Axe Throwing League Championships are held once a year after the Fall season in late November, early December

2. We will announce the seasonal WATL Champion at the end of each season.

Section O:
Trophy

1. The World Axe Throwing League Championship trophy is held with the World Champion at the WATL affiliated venue they are representing for one year, until the next World Championship where it will be delivered back.
 1. If they did not represent a venue (via a win of the Wildcard, Open Tournament etc) then they may keep it at their personal residence.
 2. The Championship Axe will be kept by the winner of that year's Championship title.



Section N: Qualifying

1. Qualifying for the World Championship
 1. When competing in a WATL sanctioned season, if you met the following criteria, you will earn a bid for the World Championship:
 1. You must win your local league season and be crowned Regional Champion.
 2. Out of all Regional Champions per season, the top 12 Regional Champions with the top overall points score from weeks 1 through 7 will earn a placement at the World Championship.
 1. The top scores of all Regional Champions must be approved and verified by WATL.
 2. This requires that your facility utilizes the official WATL League App or Software.
 2. Other ways to qualify for the World Championship:
 1. Win an officially sanctioned WATL Open Tournament.
 2. Become the winner of the Gold Cup Tomahawk tournament in the IKTHOF Championship.
 3. Be the previous years World Champion.
 4. Win one of the World Axe Throwing League Championship Wildcard spots available during the World Championship weekend.
2. **Restrictions on qualifying**
 1. Cannot be eligible for more than 1 Championship placement in a year.
 2. If a player has already earned a placement for the Championship, and they win their next regional championship and meet all eligibility requirements, the Championship placement will go to the runner-up below them that meets all other required eligibility requirements with the exception of being a regional winner.
 1. This means that the runner-up must also place in the top 12 point scores amongst Regional Champions globally.
 3. If a person wins a tournament outside of the sanctioned season and they already have placement in the World Championship then their bid is given to the runner-up of the tournament.

Still, have a rules question?

Send us a message and we'll answer it ASAP!

You're question was sent successfully. We'll contacting you soon.
Send Question