

# International Mölkky Organisation

# I.M.O.



## Tournament Rules

Changes since the last official edition (2019-03-30) are marked in light green.

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## **1. Interpretation and scope**

These tournament rules (the "Rules") as approved by the International Mölkky Organisation (I.M.O.) and its members which may be amended or restated from time to time, shall apply to all tournaments which are approved or supported by the I.M.O. These are in particular all world and continental championships (e.g. Asian and European Championships). I.M.O. recommends applying these Rules also to national championships. Of course, the tournament rules can also be used in any country for any other championship.

Members are responsible for translations into the language of their country. If there is any divergence in the wording, the English text is authoritative.

The Rules are a statement of generally accepted principles of best practice for the enjoyment of Mölkky by all participants. However, the Rules are not intended to cover every possible situation that might arise in the course of a tournament and accordingly are no substitute for the decision and discretion of the tournament main referees to determine the most appropriate solution in any particular set of circumstances.

Any reference to the male gender shall be deemed a generic gender reference. The use of the terms "player" or "opponent" shall apply analogously to teams, too.

The official languages of international tournaments must be primary English and any official or predominant language of the country in which the tournament is taking place.

National tournaments (e.g. "Open Mölkky Finnish National Championship") are unaffected by this language regulation.

## 2. Basic rules

Tournament games should be played with official Mölkky-game-sets manufactured by the company "TACTIC GAMES OY".

In case of any disagreement between the teams, please refer to chapter "7 Referees".

### 2.1. Assembly

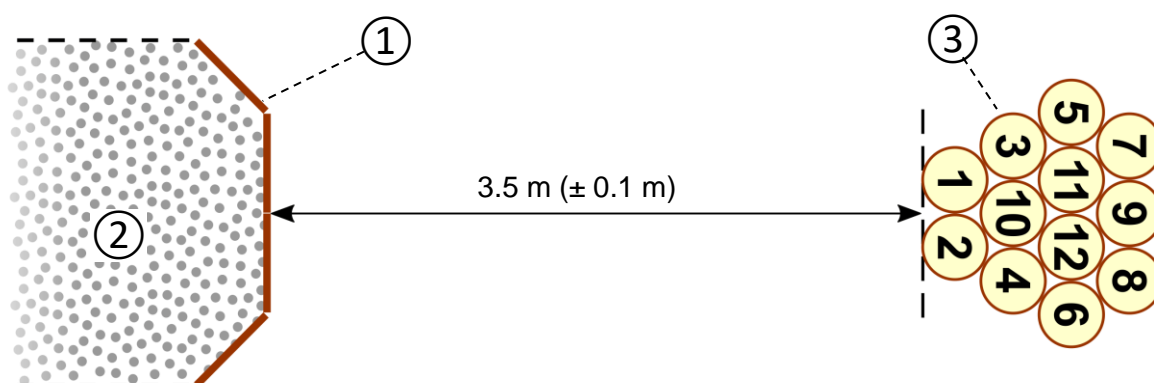
#### General

The tournament organiser decides whether the Mölkky sets are provided by him or if private Mölkky sets are to be used.

The game consists of:

- Skittles:  
12 skittles numbered from 1 to 12, each of about 15 cm height and about 5.9 cm in diameter, each bevelled from 45°.
- Throwing Skittle:  
1 throwing skittle, called a Mölkky, of about 22.5 cm of length and about 5.9 cm in diameter.  
Since the Mölkky, as well as the entire playset, is made of wood, the weight depends on the growth of the trees and on the relative humidity (up to 30% of the total weight), no fixed weight is given at this point.  
However, the difference between the lightest and heaviest Mölkky in a tournament should not exceed 50 metric grams.  
I.M.O. proposes to provide the Mölkkys with the corresponding playing field number, thereby ensuring each Mölkky remains on the same field for the entirety of the tournament.
- Mölkky frame (see ① in the following figure):  
1 Mölkky frame, called Mölkkaari, of about 96 cm total length, both legs are at an angle of about 45° to the throwing line.  
If it is the turn of a player with wheelchair (or other such mobility device), the Mölkkaari can be straightened as desired. The player can have an assistant to aid him/her entering and leaving the throwing area.
- Assembly (see ③ in the following figure):  
The skittles are placed at a distance of 3.5 meters (tolerance  $\pm 0.1$  m) from the Mölkkaari. The initial setup of the skittles is shown in the following figure.
- Throwing area (see ② in the following figure):  
The throw must be within the throwing area, which is limited by the Mölkkaari to the front and a left and right sideline that may be marked as a line (see chapter "3.7 Throwing area").  
After a throw the throwing area must be left from the back.  
See chapter "5.8 Trespassing (walking over)" for further notes and rules for the throwing area.

Assembly:



## 2.2. Definition of the term “throw”

A throw was made when the Mölkky left the hand of any player, standing inside the throwing area, and stopped moving after touching the ground, no matter where it touches the ground first.

Generally, all kinds of throws are allowed. However, the tournament organiser can choose to restrict the styles of throws in order to, for example, avoid damage.

## 2.3. Course of the game

Each team has only one throw per round.

It is unimportant whether the Mölkky (throwing skittle) hits a skittle directly or indirectly (e.g. via a wall) or a skittle is directly or indirectly hit by another skittle in terms of this rule.

A skittle is considered fallen when, after all skittles and the Mölkky have come to rest, it is lying on the ground without being supported by another skittle, the Mölkky or anything else. In case of a limited playing area, a skittle coming to rest outside the boundaries, even if it finishes standing up or leaning, will be always counted as fallen. Skittles that fall over after the throw for any other reason are not considered to have fallen and must be returned to their original position.

- if one skittle falls, the score = the number of the skittle
- if more than one has fallen, the score = the number of fallen skittles

After each throw, fallen and leaning skittles are put upright at the place where they came to rest. The point where the base of the skittle contacts the ground must remain fixed, and the skittle is rotated around this point until it is standing, then turned so the number faces the Mölkkaari. The skittles are reset starting with the nearest to the Mölkkaari working backwards.

For indoor tournaments the organiser may restrict this rule (see chapter “3.5 Indoor playing fields”).

When a skittle is leaning against a fixed object (for example a wall), it is moved away from the object so that the Mölkky fits lengthwise between the skittle and the object.

This skittle then counts as “not fallen” (unless it is outside a playing field with limited playing area).

Skittles moved by something other than direct or indirect contact by the Mölkky thrown by a player involved in the game, are put back to their original position and are not considered as “fallen”.

If a team scores 0 (zero) with 3 consecutive attempts, the set will end immediately with 0 points for this team.

## 2.4. End of a set

A set ends when the first team reaches exactly 50 points or all other teams end the set prematurely with 0 points (e.g.: 3 consecutive attempts with 0 points, fouls, etc.), in which case the remaining team also receives 50 points.

## 2.5. Definition of the terms “game” and “set”

A game can have several sets, for example a „best-of-5“-game has minimum 3 but maximum 5 played sets.

## 2.6. Playing schedule, qualifications and first throw

The playing schedule must be published at minimum 1 week before the tournament.

At this time, the qualification system of the tournament must also be published.

It must consider also the cases of a tie.

One example (how it might look like, the number represents the priority):

1. number of won sets
2. point differences
3. in case of a tie direct compare of teams by won sets
4. in case of a tie direct compare of teams by points

And here a second example:

1. sum of thrown points (little points)
2. in case of a tie Mölkk-Out

The order of the first throws must also be determined by the organiser.

Two examples:

- according playing schedule, afterwards alternating
- by tossing a coin, afterwards alternating, 5th set by Mölkk-Out

### 3. Playing fields

#### 3.1. Arrangement of the playing fields

The playing fields should be numbered and marked.

The minimum size of outdoor playing fields is 4 m width and 10 m length (starting from the throwing line). The surface should be like a football pitch (sand, gravel) or a clay court (crushed shale, stone, brick, or other unbound mineral aggregates).

Indoor playing fields may have a smaller size and a different surface.

#### 3.2. Playing fields for training

Organizers are at liberty to set up some training area for competing teams. Players who want to train must be careful not to interfere with tournament operations.

#### 3.3. Playing fields with unlimited playing area

The game is not limited to the marked playing field, the lines serve only as orientation lines.

The fallen skittles are put upright, as usual, at the place where they fell, even if this place is in another playing field. The skittle must be placed so that it is visible by the players.

#### 3.4. Playing fields with limited playing area (e.g., curbs on boule frames or just chalk lines)

The playing field is limited to its boundaries.

A skittle landing outside the boundaries, even if put itself back up, will be counted as fallen.

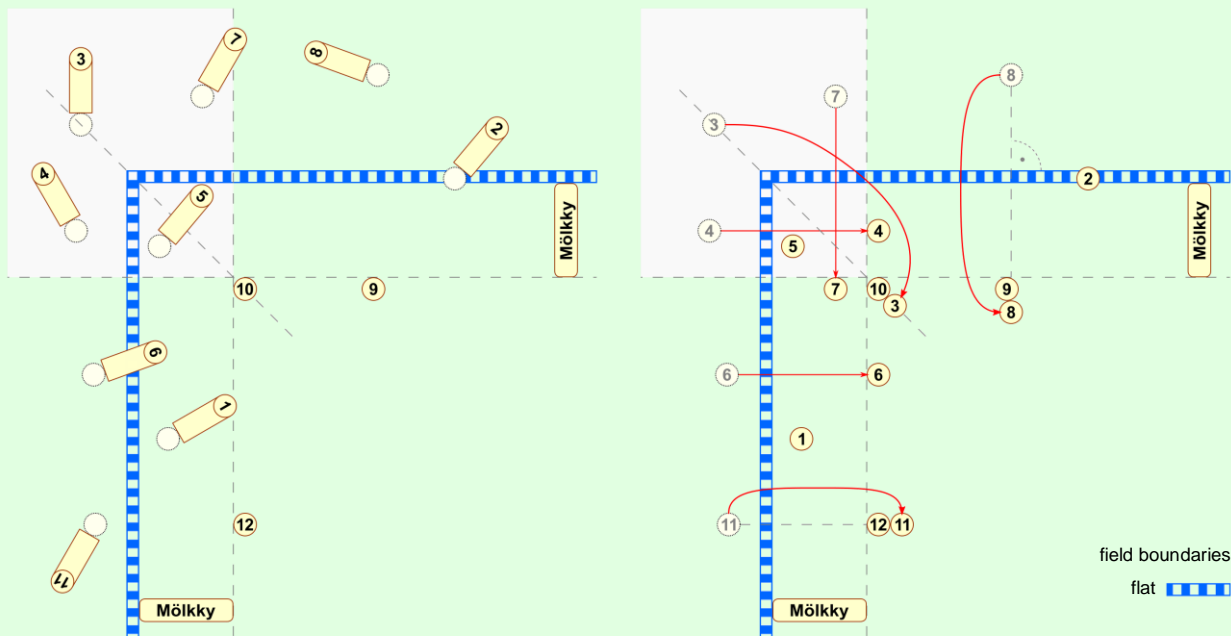
If skittles need to be moved into the playing field, they are put upright perpendicular to their current location (base) with a distance of one MÖlkky length from the boundary.

The following illustrations show many cases for flat, high and mixed boundaries, where and how the skittles are placed.

### 3.4.1. Setup for flat boundaries

The flat boundary is part of the playing field.

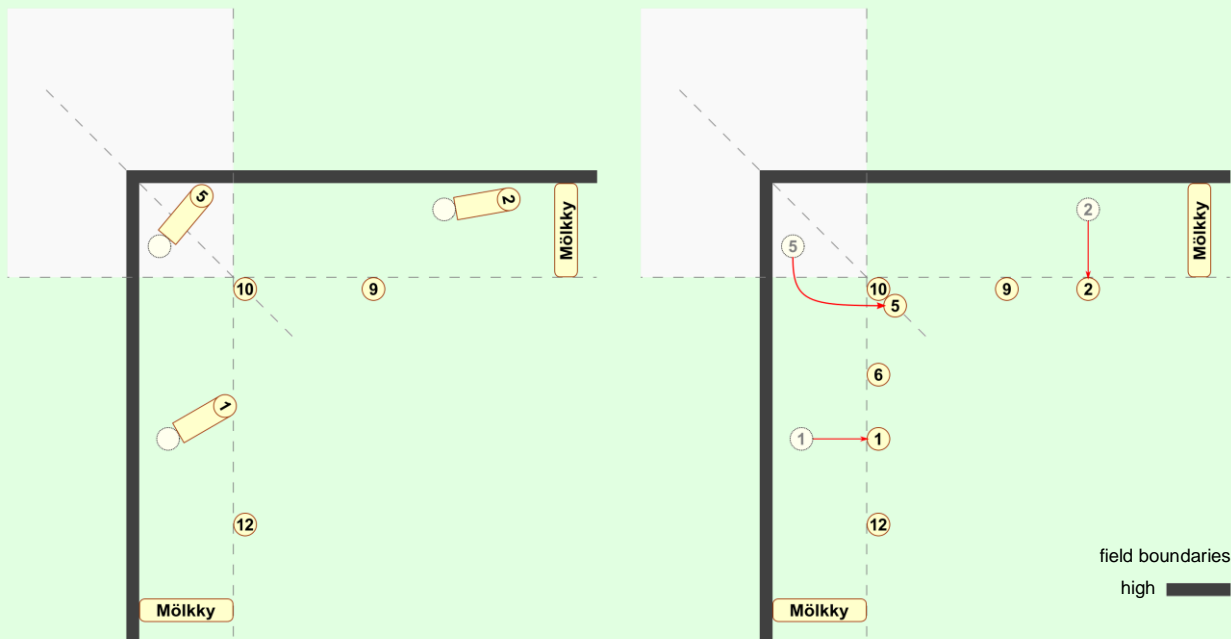
The base of a skittle must be 100 % out of the line (boundary) to be considered as “out of the field”.



### 3.4.2. Setup near high boundaries

The boundary is not part of the playing field.

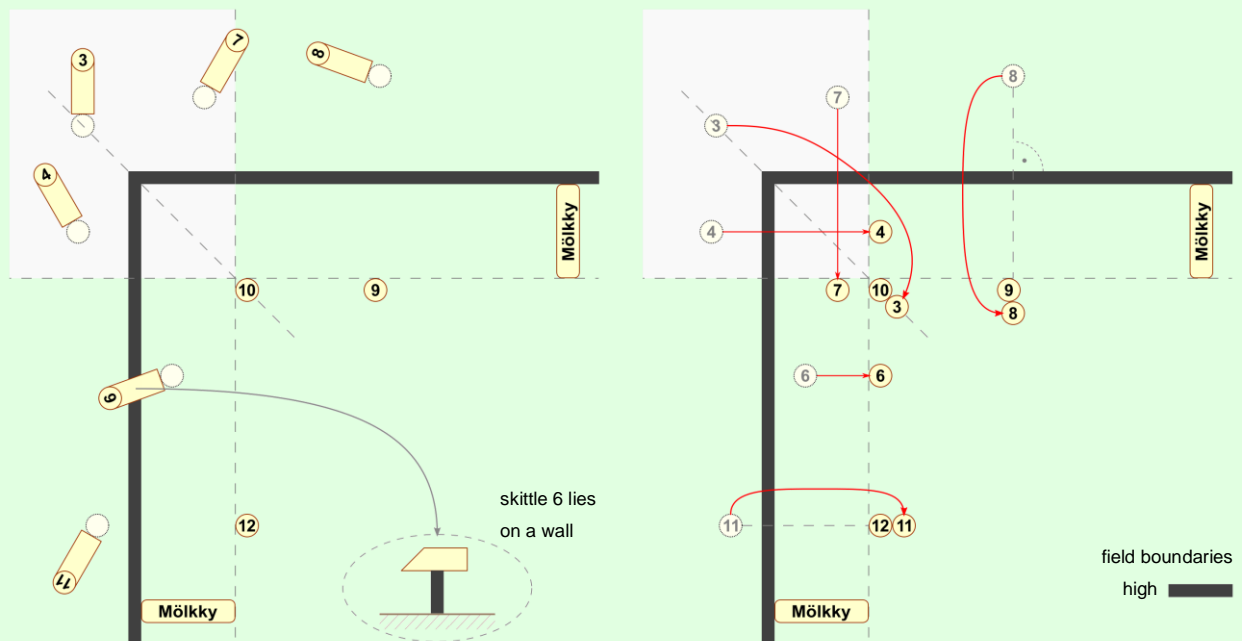
#### 3.4.2.1. Skittles within one Mölkky length





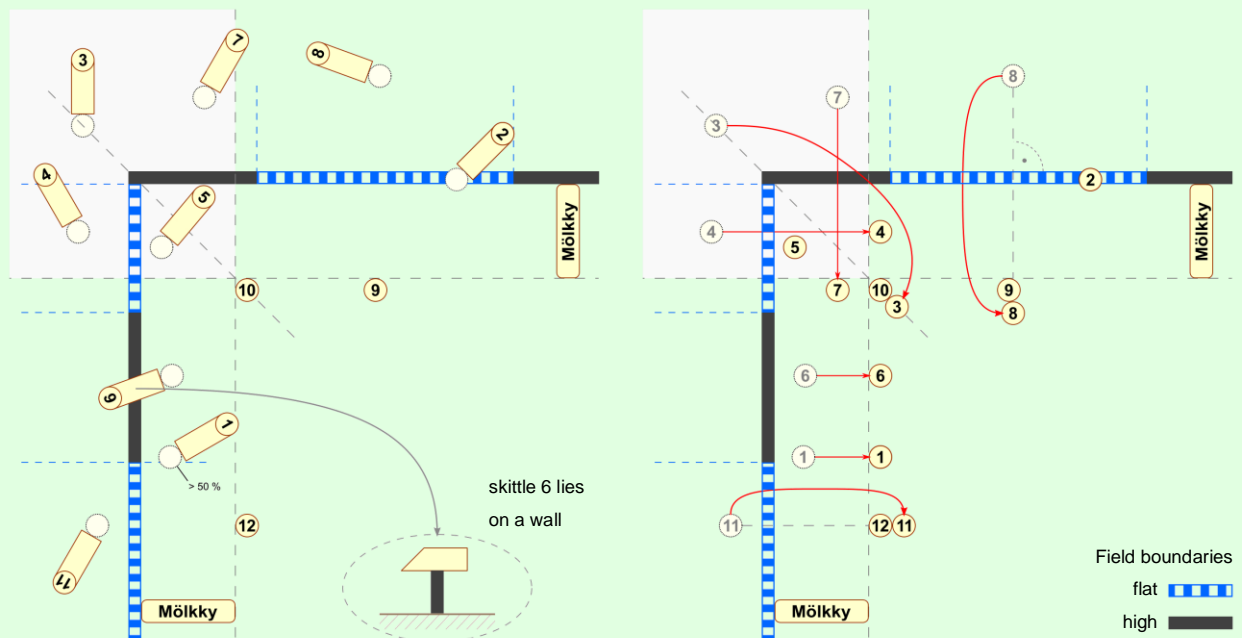
### 3.4.2.2. Skittles outside the boundary

If the base of a skittle has no contact to the playing field ground, it is considered as “out of the field” (for example: skittle number 6 lies on the boundary, e.g. concrete wall).



### 3.4.3. Setup for mixed boundaries (high and flat on one field)

Here, the rules for high and flat boundaries apply to each respective section.



### 3.5. Indoor playing fields

The tournament organiser may restrict the rules by the following items:

- skittles in front of assembly line (less than 3.5 m from the throwing area):  
When the skittles have stopped moving in front of the assembly line, they are placed back on the assembly line (perpendicular to their current location).
- playing field restricted to marked playing field:  
The game is limited to the marked playing field. In this case, the fallen skittles are put upright with a distance of one MÖlkky length to the boundary or line perpendicular to their current location (see chapter “3.4 Playing fields with limited playing area”).

### 3.6. Entering the playing field

Entering the field is only allowed after consulting the referee.

In games without a referee, this must be agreed with the opposing team beforehand. This shall also apply to putting upright the skittles after a throw.

### 3.7. Throwing area

In order to provide a better monitoring of the "Trespassing"-rule the sidelines of the throwing area can be drawn by players or the referee upon agreement.

## **4. Number of players**

### **4.1. General**

At the beginning of the game the captain of the team reports the players for this game in their order of play. In the following set, the line-up (player, order) can be changed.

During the set, no changes are permitted (with the exception of a player injury, this decision depends on the main referee). If players of a team fail due to illness, a solution can be found by the main referee.

### **4.2. For tournaments with 4 players per team**

Teams with 4 players are allowed to have up to 2 substitute players.

### **4.3. For tournaments with 3 players per team**

Teams with 3 players are allowed to have up to 1 substitute player.

### **4.4. For tournaments with 2 players per team**

Teams with 2 players are allowed to have up to 1 substitute player.

### **4.5. Player and team**

A player may only play for one team during the tournament.

## 5. Faults

### 5.1. General

Any rule violation must be announced immediately (before the next throw) to the referee (if it is a game with a referee) or the teams involved. Any claim after the next throw is thus obsolete. If there is no agreement on a game without a referee, one of the main referees must be contacted.

After any throw, listed below, fallen skittles are put upright at the place where they fell. (Exception see chapter "3.5 Indoor playing fields")

### 5.2. Over-scoring

If a team scores over 50, the team's score is lowered to 25 points and playing continues.

### 5.3. Misthrows

A misthrow is a specific kind of throw:

- A misthrow is a throw where there are no countable skittle points.
- A misthrow brings zero (0) point to the team.
- If a team has three (3) misthrows in a row, it is out of the set with zero (0) points.

### 5.4. Dropping the Mölkky

If an active player drops the Mölkky whilst standing inside the throwing area, the throw is counted as a "Misthrow" with all its consequences.

Exceptions:

- The Mölkky is dropped after picking it up from the ground.
- The Mölkky is dropped whilst being handed between players or between a player and the referee.
- The Mölkky will be temporarily put on the ground (in order e.g., whilst being handed between players or between a player and the referee).

### 5.5. Exceeding time frame

If not defined differently by the tournament organiser the following rule apply:

If the time frame is exceeded for a second time within the same game, the possibility of a throw will be forfeited (misthrow = 0 points).

(See also chapter "9.2 Time frame for throwing")

### 5.6. Absence of a player

If a player of a team for whatever reason is absent or cannot throw, the alleged throw of this player is considered a misthrow (0 points).

## 5.7. 37-points rule

If a team has 37 or more points and commits one of the following faults (chapter 5.8 to 5.10), the score will revert to 25 points, i. e. this case is considered as a misthrow and an over-scoring (more than 50 points)!

## 5.8. Trespassing (walking over)

The following events from entering until leaving the throwing area by the active player are considered as a rule offense "Trespassing":

- moving or touching the Mōlkkaari (exception new alignment)  
In case of games without a referee, the "Alignment" must be announced.  
In case of games with a referee, only he is allowed to realign the Mōlkkaari.
- touching the ground beyond the Mōlkkaari or the sidelines with any part of the body or shoes.

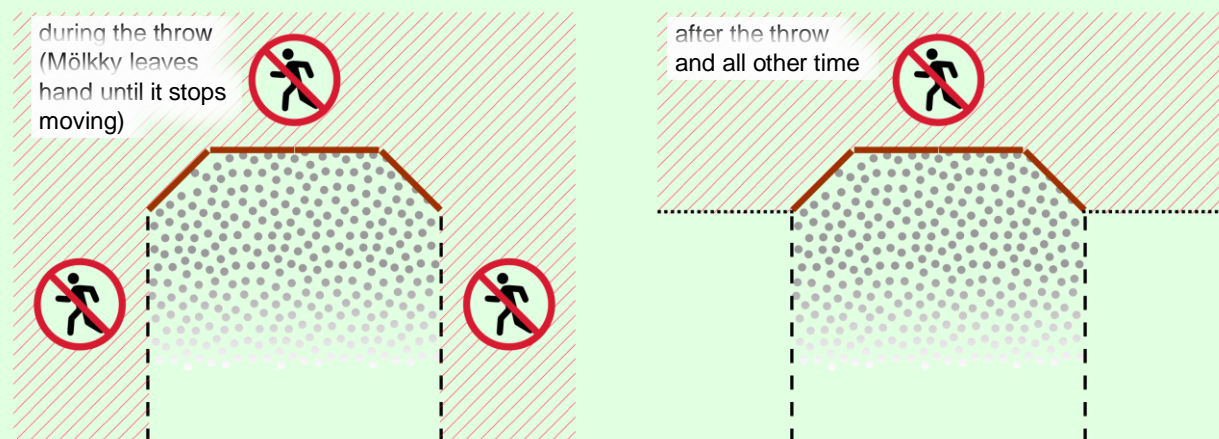
The player is allowed to enter and leave the throwing area as many times without throwing. When leaving, the same trespassing rules apply as after a throw.

To avoid this rule violation, the easiest way could be for the player to take a step back after the throw. However, the player can also turn around and then leave the throwing area.

With trespassing the throw is counted as a misthrow (0 points).

In case of an external factor pushing the player to the Mōlkkaari, an exemption can be given by the referee, but not more than one per match and team.

This may also constitute a rule violation "misbehaviour according to Fair Play".



When leaving the throwing area, the baseline (dotted line), but never the Mōlkkaari, may be crossed to set up the skittles or to better identify their positions.

### **5.9. Wrong player sequence**

If a player throws out of turn, it is counted as a misthrow (0 points).

The order of the players is continued as if the right player had thrown, even if a player throws twice in a row.

### **5.10. Wrong team sequence**

If a team throws out of turn, the achieved points will be nullified and the team receives the penalty "misthrow" (0 points) on its next regular throw, that means the team loses the right for its next throw.

The order of the teams is continued as if no one had thrown.

## 6. Fouls

### 6.1. General

Fouls can be:

- actions which break the rules that have no predefined consequences
- misbehaviour according to Fair Play.
- ignoring the instructions of the referee.
- any aggression towards referees or players.

If a foul is committed the referee will call out the foul and announce the cause, a warning or penalty, and the minimum consequences evolving from a subsequent foul.

Depending on the severity of the foul penalties can be assigned, either for a specific offence, or as a consequence of a previous warning or foul.

Severe misbehaviour such as heavy insulting, game manipulation, or violent assaults can directly lead up to the loss of a game without a previous warning and will be reported to the tournament management for possible further investigations and penalties, e.g. exclusion from the tournament.

### 6.2. Warning

Indication that a subsequent foul will lead to a penalty. Can only be assigned once per team per game (or even outside the games).

### 6.3. Penalties

Handicap evolving from a foul can be one of the following penalties:

#### **loss of throw:**

- If the foul happens in course of throw or while the player is still in the Molkkaari, the team loses the points achieved.
- In all other cases the team loses the right for its next throw.
- Both cases are handled as misthrow with all its consequences, see chapter "5.3 Misthrows".

#### **loss of set:**

- The team loses the current set (0:50 points).

#### **loss of game:**

- The team loses the game (0: minimum number of sets to win the game; every set with 0:50 points).

#### **disqualification:**

- The team is completely excluded from the tournament.

## **7. Referees**

### **7.1. General**

The tournaments must have at least one main referee whose decision is final. Other referees are provided as required.

The main referee(s) must be introduced to the players at the beginning of the tournament.

The principle applies: "The referee is always right."

### **7.2. Games without referees**

The games can also be played without referees. The teams are responsible for the implementation of the rules. The teams must agree before the game how it will be refereed.

In case of disagreements, one of the main referees can be contacted.



## 8. Indoor tournaments

This chapter is a summary of the allowed exceptions for indoor tournaments.

### 8.1. Style of throwing

Chapter “2.3 Course of the game”

*Generally, all kinds of throws are allowed. However, the tournament organiser can choose to restrict the styles of throws in order to, for example, avoid damage.*

### 8.2. Time limit of a set

Chapter “2.4 End of a set”

*As the games in indoor competitions can take a long time depending on the local conditions, the organiser may bring about an early end of the sets by additional rules (officially when 50 points are reached).*

*Two examples (how it might look like):*

1. Preliminary round: each team has maximum 12 throws  
Should there be a tie; each team gets another throw until one team has scored more points. The thrown points achieved are used for the evaluation, for example 37:34. This ensures a fair evaluation compared to other teams.
2. If a team's score is lowered to 25 points twice, it immediately loses the set 25:50.

### 8.3. Size of the playing fields

Chapter “3.1 Arrangement of the playing fields”

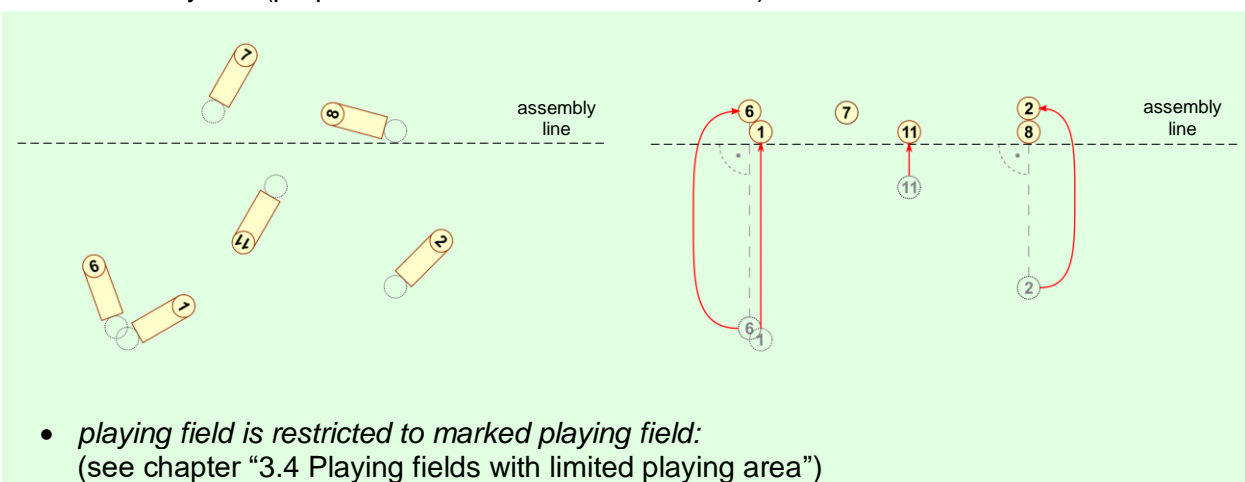
*Indoor playing fields may have a smaller size and a different surface.*

### 8.4. Additional possible rules for indoor playing fields

Chapter “3.5 Indoor playing fields”

*The tournament organiser may restrict the rules by the following items:*

- skittles in front of assembly line (less than 3.5 m from the throwing area):  
When the skittles stop moving in front of the assembly line, they are placed back on the assembly line (perpendicular to their current location).



## 9. Miscellaneous

### 9.1. Mölkk-Out

Mölk-Out is a game variant that can be used in tournaments to decide which team starts the next set. It is not part of the following set, so the order of the players may be different.

The skittles 6, 4, 12, 10 and 8 are placed in a straight row, each with an interval of one Mölkky length and normal distance (about 3.5 m) from the throwing area.

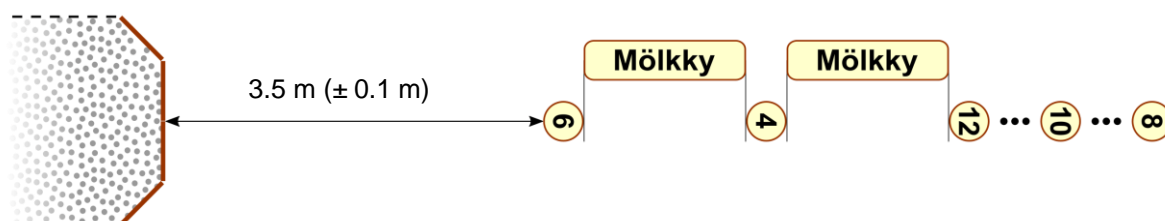
- The order of the players will be announced to the referee before the Mölkk-Out starts.
- A coin toss can be used to decide which team will throw first.
- In teams of 3 or 4 players each player has one throw.
- In teams of 2 players each player has two throws.
- In singles each player has three throws.
- The throwing order of the teams looks like this:  
Team A first throw, team B two throws, team A two throws, team B two throws, team A last throw;

short form for teams of 4 players:	A BB AA BB A
short form for teams of 3 players:	A BB AA B
short form for teams of 2 players:	A BB AA BB A
short form for singles:	A BB AA B

- Fallen skittles will be put back to their starting position.
- Achieved points are counted together as usual.

The team with the higher score wins. Should there be a tie; each player gets another throw until one team has scored more points.

Assembly for Mölkk-Out:



### 9.2. Time frame for throwing

Due to the organisational effort, there is no predetermined no time frame.

If the tournament organiser deems a time frame necessary, I.M.O recommends the following, but it must be communicated to all teams:

Players have 60 seconds to complete the throw. The time starts when the Mölkky has been returned, i. e. either handed over to a team member or left at the Mölkkaari.

Placing the Mölkky back on the ground or given to someone else does not stop or reset the time.

Players can either measure the throwing time of opponent themselves or request assistance through the main referee or other tournament officials (if available).

When a player exceeds the time frame for the first time during a game, he receives a time warning. If the time frame is exceeded again within the same game, the possibility of a throw will be forfeited. This means that the player is not allowed to throw anymore and a misthrow (0 points) is recorded.

### **9.3. Time-out**

Time-outs can be called by the team captain once per set, e.g., to determine the further strategy. The time-out can be a maximum of twice the time frame for a throw.

### **9.4. Change of equipment (e.g., MÖlkky)**

The main referee may change the equipment being used at any time. The players are only permitted to change the equipment in use in a game in progress if the equipment is defective and if both teams agree.

Contraventions may result in loss of the game (decision by main referee).

### **9.5. Fair play**

The idea of fair play is crucial for the game.

At the tournament a positive atmosphere and fair play are encouraged.

Each player is asked to respect the other players and to limit the enjoyment of alcoholic drinks to a reasonable level.

If this is not observed, the main referee may issue a warning and, in consequence, send players off!

So please be "quiet" during a throw so that the playing teams can concentrate on the game.

### **9.6. Completeness of the Rules**

Any point not covered within this document is at the discretion of the organiser.

## 10. Glossary

Fault	A playing fault like trespassing, misthrows, etc. In most cases, a fault leads to loss of points. (See chapter "5 Faults")
Foul	Misbehaviour, ignoring instructions of referees, etc. A foul may result in penalties, from warning to disqualification. (See chapter "6 Fouls")
Game	A game (can) consists of multiple sets. (See chapter "2.5 Definition of the terms "game" and "set"")
Misthrow	Fault made during a throw (See chapter "5.3 Misthrows")
Mölkkaari	Frame, limiting the front boundary of throwing area (See chapter "2.1 Assembly")
Mölkky	In general: the game itself, manufactured by "Tactic Games Oy", Finland registered trademark, owned by "Tactic Games Oy", Finland In particular: the throwing skittle (See chapter "2.1 Assembly")
Set	One set end when one team reaches 50 points. (See chapter "2.5 Definition of the terms "game" and "set"")
Trespassing	Walking over the Mölkkaari (also involves moving it with feet) (See chapter "5.8 Trespassing (walking over)")

## 11. List of revisions

Date	Subject
2018-04-29	first issue
2019-03-30	minor improvements (grammar & terms), chapter "2.2 Definition of the term "Throw" new chapter "2.6 Playing schedule, qualifications and first throw" extended with "the cases of a tie" and a 2nd example chapter "3.2 Playing fields for training" new
2024-02-11	chapter "2.1. Assembly" consideration to the weight of the Mölkky added chapter "2.3. Course of the game" definition of a fallen skittle clarified chapter "3.3. Playing fields with unlimited playing area" terms exchanged (previous: "without fixed boundaries"), instruction extended chapter "3.4. Playing fields with limited playing area" terms exchanged (previous: "with fixed boundaries"), instruction extended chapters "3.4.1. Setup for flat boundaries" to "3.4.4. Setup for mixed ..." new chapter "5.3. Misthrows" definition made more precise chapter "5.8. Trespassing (walking over)" illustration added, some inconsistencies clarified chapter "8.2. Time limit of a set" new chapter "8.4. Additional possible rules for indoor playing fields" illustration added, explanation on limited playing areas replaced with a cross-reference chapter "9.2. Time frame for throwing" definitions modified