

**PIT RULES USED FOR CONTESTS DECIDING THE GAMER OF TWO DOGS**  
(GAME = PLUCKY, UNYIELDING IN MANNER READY AND WILLING)

**Rule 1:** The principals shall select a referee who is familiar with the rules and who is satisfactory to both sides. The referee will then appoint his Timekeeper. Each handler will select a man to act as his chief second or cornerman, whose duties are to wash the opponent's dog, and to remain near this dog's corner as an observer.

**Rule 2:** Each handler is to furnish two clean towels and a suitable blanket, to be used by his opponent. Either handler may demand that the opposing handler and his cornerman bare their arms to the elbows; also the handler may taste his opponent's dog's water before or after the contest (up until the referee has rendered his decision on the contest).

**Rule 3:** No water, sponges, towels or any other accessories are allowed in the pit at any time, except the referee who shall have in his possession an adequate breaking stick and a pencil; also a copy of these rules. The pit shall not be less than 14 feet each way, whenever possible, with a canvas-covered floor, upon which has been painted or chalked on, 12.5 feet apart, and with a center-line half way between the scratch-lines.

**Rule 4:** The referee shall toss a coin to be called by the handlers. The winner of the toss shall decide which dog shall be washed first and also have the choice of corners.

**Rule 5:** The dogs shall be washed at pit-side in warm water and some approved washing powders and then rinsed. The first dog to be washed shall be brought in and held in the tub by his handler and washed by the opposing cornerman. When pronounced clean by the referee, the dog shall be rinsed clean in a separate tub of warm water and towed dry as possible, then wrapped in the blanket provided and carried to his appointed corner by his handler and accompanied by the man who washed him. These are the only two persons allowed near this dog until the dogs are Let Go. The other dog shall now be brought in and held in the tub by his handler and washed (in the same water) by the opposing cornerman. When this dog is pronounced clean by the referee and rinsed clean and towed dry, he shall then be carried to his corner by his handler and accompanied by the man who washed him.

**Rule 6:** The referee shall now ask "Are both corners ready?" If so, "Cornermen, out of the pit"... "Face your dogs"... "Let Go." The timekeeper shall note the time and write it down for future reference.

**Rule 7:** Any dog who jumps the pit is automatically the loser of the contest and no scratches are necessary, and no dog is required or allowed to scratch to a dead dog. The live dog is the winner.

**Rule 8:** Should either dog become fanged, the referee shall instruct the handlers to take hold of their dogs and try to hold them still so the handler can try to unfang his dog. If this isn't possible, the referee shall separate the dogs with the proper breaking stick and then unfang the dog using a pencil. The referee will then order the handlers to set their dogs down near the center of the Pit and approximately two feet apart. The referee will then order "Let Go." This in no way constitutes a turn or a handle and has no bearing of the future scratches.

**Rule 9:** This is to be a fair scratch-in-turn contest until the dogs quit fighting, then rule 13 shall take over. The first dog to turn must scratch first; thereafter they are to scratch alternately (regardless of which dog turns) until one dog fails to scratch and thereby loses the contest.

**Rule 10:** To be a fair turn, the dog accused of turning must turn his head and shoulders and his front feet away from the opponent and regardless of whether or not the dogs are otherwise touching.

**Rule 11:** The referee shall call all turns, although either handler may ask for a turn on either dog. If the referee rules there has been a turn, he will instruct the handlers to "pick up free of holds" as soon as possible, and should either dog accidentally get a hold again, the handlers shall set the dogs down immediately and make a continued effort to pick up the dogs, free of holds. When picked up, the away from their opponent. The Timekeeper shall note the time and take up the count (not out loud) and also the referee shall notify the handler whose dog must scratch.

**Rule 12:** At 25 seconds, the Timekeeper shall call out "Get Ready." At these instructions each handler must toe his scratch-line and face his dog toward his opponent with his dog's head and shoulders showing fair from between his handler's legs, and the dog's four feet on the canvas floor. At the 30 seconds, the Timekeeper calls out "Let Go." and the handler whose dog must scratch must instantly take his hands away from all contact with his dog and also release all leg pressure from against the dog's body. And the dog must instantly start across and the handler must remain behind his scratch-line until his dog has completed his scratch or the referee has ruled upon it. There is no time limit on the time required to complete this scratch. But, when released at the words "Let Go," the dog must start across at his opponent. He may waver from direct line, fall down, crawl ... drag or push himself across, so long as he makes a continued effort and DOES NOT HESITATE OR STOP until he has reached out and touched his opponent. The opposing handler may release his dog any time he sees fit after the order to "Let Go"; however, he must do so as soon as the dogs have touched each other.

**Rule 12A:** This is an alternate rule for those handlers who wish to have their dogs counted out in the corner. It is the same in all respects as Rule 12, except that after 30 seconds, when the Timekeeper calls out "Let Go," the referee shall count our loud, at as near one-second intervals as possible, ONE...TWO...TIME (three seconds), and the dog must be out of his corner and on his way before the referee calls "time," or lose.

**Rule 13:** If the dogs have apparently quit fighting, whether they are helpless, tired out or curred out, and regardless of whether both dogs are down or one dog is down and the other dog is standing over him, but neither dog has a hold, the referee shall ask if they are willing to scratch-it-out to a win or not. If so, they shall proceed to do so, but if either handler is unwilling, then the referee shall instruct the Timekeeper to note the time and call time in two minutes. If either dog breaks time, then nothing has changed, but if, at the end of the two minutes, the dogs are in the same relative positions and neither dog has a hold, the referee shall order the handlers to handle (PICK UP FREE OF HOLDS) their dogs. When picked up, the dogs shall be taken to their corners and the corner procedure is the same as in a normally called turn and handle. If there have been no previous turns or handles to establish the order of scratching, the dog who has been the longest without a hold (usually the down dog) to be scratched first, then, as soon as free of holds, the dogs shall be picked up and the other dog scratched. Should one dog fail or refuse his scratch, then the dog who failed shall lose the contest. If both dogs fail to scratch, the referee shall call it a no contest, but should both dogs make their initial scratches, the handlers by mutual agreement may ask the referee for a draw decision. The referee will then rule it a draw. Otherwise the contest shall continue, but in this manner: any time the dogs are not in holds and not fighting, the referee shall order the dogs to be handled and scratched alternately until one dog fails to scratch and thereby loses. No attention is paid to turns (after rule 13 is invoked) except as a possible chance to handle. THE REFEREE HAS FULL AUTHORITY AND HIS DECISION IS FINAL IN ALL MATTERS.

**Rule 14:** Fouls that will be just cause for losing a contest: A. To leave the pit, with or without the dog before the referee has ruled. B. To receive anything from outside the pit, or allow anyone outside the pit to touch or assist the dog. C. To push, drum, throw or spank, or in any way assist a dog across his scratch-line, except by encouraging him by voice. D. To step across a scratch-line before the dog has completed his scratch or the referee has ruled on it. E. To stomp on the pit floor or kick the pit sides, yell at or give orders to the opponent's dog, or (in the referee's opinion) do anything to distract or interfere with either dog while scratching or fighting to affect the outcome of the contest. F. To interfere with the opposing handler or touch either dog until the referee gives an order to handle the dogs. G. To use a "Rub," "Poison," or "Hypo" on either dog.

**Rule 15:** If there should be any outside interference before the contest has been concluded, the referee has full authority to call it a "NO CONTEST" and shall name the time and place the contest is to be resumed and fought out to a referee's decision. (The same referee shall preside.) Also, the referee shall insist that the dogs be washed and weighed (in the referee's presence), and the dogs shall weigh at the weights specified in the original articles of agreement, and to do this as many times as necessary to conclude the contest. VARIATIONS TO THE RULES (Cajun) Instead of rule number 12A in which a dog has three seconds to leave his corner, he usually given ten seconds to cross to the other dog. A 30-second out-of-hold count is generally used, and the down dog must always scratch first (unless both dogs are down with neither in a position of advantage). The pit may be covered with carpeting rather than canvas (rule 3), the scratch lines may consist of some of the modern tapes, and the central line between the scratch line is often omitted.