

## Bandy - Overview

Bandy is one of the most popular winter sports around the world. After hockey, bandy is having huge number of participants from all over the world. As the sport is played a lot like ice hockey, it is mostly confused with it and generally considered as a form of hockey as well.



Bandy is played in two halves of 45 minutes each. There are eleven players in each team and the field is more or less the same as a soccer field. This sport is played with bowed sticks and a ball.



Bandy is played by two teams. With the help of proper co-ordination and teamwork, each team has to try to direct the ball with bowed sticks into the other team's goal.

### A Brief History of Bandy

Inception of this game has occurred long back in 18<sup>th</sup> century in Russia. Though the game was pretty much similar as that of hockey, but the rules were not. They were not as standardized as of today. The rules got modified in England much later.

Starting match of this sport was organized in England in the year 1875. Due to its playing environment, it was named as **hockey on the ice** then but first international match of bandy was played in 1902 in Sweden. Soon after that it was introduced into the 1905 Nordic games.

## Difference between Ice Hockey and Bandy

Ice hockey and bandy are played on ice using a hockey stick but both of them have a lot of differences. Some of the differences are as follows –

- Bandy is played by using a ball whereas ice hockey is played using a puck.
- In bandy, both teams have eleven players each whereas in ice hockey, both teams have six players each.
- Bandy rink is larger than that of ice hockey rink.
- Bandy is played in two halves of 45 minutes each whereas ice hockey is played with three intervals of 20 minutes each.

The goal posts in Bandy are larger in comparison to ice hockey. That's the reason that in bandy goalkeeper stands in order to prevent the goal whereas in ice hockey goalkeeper has to sit to do the job.

## Participating Countries

For a long time, only four countries competed in the world championships: the Soviet Union, Norway, Sweden and Finland. Among these, the Soviet Union was the dominating country. The United States joined the tournaments in 1985. The popularity of the sport is also there in other countries like Europe, North America, and Asia as well.

As of 2016, there are 21 countries who participate in official tournaments in which the Soviet Union is on the top with 14 gold medals followed by Sweden with 12 gold medals.

## Bandy - Playing Environment

The size of a bandy field is 45–65 meters (148–213 feet) by 90–110 meters (300–360 feet), which totals to 4,050–7,150 square meters (43,600–77,000 sq ft), or about the same size as a football ground and considerably larger than an ice hockey

rink. Along the side lines, a 15 cm (6 inches) high border (vant, sarg, wand, wall) is placed so that it will not allow the ball move out of the ice.

At the centre of each short line, there is a 3.5m (11 ft) wide and 2.1m (6 ft 11 inches) high goal post. In front of the cage, there is a semi-circular penalty region which has a radius of 17m (56 ft).



There are two penalty spots, each located at 12 meters (39 ft) in from of the goal post. There are two free-stroke spots on the penalty line, surrounded by a 5m circle.

The centre spot marks the center of the bandy field and it is surrounded by a circle of radius 5m (16ft). A line called the **centre-line** is drawn parallel to the short lines through the centre spot.

## How to Play Bandy?

Bandy is played by two teams, each having 11 players. The idea is to get the ball and direct it to the opponent's goal using bowed sticks. It is played on a rectangular field, just like field hockey, but this time the terrain is ice, hence players have to skate on ice.

There are certain rules which are inherited directly from soccer like 11 players in each team in which one is the goalkeeper. The offside rule is applied. A goal cannot be scored from a stroke-in or a corner throw.



The team that has scored most number of goals at the end of the match is the winner. If both teams have scored equal number of goals, then the match is said to be draw. The main rule is that the players, except the goalkeeper, must not touch the ball with their heads, hands or arms intentionally during the match.

## Moving the Ball

Players have to use their sticks to move the ball. They may also use any other part of the body except their heads, hands or arms and may even use their skates to some extent. If a player uses his head intentionally to move the ball, a five minute penalty is given by the referee.

## Passing the Ball

Players generally use simple techniques like passing the ball to a teammate or dribble the ball with the sticks and try to bypass the opponent players and then make an attempt to shoot a goal.

Similarly, the opponents can try to take control of the ball by intercepting a pass or by tackling a player and then try to dribble away the ball. Physical contact between two opponents should be limited so that no one gets injured.



## Pausing the Match

Generally, the game isn't stopped in between unless the ball goes out of the rink or the referee announces a pause. After a pause, the match can be resumed by a corner stroke, a free stroke, or a penalty shot.

If the ball goes out of the field, the referee will have to decide which team's player touched the ball before it went out and then the opponent team will get a chance for a free stroke, also called a **restart stroke** in this scenario.

## Positions of Players

The game has no specific description about positions for players except the goalkeepers, but with time certain strategic positions have been made up by players which are –

- **Forwards** – These players have to focus mainly on scoring the goal.
- **Defenders** – These players have to focus mainly on defending the ball from the opposing players and not let them reach the goalkeeper.
- **Midfielders** – These players have to focus mainly on tackling the opposing players or intercept their passes, get the ball and then pass it on to the forwards.

While players may spend most of the time in the specified positions, there are certain restrictions on the player's movement. Players can switch positions at any time. This layout is called **team's formation**.

## Bandy - Rules

There are 18 official rules which are applied in all styles of bandy. However, there are slight modifications for women, juniors, and veterans.

### Players and Officials

Each team consists of a maximum of 11 players (not counting substitutes). Among them one is the goalkeeper. A team is not eligible to play if it has less than eight players.

It is allowed for the goalkeepers to touch the ball with their bare arms but only inside the penalty area present in front of the goal post. Out of many possible outfield positions, players (except the goalkeeper) are positioned according to their coach's advice.

Players can be replaced by substitutes at anytime during the course of the game. Substitutions can be done without notifying the referee and can be performed while the ball is in the match. However, if the substitute enters the field before his teammate has left it, it results in a five-minute ban.

A team can bring up to four substitutes into the game and one of these is mostly a substitute goalkeeper. The game is officiated by a referee, the authority and enforcer of the rules, whose decisions are final. There may be one or two assistant referees along with the main referee.

### Bandy – Equipment

The players are equipped with a pair of skates, a helmet, a mouth guard. Besides these, goalkeeper also has to wear a face guard. Both the teams should wear uniforms which are easily distinguishable and the color of the skates, sticks, and any tapes etc. must be different than that of the ball.

In addition to the above mentioned equipment, various protections are used to protect the essential parts of the body like knees, elbows, genitals and throat. Paddings are given in pants and gloves to provide extra protection.

### The Bandy Stick

The bandy stick is a very essential part of the sport. The stick should be built of good quality wood and must not contain any metal and sharp materials which can hurt other surrounding players.

This stick should be crooked and the bend of the blade has to be split up into five different dimensions, where one is the smallest bend and five is the largest. Bend number four is the most common size in professional bandy.

The bandy stick should not have similar colors to the ball, such as orange or pink. It should not be longer than 127cm (50 inches) and the breadth should not exceed 7cm (2.8 inches).

## Game duration and tie breaking measures

Bandy match can be played in two halves, each of 45 minutes duration. If every half of the match goes on smoothly and continuously without any abruption, then it means the clock is not stopped but it is under the control of referee to pause the match.

There is usually a 15-minute half-time break between halves. The end of the match is known as **full-time**. The referee keeps track of the time and he is the one who may make an allowance for time lost while substitutions, in case a player gets injured, or any other stoppages.



If the weather is too cold or unfavorable, the referee can break the match into shorter thirds or quarters instead of 45 minute halves. For example, in the extremely cold 1999 World Championship, a few of the matches had to be played in four quarters of 15 minutes each along with extra-long breaks in between the quarters.

If the game ends in a draw, the time may be increased to further 15 minute periods for the match. If there's a goal in this extra time, it is called a **golden goal** which results in the victory of team which scored the goal. If both the extra periods are over without any goals, then the referee has to organize a penalty shootout to finally end the game.

Although, in league competitions, if there is a draw, there is no increase in time and the game is set to tie with no winner.

## The ball in and out of play

If the match is going on and the ball is in the field, it is said to be **ball in play**. When the ball gets out of the field by one way or another, it is said to be **ball out of play**. These are the two basic phases of the game.

When the ball is out of play, six popular methods to resume the match are –

- Face-off
- Goal-throw
- Free-stroke
- Corner-stroke
- Penalty shot
- Stroke-off

Suppose the time runs out when a free stroke or penalty has to be executed, the player can still strike the ball but it must go into the goal without any interference in one try, or else there are no more retries and the game has to come to an end.

## Penalty shots and free strokes

Free strokes are awarded to a team in case the opposite team do any fault by not obeying the rule. Take an instance, where a player hits the opponent's stick with his own stick, it is case of fault hence free strokes will be awarded.





Free-strokes can also be awarded if there is any incorrect execution of corner strikes, free-strikes, goal throws, and so on, or the use of incorrect equipment, like using a broken stick.

There may be such instance that if your team is doing in any offence and it is benefiting the other team, and then referee may continue the play as penalty, popularly known as **playing an advantage**. If no such situation is happening then referee may call back and penalize the offending team.

Let's analyse another case. Suppose you are a defender and you attacked one of the other team members while defending, then that team will get a penalty shot in reward, provided there is a chance of goal.

No one except the goalkeeper has the advantage of kneeling down to block the ball and it is not in rule also for other players to block the ball with their skates or to hook the other player with it.

## Warnings and Penalties

Cases such as misbehaving with other players, blocking the ball, or attacking the other team members can attract penalty of 10 minutes. This is indicated by the referee by showing a **blue card**.

In case a player gets penalties for three times, then he can no longer play that match, as it will be a personal penalty. Another player can replace him but not before at least 5- 10 minutes of the match.



Red Card



Blue Card

There is also a penalty for abusing the other team members or for attacking them violently. This penalty is called **full game penalty**. This is indicated by a **red card**. Once it is superimposed on a team player, he can no longer play the match and no substitute will be allowed in his place.

## Bandy - Championships

The first ever Bandy World Championship was held in 1957 and it was played every two years from 1961. Now it is played every year since 2003. The number of participating countries in the Bandy World Championship is 17, hence every country which is able to set a new team is allowed to participate in the championship.

Soviet Union, Russia, Sweden, Finland, Norway, and Kazakhstan are the few nations who have ever won medals in the world championships. Finland has won the title once in 2004 and all others have been won by the Soviet Union, Russia and Sweden.



Some of the important Championships under this category are –

- World Championships
- Olympic Games
- Asian Winter Games
- World Cup
- Winter Universiade

## Bandy World Championship

Bandy World Championship is arranged by Federation of International Bandy. Previously, the countries that participated in this competition were Soviet Union, Sweden, Finland, and Norway. Soviet Union has won many tournaments and dominated the championship. United States joined the championship in 1985. Later on, the sport got popularised in many other countries. Soviet Union was dissolved in 1991 which created a way for other countries to participate in the championship.

## Olympic Games

Bandy has not yet officially included in Olympic Games as only three teams participated in 1952 Olympics held in Norway. The sport has also been tried to get a place in 2004 Olympics but it was not included. Now Federation of International Bandy is trying to include the sport in 2022 Olympics.

## Asian Winter Games

Bandy was included in Asian Winter Games from 2011 in which three teams participated. Kazakhstan won Gold in the first Asian Winter Games.

## World Cup

World Cup is arranged annually since 1970s in which teams of various clubs participate. The tournament is arranged in the month of October and played day and night. The tournament has to be completed in four days.

## Winter Universiade

Bandy will be demonstrated in Winter Universiade in 2017. In 2019 also, it will be included in which women teams will also participate.