# hoop

## The player's manual

Keep the hole empty. Stay alive. Beat your time.

Desktop playtest | Game version 0.2.20261031

Built from the maintained Markdown manual. Online Rankings are optional.

### Find your way


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# 1. Your first game

**hoop is a survival game. You move the hoop; the bots throw balls. Do not let a ball fall completely through your hoop.** You are protecting a hole in the floor, rather than trying to score baskets.

Your score is the time on the clock when you lose. A higher time is better. Bonuses can add time, so your score is not necessarily the number of seconds you spent playing.

1. Install the Windows setup program, or download the Linux AppImage, make it executable, and launch it.
2. Open **how to play** and use its Play control to try the interactive tutorial. It demonstrates movement, losing, pickups, double time, and disabling and destroying bots. You can return to it later.
3. Choose **game mode**, then **classic** for the standard rules.
4. Leave the arena on **auto** in Settings for your first attempt.
5. Press Play. Watch the countdown: movement, the clock, and firing begin at **2...**, before **DODGE!** disappears.
6. Move away from where balls will land. When a ball falls through, watch the close-up, then try again from the menu.

**You do not need an account or internet access to play.** Online Rankings are optional. Start offline while you learn.

On Windows, setup offers to associate `.thr` replay files with hoop. Leave this selected if you want to open hoop replays by double-clicking them; clear it if another application uses that extension. The current playtest is unsigned, so Windows may display a warning. Get your download from the hoop website.

On Linux, your file manager's permissions or properties dialog usually has an option to allow executing the AppImage as a program. You can also use `chmod +x` with the downloaded filename in a terminal, then launch that file.

# 2. Moving, surviving, and reading the screen

## Controls

- **Mouse:** move the pointer to steer. The hoop carries momentum, so allow room to brake and turn. During play the pointer stays within the game window; pausing releases it.
- **Keyboard:** use **WASD** or the **arrow keys** to steer. Try one input method at a time while learning.
- **Pause:** use the pause control or **Escape**. Resume continues the same run; Restart abandons it and begins again; Main Menu leaves it.
- **Menus:** use the mouse, or Up/Down to select, Left/Right or Tab to reach panel controls, and Enter to activate. Escape closes a picker or returns from a submenu.
- **Phone development builds:** use the touch steering control. Portrait play uses a floating joystick: touch down, then drag to steer. Do not assume a phone build is available with every desktop release.

### What is dangerous?

The hoop opening is a moving hole in the arena floor. A descending ball that fits inside and passes fully through ends the run. A near miss or rim touch by itself is safe. A rim deflection can still fall into the hole afterward.

**Balls that have hit the floor can still kill you.** They bounce and roll, and you can move the hoop underneath one by mistake. A ball does not become harmless just because its first throw missed. Balls leaving the arena stop interacting; settled balls fade away.

Bots stay in place around the perimeter. They are solid: trying to drive through one stops you. They aim when throwing; the launched ball does not chase you afterward. Some throws anticipate your movement, and bots can aim at good pickups. Changing direction can help, but repeatedly chasing green tokens can lead you into danger.

The camera follows the hoop and pulls back for approaching balls. It has a limited view, so keep watching the floor around you as well as new throws.

### The clock and signals

The clock shows minutes, seconds, and milliseconds. It stops when you lose. Messages in the middle explain time awards, pickups, hoop growth, and bot events. Rings beneath the clock show temporary effects and their remaining time. Blue downward arrows mean slower future balls; orange upward arrows mean faster future balls. A grey chain ring shows your remaining chance to chain another disable.

### Try this when you keep losing

- Make small, deliberate moves before the ball arrives. Large last-second swerves are harder to stop.
- Leave yourself an escape route. A pickup is optional; survival comes first.
- Notice whether you lost to a new throw or a bouncing ball. The close-up helps explain the mistake.
- Practise plain dodging, then add one bot approach or pickup attempt at a time.
- Replay the tutorial whenever the rules feel unclear.

## 3. Game modes and arena types

**Game mode changes the rules. Arena class changes the shape of the playing area.** They are separate choices, and scores are grouped by both.

## Game modes

| Mode | What changes | Try it when... |
|---|---|---|
| classic | Mixed good and bad pickups, bot disables, and regular difficulty increases. | You want to learn the standard game. |
| pure play | No pickups and no bot disables. Movement and survival remain. | You want to practise dodging without chasing bonuses. |
| lightning | Faster buildup: the second and third bots arrive at 5 and 10 seconds, then growth and bot events alternate every 10 seconds from 20 seconds. | You want pressure quickly. |
| foobar | Only bad pickups appear; bot disables are still available. | You want to practise avoiding harmful tokens. |
| lucky dawg | Only good pickups appear; bot disables are still available. | You want to explore beneficial pickups. |

Outside Lightning, the second and third bots arrive at 10 and 20 seconds. From 30 seconds, difficulty events alternate hoop growth and an extra bot every 30 seconds. A larger hole gives balls more room to fall through. Pure Play still gets harder; removing pickups does not remove progression.

## Arena classes

Choose an arena class in **Settings**. The arena floor remains an ellipse; these names describe its overall proportions, rather than different terrain or levels.

| Setting | Shape |
|---|---|
| auto | Uses your display's proportions and assigns the matching score class. Extremely wide displays are capped at Ultra Wide. |
| square | Equal width and height, 1:1. |
| standard | 4:3 proportions. |
| wide | 16:9 proportions. |
| ultra wide | 21:9 proportions. |

Portrait windows use the corresponding tall shape. Choosing a shape that does not match your window leaves black bands outside the play area; they are not extra floor. Auto can keep an in-class shape such as 16:10 rather than forcing exactly 16:9.

On desktop, **window mode** selects Fullscreen or Windowed. Windowed mode also offers aspect ratio and resolution choices. Window size and arena class are different settings: a wide window can still contain a square arena with bands. A run's arena is fixed when it starts; resizing does not rebuild the playing field midway through it.

For a useful score comparison, check both mode and arena class. Browsing a different mode's scores does not by itself change your selected Play mode; check the mode before starting.

# 4. Pickups, time, and fighting back

Move the hoop onto a hovering token to collect it. **Green square tokens help; red square tokens hurt.** Read the symbol and the centre-screen confirmation as well as the colour. Tokens appear irregularly; effects that cannot currently do anything may not be offered.

## Pickup reference

| Token | Result |
|---|---|
| +10 sec (green) | Adds 10 seconds to your score clock. |
| -10 sec (red) | Removes 10 seconds, stopping at zero. |
| -1 hoop (green) | Shrinks the opening one step, but never below its starting size. |
| +1 hoop (red) | Enlarges the hoop one step, making it harder to protect. |
| -1 bot (green) | Destroys one randomly chosen eligible bot. Gives no time award; a minimum-bot rule limits availability. |
| +1 bot (red) | Adds one firing bot immediately. |
| -10% ball speed (green) | Slows balls launched during the next 60 seconds of active play. |
| +10% ball speed (red) | Speeds up balls launched during the next 60 seconds of active play. |
| +1 fast disable (green) | Halves the time needed to disable a bot for 30 seconds of active play. |

Speed tokens affect future throws, rather than changing balls already flying. Each token has its own expiry ring; repeated speed effects multiply and expire separately. One slow and one fast effect do not exactly cancel: 0.9 times 1.1 is 0.99. Temporary-effect timers use active play time, rather than bonus seconds added to your score, and pause with the game.

Adding time normally advances difficulty too: a +10-second pickup can bring a scheduled bot or hoop-growth event forward immediately. Removing time never removes bots or reverses growth that already happened. Bot-disable awards are the exception: they add score time without advancing difficulty.

## Disable a bot by staying close

Approach a bot and remain inside its indicated range. Its progress cue fills while you charge; leaving makes progress decay. You do not need an attack button. The hoop cannot pass through the bot, so approach from a side with room to escape.

A fresh bot takes **1.5 seconds** to disable. The next disable of that bot takes **2 seconds**, and the third takes **2.5 seconds**. The first two disables temporarily stop it and leave permanent damage; it later reactivates. The third destroys it. Balls already thrown remain dangerous. Balls hitting a bot do not damage it.

Outside Fast Disable, your first disable awards **+10 seconds** and starts a five-second chain window. Disable another bot before the grey ring empties to earn **+20**, then **+30**, and so on. Each success refreshes the five-second window; there is no chain cap. Let it expire and the next disable starts at +10 again.

Fast Disable halves each bot's current charge requirement. Collecting it clears your chain, and each disable while it is active awards only the ordinary +10 seconds. It cannot stack or refresh while active.

### Other ways to gain time

A ball's first qualifying rim deflection earns **+5 seconds** if it has not yet bounced on the arena floor twice. Each ball can award this once. This is a risky bonus, not a reason to put the opening under a falling ball.

At five-minute clock marks, a yellow **2x** area appears and moves through the arena. Follow it only when safe. Fully covering the hoop with it makes the clock advance twice as fast; partial coverage gives a partial bonus. It lasts 30 seconds including its fades and pulses during its last five seconds. It speeds up the clock, not your steering, bot firing, or balls. It is an area to overlap, not a token to collect.

# 5. Scores and replays

When a run ends, High Scores opens for that mode. A qualifying local result may ask for a name; the game remembers the last submitted name on this device. That local name is separate from your online public handle.

Boards are separated by **game mode**, **arena class**, and compatible game rules. They offer **weekly**, **monthly**, **yearly**, and **all-time** views, with up to 20 rows. Check the selected period and filters, including **my scores** and **ranked only**, if a result seems missing. Your local scores remain usable offline.

**Not every completed run is retained as a local high score.** A run needs to qualify for a retained board position. A normal retained local run can have a linked replay; retention changes can eventually remove it.

### Watch and learn

Use a row's Play action when a replay is available. Watch where the hoop was moving just before the loss, then try a different escape route in your next game.

- Play/Pause stops and resumes viewing.
- The jump controls move ten seconds backward or forward.
- Playback speeds are 1x, 2x, and 4x.
- Stop leaves replay playback. Escape opens the pause menu.
- The progress line is a display, not a draggable seek bar.

A replay keeps the original run's arena shape and camera framing. Black bands on a different display are expected. Older recordings can have less accurate motion or jumps.

On Windows, double-click a `.thr` file if you selected the installer association. You can also launch the game with a file, for example `hoop.exe --replay "D:\Replays\my-run.thr"`. A replay is recorded game data, not a screen video.

### Online scores and replay availability

An online attempt needs authorization from the server before play starts and uploads its replay after the run. A score can appear provisionally after initial checks, then be removed if its background review fails. Signing in after an offline run does not turn it into a ranked run. Failed submissions do not have a promised later-upload queue.

Public playback is limited to retained, accepted leading replays, generally the top three within a current board view. A score can remain visible after its replay is removed. A missing replay button does not mean the score is invalid. Public replay viewing does not require signing in; viewers can keep downloaded copies.

# 6. Joining Online Rankings

**Offline play needs no sign-up.** During this playtest, Online Rankings require an approved email address. Website news-email signup is separate from rankings access.

1. If you have not been invited or approved, contact the playtest organizer. For help, use hello@hoop-game.com.
2. If you receive an invitation email, open its confirmation link first. Then return to the game.
3. Open **Settings > Online Rankings**. Enter the approved email address and choose a unique **public handle** of 3-24 characters. Follow the handle guidance shown by the game.
4. Open **Read more** and read the current Online Rankings terms and privacy notice. If you agree and are 16 or older, tick the acknowledgement.
5. Choose **send email code**. Check that email inbox, including junk or spam folders.
6. Enter the numeric code from the email and choose **put scores online**. Wait for the signed-in status before starting a new run.

No separate game password is needed for this email-code flow. Keep codes private. If the game asks you to confirm your email, use the email link, then request a new code. If it asks you to wait, wait at least a minute before requesting another.

## What becomes public?

Other players can see your handle, score, game mode, arena class, and available public replays. Your email is not shown on the leaderboard. Choose a handle you are comfortable making public. Read the notice reached through **Read more** for the current data and retention details; this manual does not replace it.

You can change your public handle in the game, normally once every 30 days. Online Rankings are optional: **stay offline** returns you to play without completing signup.

## Removing online data

The rankings settings offer **keep public records** and **remove all my data** when deleting your account. Read the confirmation carefully. Keeping public records removes sign-in details while retaining your public handle and eligible public score records. Removing all data also removes those public records. Both choices remove uploaded replays from the service; they cannot erase copies someone already downloaded. These choices concern online data rather than uninstalling the game or clearing local scores.

# 7. When something goes wrong

## I cannot control the hoop, or it feels slippery

The hoop has momentum. Start with small movements and leave space to brake. Click or focus the game window, check that you are in a live run rather than a menu, tutorial card, or replay, and try either mouse or keyboard on its own. During the tutorial, follow the card and continue when prompted. Escape opens pause and releases the pointer.

## The game runs slowly, stutters, or freezes

Open **Settings > Advanced**. Try **3D resolution: 75%** and turn **ball reflections** off. These reduce decorative rendering cost. Try the VSync choices to compare smoothness on your display. The game normally caps rendering at 60 FPS; a faster display does not imply a higher game frame rate.

On Windows, Advanced also lets you choose **Vulkan** or **Direct3D 12**. That change requires restarting the game; immediate graphics settings do not. If one driver freezes or fails on your machine, try the other. The optional GPU/CPU/FPS statistics can help describe a problem; their percentages relate frame time to the 60 FPS budget.

If the game will not reach Settings, or freezes recur, report the problem and ask for the diagnostic build. Its Windows launchers offer normal, Vulkan, Vulkan without VSync, and Vulkan at 75% 3D resolution variants. Their logs are saved under `%LOCALAPPDATA%\hoop\diagnostics`. This is a separate support package; ordinary play does not automatically create those diagnostic captures.

## The email code does not arrive, or sign-in fails

Check the address, spam folder, invitation confirmation, and approval with the organizer. Wait a minute before **send another code**. Follow any message about an unavailable or already used handle. If rankings are unavailable, keep playing offline and try again later. Do not delete your local game data to fix an email problem.

## My score is missing, or was not posted online

Check mode, arena, period, and score filters first. Confirm that you were signed in before the run began and that the game could contact the service. A run that started offline stays offline. A posted result may later fail review. Local saving and public submission are separate outcomes; do not assume one proves the other succeeded. Report the exact result and any submission message rather than repeatedly reinstalling.

## A replay will not open

Check that the file is a hoop `.thr` replay and that your installed game is current. Try opening it from High Scores or using the command in chapter 5. Public files may no longer be retained. Damaged or incompatible recordings may fail to load. Keep the original file when reporting the problem.

## Updating, uninstalling, and asking for help

The menu's website link changes to **new version!** when it finds a newer published release. Updates are manual: download and install the new version from the website. The current version appears in the menu footer; compare it with the PDF cover if instructions differ.

Windows uninstall asks whether to keep game data; **Keep** is the default. On Linux, deleting the AppImage removes the program but leaves user data. Back up anything important before deliberately removing saved data.

For help, email hello@hoop-game.com. Include the game version, operating system, GPU if known, mode and arena class, what you did, what happened, and whether it repeats. Add a screenshot, a relevant replay, or diagnostic logs when available. Never send sign-in codes or passwords.