



RECREATIONAL SERVICES

Intramural Rulebook



Volleyball

VOLLEYBALL RULES

Italicized print indicates a rule change or clarification from the previous year.

Official rules are the USA Volleyball rules with the following intramural adaptations:

Rule 1 - Playing Area

1. Dimensions - The playing court measures 18 m x 9 m (59' x 29'6") and is divided by the axis of the center line into two team courts.
2. Lines on the Court
 - a. All lines are 5 cm (2") wide. They must be of a contrasting color from the floor and any other lines.
 - b. Boundary Lines: Two sidelines and two end lines mark the playing court. All boundary lines are drawn inside the dimensions of the playing court.
 - c. Center Line: The axis of the center line divides the playing court into two team courts measuring 9 m x 9 m (29'6" x 29'6") each. This line lies in the plane of the net and extends from sideline to sideline.
 - d. Attack Lines: These lines are drawn in each team court so that the edge of the attack line farthest from the center line is 3 m (9'10") from the axis of the center line.
3. Zones and Areas of the Playing Court
 - a. Front Zone: On each team court the front zone is limited by the axis of the center line and the attack line. The front zone, center line and attack line are considered to extend indefinitely beyond the sidelines.
 - b. Service Zone: The service zone is a 9 m (29'6") wide area behind and excluding the end line. It is laterally limited by two short lines, both as extensions of the sidelines. Both lines are included in the width of the zone. In depth, the service zone extends to the limit of the free zone.
 - c. Free Zone: The playing space surrounding the playing court.

Rule 2 - Net and Posts

1. Net - The net is 1 m (39") wide and at least 9.5 m (32') long, placed vertically over the axis of the center line. At its top is a horizontal band, 5 cm (2") wide. The top and bottom of the net must be fastened to the posts so that the net remains taut throughout and maintains its specified dimensions.
2. Antennas - An antenna is a flexible rod. An antenna is fastened at the outer edge of each side band and placed on opposite sides of the net. The antennas are considered part of the net.
3. Height of the Net - The height of the net shall be 2.43 m (7'11 5/8") for men and 2.24 m (7' 4-1/8") for women. It is measured from the center of the playing court. The two ends of the net (over the sidelines) must both be at the same height from the playing surface and may not exceed the official height by more than 2 cm (3/4").

Rule 3 - Teams and Players

1. Number of Players-Teams shall be composed of 6 players. Games may be played with no less than 5, or the match will result in forfeit. When a team's sixth player arrives, he or she is allowed to enter the game in the center back position at the first side-out or time-out. Teams may continue play with as few as 4 players if players are lost to injury only during the match.
(Exception: Rule 3-5)
 - a. If playing with less than six, all front row positions must be occupied.
2. Team Roster - Each team shall give the official a list of team members playing in that match. If a player arrives late his or her name may be added to the scorecard after the game has started. ID cards will be checked by the official of each match prior to the start. Players without ID's will not be allowed to play. Players with false ID's will be suspended from participation and use of the Rec Complex. The ID will be confiscated and the team will suffer a team penalty.
3. Entering the Court - Substitutes, coaches, managers, and other team representatives shall not enter the court while the ball is in play or during a time-out.
4. Forfeits - If a team is not ready to begin play with a minimum of 5 players, within 5 minutes after the scheduled starting time, the opposing team shall be credited with a win by forfeit for the entire match. If neither team has a sufficient number of players, a double forfeit will be declared.
5. Scorekeeper - Each team will provide one individual to aid the official as the scorekeeper. When an extra individual is not available each team will play a court player "short". Spectators can keep score in any instance. **Example: If Team A has 6 players and Team B has 5 players each team will "lose" 1 player off the court to keep score if a spectator is not available to keep score. Team A will have 5 players on the court and Team B will have 4 players participating on the court.**

Rule 4 - Players' Equipment

1. No guard, cast or brace, regardless of composition, is permitted on the elbow, hand, finger, wrist or forearm.
2. Knee and ankle braces made of hard and unyielding material such as metal must be covered. Any brace /support with a sharp edge or point shall be covered.
3. Hair devices may be worn if made of soft material.
4. Jewelry:
 - a. No jewelry will be allowed. *Religious and medic alert bracelets are not considered jewelry. A religious medal must be taped to the skin and worn under the shirt. A medical-alert medal must be taped, may be visible as long as it does not contradict other player rules. See 4-1 and 4-2.*
 - b. Hats may not be worn.
 - c. Glasses must be tightly strapped on.

- d. Visible body piercings must be removed. Tape may not be used to cover otherwise visible piercings on the body

Rule 5 - Scoring System

1. Rally Scoring will be used in Intramural competition. If a team fails to serve properly, return the ball, or commits any other fault, the opponent wins the rally and scores a point. The consequences of winning the rally are
 - a. If the serving team wins the rally, it scores a point and continues to serve.
 - b. If the receiving team wins the rally, it scores a point and gains the right to serve.
2. To Win a Set
 - a. A team scoring 21 points in a set with at least a two-point advantage wins that set.
 - b. If the score is 20-20, play continues until a two-point advantage is reached (22-20, 23-21) or until a team scores 23 points with a one-point advantage (23-22). A cap will be placed on sets one through four of 23 points.
3. To Win A Match - An intramural match consists of the best 3 out of 5 games with a 55 minute time limit.
 - a. A deciding fifth set is won by the team which first scores 15 points with a minimum lead of 2 points. The cap for a fifth set will be 17 points.

Clarifications:

- a. Whichever team is ahead in the fifth set, at the end of the time limit, will be declared the winner of the match. If a tie exists, the winner of the match will be the team to gain a 2 point advantage or until the 17 point limit is reached.
- b. Completed sets will take precedence over games in progress when the time limit expires. An uncompleted set will not count as a victory or loss.
Example: Team A wins set 1 and 2; Team B wins set 3, set 4 is incomplete; Team A wins the match 2 games to 1 game.
- c. Playoff games will be played to completion with no time limit and no point cap imposed. **Example: During playoffs, if the first set is tied at 20, the first team to gain a 2 point advantage will be declared the winner of the set. No cap placed on any set. The first team to win by 2 points after reaching the required points needed to win each set will be the winner of the set.**

Rule 6 - Regular Game Interruptions

1. Categories - Regular game interruptions are time-outs and player substitutions.
2. Time-Outs - Each team is entitled to a maximum of two time-outs per game. A time-out shall last for 30 seconds. In the last 5 minutes of the contest, time-outs will not be considered part of the 55 minute time limit.
3. Substitutions - Teams may use free substitution as long as a player does not play more than 3 out of 6 consecutive team rotations in either the front row

or the back row. He/she must follow the normal rotation pattern in the lineup, cannot advance rotations beyond the normal pattern, and can only play one position in the lineup.

4. Request for Regular Interruptions - Interruptions may be requested only by a coach or game captain, when the ball is out of play and before the whistle for service. A request for a time-out or a substitution before the start of a game is permitted.

Rule 7 - Exceptional Game Interruptions

1. Accident/Injury - Should a serious accident occur while the ball is in play, a referee must stop the game immediately. The rally is replayed.
2. External Interference - If any external interference occurs during a game, play must be stopped and the rally replayed.

Rule 8 - Intervals and Changes of Courts

1. Intervals - The interval between games lasts two minutes. During this period of time, the change of team courts are made.

Rule 9 - Players' Positions and Rotation

1. Positions
 - a. At the moment the ball is contacted by the server, each team must be completely within its own team court (except the server) in two rows of three players. These rows may be staggered.
 - b. Three players are front-row players and occupy positions 4 (left player), 3 (center player), and 2 (right player). The other three are back-row players occupying positions 5 (left player), 6 (center player) and 1 (right player).
 - c. The positions of players are determined and controlled according to the positions of their feet contacting the court as follows.
 - 1) Each front-row player must have at least a part of a foot closer to the center line than both feet of the corresponding back-row player.
 - 2) Each right (left)-side player must have at least a part of a foot closer to the right (left)-sideline than both feet of the center player in the corresponding row. The server is exempt from the application of this rule.

Commentary: The position of the players is judged according to the position of the foot last in contact with the floor at the time the ball is contacted for service.

- d. Once the ball has been served, the players may move to any position on their playing area.
2. Rotation - When the receiving team has gained the right to serve, its players must rotate one position clockwise (player in position 2 rotates to position 1 to serve, player in 1 rotates to 6, etc.).
 3. Position Faults
 - a. The players of a team commit a position fault if they are not in their correct positions at the moment the ball is contacted by the server.

- b. If the server commits an illegal service at the moment of contact with the ball, that fault prevails over a position fault and is penalized. In the case of a service fault, the position fault is penalized.
 - c. The position fault is penalized with the loss of a rally, and the players are placed in their correct positions.
4. Rotation Fault
- a. A rotation fault is committed when the service is not made according to the rotation order. The results are the same as a position fault.
 - b. All points scored subsequently by the team at fault must be canceled. If the points scored while the player was out of rotation order cannot be determined or the opponents have served, then a loss of rally is the only penalty charged. The opponent's points remain.

Rule 10 - Service

1. Definition - The service is the act of putting the ball into play by the right back-row player (player position 1), who hits the ball with one hand or arm from the service zone.
2. The let serve will be used in Intramural volleyball. A serve contacting and crossing the net shall remain in play provided the contact occurs entirely within the net antennas.
3. First Service in a Game
 - a. The first service of games one and three and five (deciding game) is executed by the team determined by the initial coin toss.
 - b. The other games will be started with the service by the team that did not serve first in the previous game.
4. Service Order
 - a. The players must follow the service order.
 - b. After the first service in a game, the player to serve is determined as follows:
 1. When the serving team wins the rally, the player who served before, serves again.
 2. When the receiving team wins the rally, it gains the right to serve and rotates. The player who moves from the right front-row position (player position 2) to the right back-row position (player position 1) will serve.
5. Authorization of the Service - The first referee authorizes the service after having checked that the server is in possession of the ball and the teams are ready to play.
6. Execution of the Service
 - a. The server may move freely within the service zone. At the moment of the service hit or takeoff for a jump service, the server must be completely in the service zone and not touching the court (end line included) nor the playing surface outside the zone. After the service, the player may step or land outside the zone including the court.

- b. The server must contact the ball within five seconds after the first referee whistles for service.
 - c. A service executed before the referee's whistle is canceled and repeated.
Commentary: After the whistle for service, no other actions (requests for line-up check, timeout, etc.) may be considered until after the ball has been served. This is true even if a request has been made after a server has initiated service action and legally permitted the ball to fall to the floor. A re-serve is considered to be part of a single effort to serve and must be completed before any requests may be considered.
 - d. The ball shall be contacted with one hand or any part of one arm before it touches the playing surface.
 - e. *Only one toss or release of the ball is allowed during an attempted serve. Dribbling or moving the ball in the hands is permitted.*
7. Screening - The players of the serving team must not screen the opponents from seeing the server or the path of the ball.
- a. A player of the serving team makes an individual screen if the player waves arms, jumps or moves sideways when the service is being executed and the ball is served over that player.
 - b. A team makes a collective screen when the server is hidden behind a group of two or more teammates and the ball is served over them.
Commentary: If the players bend over, they are not construed as being a screen.
8. Illegal Service - The following faults lead to a change of service even if the opponent has a position fault. The server:
- a. violates the service order.
 - b. does not execute the service properly.
 - c. violates the rule of service tossing error.
9. Service Faults - After the ball has been correctly hit, the service becomes a fault (unless there is a position fault) if the ball:
- a. touches a player of the serving team.
 - b. fails to pass through the crossing space.
 - c. lands "out".
 - d. passes over an individual or collective screen.

Rule 11 - States of Play

1. Ball in Play - The rally begins with the referee's whistle. However, the ball is in play from the service contact.
 - A. A player may play the ball over a non-playable area if the player has a body part in contact with a playable area at the time the ball is contacted, and may enter the non-playable area after playing the ball.
2. Ball Out of Play - The rally ends with the referee's whistle. However, if the whistle is due to a fault made in play, the ball is out of play from the moment the fault was committed.
Commentary: In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the rally is ended. The first referee must make a ruling that will not penalize either team.

3. Ball "In" - The ball is "in" when it touches the floor of the playing court including the boundary lines.
4. Ball "Out" - The ball is "out" when part of the ball:
 - a. contacts the floor completely outside the boundary lines.
 - b. contacts an object outside the court, the ceiling or a person out of play.
 - When, in the judgment of the official, the ball would have remained in play had the vertical backboard not been over the playable area, a replay is granted.
 - c. contacts an antenna, rope, post or the net itself outside an antenna/side band.
 - d. completely crosses the vertical plane of the net, partly or totally outside the crossing space.

Rule 12 - Playing Faults

1. Definition
 - a. Any playing action contrary to the Rules is a playing fault.
 - b. The referees judge the faults and determine the penalties according to the rules.
2. Consequences of a Fault
 - a. The consequence of a fault is a loss of rally. The opponent of the team committing the fault wins the rally.
 - b. If two or more faults are committed successively, only the first one is penalized.
 - c. If two or more faults are committed by two opponents simultaneously, a double fault is committed and the rally is replayed.

Rule 13 - Playing the Ball

1. Team Hits
 - a. Each team is entitled to a maximum of three hits (in addition to blocking), to return the ball to the opponents.
 - b. The hits of the team include not only intentional hits by the player, but also unintentional contacts with the ball.
 - c. A player may not contact the ball with two separate and consecutive motions [Exception: Rules 13.2b and 17.2c].
2. Simultaneous Contact
 - a. Two or more players may touch the ball at the same moment.
 - b. When two or more teammates touch the ball simultaneously, it is counted as one contact. If teammates collide, no fault is committed. Any player may play the ball next if this is not the third team contact.
 - c. If two opponents simultaneously contact the ball and it remains in play, the team receiving the ball is entitled to another three hits. If such a ball goes "out," it is the fault of the team on the opposite side.
 - d. A joust occurs when players of opposing teams cause the ball to come to rest above the net through simultaneous contact. A joust is not a fault, and play continues as if the contact were instantaneous.
3. Assisted Hit - A player is not permitted to take support from a teammate or any structure/object in order to reach the ball. However, the player who is

about to commit a fault (touch the net, cross the center line, etc.) may be stopped or held back by a teammate.

4. Characteristics of the Hit

- a. The ball may be touched with any part of the body.
- b. The ball must be hit, not caught or thrown. It can rebound in any direction.

Commentary: Receiving a served ball with an overhead pass using open hands is not necessarily a fault.

- c. The ball may touch various parts of the body, provided that the contacts take place simultaneously. Exceptions:
 1. During blocking, consecutive contacts may occur by one or more blockers provided the contacts occur during one action.
 2. During the first hit of the team (not blocking), the ball may contact various parts of the body consecutively, provided the contacts occur during one action.

Commentary: The first hit of the team includes reception: (a) of the serve; (b) of an attack-hit by the opponent (this may be a soft or hard attack-hit); (c) of a ball blocked by one's own team and (d) of a ball blocked by the opponents. During the team's first hit successive contacts with various parts of the player's body are permitted in a single action of playing the ball. The ball, however, may not be caught and/or thrown.

5. Faults in Playing the Ball

- a. Four Hits: A team contacts the ball four times before returning it to the opponents.
- b. Assisted Hit: A player takes support from a teammate or any structure/object in order to reach the ball.
- c. Caught or Thrown Ball: A player does not contact the ball cleanly.
- d. Double Contact: A player contacts the ball twice in succession, or the ball contacts various parts of the body successively.
- e. Illegal Hit: A player, in a non-playing area, plays a ball.

Rule 14 - Ball at the Net

1. Ball Crossing the Net

- a. A ball sent to the opponent's playing area must pass over the net within the crossing space. The crossing space is the part of the vertical plane of the net limited:
 1. at the sides, by each antenna and its imaginary extension, and
 2. above, by the ceiling.
- b. A ball penetrating the opponent's side outside of the crossing space may be played back to a teammate, provided it has not completely crossed the vertical plane of the net at the moment of contact.
- c. The ball is "out" when it completely crosses the lower space under the net.

2. Ball Touching the Net - The ball may touch the net while crossing it.

3. Ball In the Net (Other Than The Service Ball)

- a. A ball driven into the net may be recovered within the limits of the three team hits.
- b. If the ball rips the mesh of the net or tears it down, the rally is cancelled and replayed. If the fault occurs on a team's third contact, then it is a loss of rally.

Rule 15 - Player at the Net

1. Playing Space - Each team must play within its own playing area and space.
2. Reaching Beyond the Net
 - a. In blocking, a blocker may contact the ball beyond the plane of the net inside the antennas, provided the blocker does not interfere with the opponent's play.
 - b. A player is permitted to pass hand(s) beyond the net after the attack-hit, provided the ball is contacted while within his/her own playing space or within the plane of the net.
3. Penetration Under the Net
 - a. A player may reach or penetrate into the opponent's space under the net, provided this does not interfere with the opponent's play.
 - b. Penetration into the opponent's court, beyond the center line to:
 1. touch the opponent's court with a hand or hands, foot or feet is permitted, provided that some part of the penetrating hand(s), foot/feet remains either in contact with or directly above the center line.
 2. contact the opponent's court with any other part of the body (except hair) is a fault.
 - c. A player may enter the opponent's court only after the ball is out of play. A player may enter into the opponent's free zone provided this does not interfere with the opponent's play.
4. Contact With the Net
 - a. It is a fault to touch any part of the net or the antennas. Incidental contact with hair is not a fault.
 - b. A player may touch a post, rope or any other object outside the total length of the net provided it does not interfere with play.
 - c. When the ball is driven into the net and causes it to touch an opponent, no fault is committed.
5. Player's Faults at the Net - The following faults result in a loss of a rally: A player
 - a. touches the ball or an opponent in the opponent's space before or during the opponent's attack-hit.
 - b. penetrates into the opponent's space under the net interfering with the opponent's play.
 - c. penetrates into the opponent's court.
 - d. touches the net.

Rule 16 - Attack Hit

1. Definition - All actions directing the ball toward the opponent except a serve or a block, are considered to be attack-hits.

- a. During an attack-hit, tipping (directing the ball by contact with the fingers only) is permitted if the contact is brief and the ball is not caught or thrown.
 - b. An attack-hit is completed the moment the ball completely crosses the vertical plane of the net or is touched by a blocker.
2. Front-Row Player's Attack-Hit - The front-row player may carry out an attack-hit at any height, provided the ball contact has been made within the team's playing space [Exception: Rule 16.4d].
- Commentary:** If a player near the net completes an attack-hit in such a manner that the ball is blocked back into the attacking player, such contact is considered to be a first team contact. If a ball passed toward a teammate by a back-row player is legally blocked back into that player, it is an illegal back-row block *if* that player had been above the net at anytime during the attempt and has not returned to the floor.
3. Restrictions To a Back-Row Player's Attack-Hit
- a. A back-row player may complete an attack-hit at any height from behind the front zone. At take-off the foot (feet) must neither have touched nor crossed over the attack line or its imaginary extension. After the attack-hit, the player may land within the front zone.
 - b. A back-row player may also carry out an attack-hit from the front zone, if at the moment of the contact any part of the ball is below the top of the net.
4. Attack-Hit Faults
- a. A player initiates an attack hit on the ball completely within the playing space of the opposing team.
 - b. A player hits the ball "out."
 - c. A back-row player completes an attack-hit from the front zone, when, at the moment of the attack-hit, the ball is entirely above the top of the net.
 - d. A player completes an attack-hit on the opponent's service, *when the ball is in the front zone and entirely higher than the top of the net.*

Rule 17 - Block

1. Definition - Blocking is the action that deflects the ball coming from the opponent by (a) player(s) close to the net reaching higher than the net.
 - a. **Commentary:** To be considered a blocker, the player(s) must reach above the net sometime during the effort. A blocker ceases to be a blocker only when he/she returns to the floor or makes a subsequent attempt to play the ball.
 - b. **Block Attempt:** A block attempt is the action of blocking without touching the ball.
 - c. **Completed Block:** A block is completed whenever the ball is touched by a blocker. Only front-row players are permitted to complete a block.
 - d. **Collective Block:** A collective block is executed by two or three players close to each other. It is completed when one of the players touches the ball.
2. Block and Team Hits
 - a. A block contact is not counted as a team hit.
 - b. After a block contact, a team is entitled to three hits to return the ball to the opponents.

- c. The first hit after the block may be executed by any player, including the player who contacted the ball to complete the block.
- 3. Block Within the Opponent's Space - In blocking, a player may place hands and arms beyond the net, inside the antennas, provided this action does not interfere with the opponent's play. Blocking of the ball across the net above the opponent's team area shall be permitted, provided the block is made after the opponents have executed an attack-hit or
 - a. The block is made after the opponents have hit the ball in such a manner that the ball would, in the first referee's judgment, clearly cross the net if not touched by a player and no member of the attacking team is in a position to make a play on the ball.
 - b. The ball is falling near the net and no member of the attacking team could, in the first referee's judgment, make a play on the ball
 - c. Any third team hit by the opponent is an attack-hit and may be blocked at any time after the contact.
- 4. Blocking Contact
 - a. Consecutive (quick and continuous) contacts may occur by one or more blockers provided the contacts are made during one action.
 - b. These contacts may occur with any part of the body.
- 5. Blocking Faults
 - a. A blocker touches the ball in the opponent's space before or simultaneous with the opponent's attack-hit.
 - b. The ball touches the blocker below the knee.
 - c. A back-row player completes a block or participates in a completed collective block.
 - d. A blocker contacts the ball in the opponent's space from outside an antenna.
 - e. A player blocks the opponent's service.
 - f. The ball lands "out" after contacting the block.

Rule 18 - Conduct

- 1. Unsportsmanlike (When Opponent Plays Ball) - When an opponent is about to play or in the act of playing the ball, players shall not stamp their feet or shout at him/ her.
- 2. Derogatory Remarks or Acts - The referee shall have the power to warn, declare side-out or point, or disqualify for the game or match, any player, substitute, coach or manager who commits, in the referee's opinion, any of the following gross violations of sportsmanship:
 - a. Persistently addresses the official in regard to decisions.
 - b. Makes derogatory remarks about or to the official.
 - c. Commits acts derogatory to the official or attempts to influence his decisions or to deceive the official.
 - d. Makes personal and derogatory remarks about or to opponents.
 - e. Commits audible comment or visible display derogatory to the game.

3. Delaying the Game - A player, substitute, coach, or manager shall not commit any act which, in the opinion of the referee, attempts to slow down the game unnecessarily.

Rule 19 - Play-Over

1. Official's Error.
2. Foreign Object Entering Court.
3. Double Foul.
4. Unresolved Conflicting Calls in 2-Official System.
5. Inadvertent Whistle.

Rule 20 - Co-Rec Volleyball

Co-Rec volleyball will be played with regular men's and women's volleyball rules with the following exceptions.

1. Players - Each team shall consist of 3 men and 3 women. Teams will be allowed to start with 5 players. If 5 members are used, 3 of the team members must be female. Teams may continue play with as few as 4 players (2 females - 2 males or 3 females - 1 male) if players are lost to injury during the match.
2. Alignment - The serving order and positions on the court at service shall be alternated by sex.
3. Contact - When the ball is played more than once by a team, at least one of the contacts shall be made by a female player. Contact of the ball during blocking shall not constitute playing the ball. There is no requirement for a male player to contact the ball, regardless of the number of hits by a team.
 - a. A ball contacted more than once by a team, without a female player having contacted it, remains alive and does not become an illegal hit until it fully crosses the plane of the net or is contacted by an opponent.
 - b. An illegally hit ball blocked by an illegal blocker becomes a double fault and a replay is directed.
4. Blocking - When only one male player is in the front row at service, one male back row player may be forward of the attack line for the purpose of blocking.
 - a. The remaining back row player must be behind the attack line until the ball has been contacted by the blocker(s) or has been hit in such a manner that no block is possible. If a back row player is not participating in a block, there is no restriction on both back row male players being in the attack zone.
 - b. No female back row player may participate in a block.

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